

Contemporary Choreographers' Collective Dance Festival 2014 Prepares For An Iconic Season Of Dance

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Posted by [Johaila Kinney](#)



Contemporary Choreographers' Collective Dance Festival 2014 Prepares For An Iconic Season Of Dance

Trinidad and Tobago's Foremost Platform For The Presentation Of Innovative And Experimental Contemporary Choreography Features A Diverse Cast of Local, Regional And International Choreographers

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago... Following its 2014 call for submissions, Trinidad and Tobago's foremost platform for the presentation of innovative and experimental contemporary choreography, Contemporary Choreographers' Collective (COCO) Dