



Croydon Schools' Dance Association – 2008/2009 Report

The number of schools involved with CSDA and the number of events held by CSDA during the year continue to grow. Fifty-six school groups have affiliated to the Association this year. The membership comprises one special school, thirteen high schools, eight junior schools, twenty-two primary schools and nine infant schools, two after school dance groups with students from several schools and one SScO dance specialist.

Of these, fifty-four took part in the annual performances at the Fairfield Hall on 25 and 26 March 2009. CSDA again had to include a matinee performance in order to accommodate all the schools wishing to perform. Community groups of older citizens were invited to attend the matinee and the special ticket rates for schools meant that whole schools were also able to come and watch the performance. Peter Westlake was the guest of honour at the matinee, and he escorted Lorraine Drolet (ballroom dance teacher) and the Deputy Mayor of Croydon who each attended an evening performance as a guest of honour. The lists of schools dancing at each performance follow at the end of this report.

The performances were entitled *Fact or Fiction* and each school chose their own interpretation and music without lyrics and over 1,000 Croydon students (ranging from 5 to 18 years) performed to packed houses. Dances in a wide range of styles were performed including, for the first time, a live samba band accompaniment. There were two all male groups dancing and several schools sent more than one group to dance.

High school students were again given a chance to showcase their own choreography in a performance, *Choreographics 5*, held at the Ashcroft Theatre on 22 January 2009. This year high school students from the BRIT School, Virgo Fidelis, St Andrew's, and Woodcote took part. Blue Sky Dance Company also performed and the senior workshop piece (see paragraph below) included students from BRIT, Riddlesdown, Woodcote, Norbury Manor, Oasis and Westwood Girls' Schools. For the first time, this event broke even and holding it in the smaller Ashcroft Theatre rather than the Fairfield Concert Hall made for a more intimate atmosphere, with easier security. This year CSDA invested in t-shirts printed with the CSDA logo on the front and 'CSDA CREW' on the back meaning that the committee and officials were instantly visible to the performers and to the Fairfield staff both at this event and at the March concerts.

Following from the success of last year's Senior Dance Workshops for students in years 9 to 11, three twilight workshops were held in January at the BRIT School. The resulting dance (choreographed by Vix Kerley, Woodcote High School teacher and Jenny Barber, BRIT School Director of Dance) was included in *Choreographics 5*. Twenty-two students from six high schools attended – the largest group ever to take part in these workshops.

Dance workshops for boys were held in October, December and April at the BRIT School in order to raise the profile of boys' dance. BRIT male students taught contemporary and street dance to boys from years 5 to 8 in after school workshops. At the end of each session, the boys performed the

dances they had learned to their family and teachers. Seventy-three boys attended these sessions throughout the year.

A big coup for CSDA was organising a workshop for GCSE dance students run by a dancer from the Siobhan Davies's Company (the performer of the GCSE set work). This was held on 6 February at the BRIT School for years 10 and 11. The teacher was excellent; however, the event was only attended by students from the BRIT and Woodcote High Schools. Other schools did not send any students although they teach GCSE dance and had requested GCSE workshops on a questionnaire distributed at CSDA's AGM. This is a continuing problem that CSDA faces – how to get more schools (other than those associated with the committee) to attend events or send students to events.

CSDA now sponsors a youth dance group called Blue Sky Dance Company. Company members aged from 10 to 14 years are selected by audition. As well as performing in CSDA events this year, the company is performing this summer in London and south eastern youth dance competitions and events. The company director is Gemma Coldicott, a community dance worker, who also runs CSDA endorsed classes for adults and children in South Croydon.

A Day of Dance for students in years 5-8 who performed in the Fairfield Hall concert was held in May at Archbishop Lanfranc High School. Each participating school sent a maximum of 5 students. After warming up in a large group, the dancers split into groups, each with a different teacher, to produce a dance. At the end of the day, all the dances were combined into a performance for teachers, family and friends.

Every Country's Dancing held at Smitham Primary School will be repeated this year as it was so popular. Last year primary children had the opportunity to learn salsa, Afro-Caribbean, and bharata natyam dances. The afternoon concluded with a picnic, a showing to parents and friends of the three dances learned and the whole group then joined together in circle dances. During this year's event, children will be able to learn line dance, Bollywood dance and Polish dance as well as enjoy the picnic and group dancing.

The week long gifted and talented summer dance school (Dance Blast) run in conjunction with Croydon SSCos was held again this year. Two gifted and talented students nominated from each school attended dance sessions at the Ashcroft Theatre each day and the resulting dances were performed in front of a paying audience (and the Deputy Mayor of Croydon) on the final Friday evening. CSDA was responsible for the junior group of twenty-four students from years 5 and 6 who created a complex dance based on *Calendar Songs* (choreographed by Barbara Richardson and Mary Cox). A CSDA senior group of students from Woodcote and St Andrew's High Schools also performed a dance which they had learned in two twilight workshop sessions held in June and July at St Andrew's High School. The Dance Blast event will run again this summer, but, as it made a loss last year, for the first time participants will have to pay a nominal fee for the week.

The CSDA Resource Centre is still housed at Ashburton Library. Teachers from CSDA affiliated schools, once they are members of Croydon libraries, are able to borrow CDs, DVDs, videos and books to aid with dance teaching to both primary and secondary students.

The AGM this year was held in the Town Hall in order to raise awareness of the arts programmes held in Croydon Clocktower.

CSDA is moving into the technological age: a CSDA group has now been formed on Facebook with an increasing membership and a website is currently being designed which will go live in September.

CSDA again this year produced a glossy leaflet which gave details of all the previous year's events and achievements which was sent to all Croydon schools.

CSDA Committee 2008-20089

**Chairman: Barbara Richardson,
Vice Chairman and Secretary: Mary Cox,
Treasurer: Janet Brett,
Newsletter Editor: Vix Kerley;
Members: Jenny Barber,
Della Bhujoo,
Sheila Bryan
Co-opted: Gemma Coldicott**

The following schools participated in this year's CSDA performances, *Fact or Fiction* at the Fairfield Halls on 25 March 2009:

**Beulah Nursery & Infant School
St Andrew's High School
Ashburton Infant School
Smitham Primary School
Atwood Primary School (Infant)
Purley Oaks Primary School
St James the Great Infant School
DanceMode
Keston Primary School
St Joseph's RC Junior School (boys)
Woodcote Primary School
Virgo Fidelis RC Convent Senior School
Blue Sky Dance Company
The Hayes Primary School
Wattenden Primary School
St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary School
St James the Great Junior School
Margaret Roper RC Primary School
Shirley High School
Atwood Primary School (Juniors)
The BRIT School
St Joseph's RC Junior School (girls)**

These schools performed in the matinee at the Fairfield Halls on 26 March 2009:

**St Aidan's Primary School
Howard Primary School
Ridgeway Primary School (Juniors)
Winterbourne Infant School
Bubble...Gum Dance
Benson Primary School
Parish Church Nursery and Infant School
Parish Church Junior and Woodcote Primary Schools**

Wolsey Infant School
Gresham Primary School
Ridgeway Primary School (Infants)

These schools performed in the evening of 26 March 2009:

St Joseph's RC Infant & Nursery School
St Mark's CofE Primary School
Woodside Children's Centre & Infant School
Broadmead Nursery & Infant School
David Livingstone Primary School
St Mary's Catholic Infant School
Woodcote High School (boys)
Selsdon Primary School
Coloma High School
Priory/BRIT School
Oasis Academy Coulsdon
Kingsley Primary School
St Chad's RC Primary School
Norbury Manor Business & Enterprise College for Girls
Duppas Junior School
Ashburton Junior School
Woodcote High School (girls)
Winterbourne Junior Girls' School
West Thornton Primary School
The BRIT School
Spring Park Primary School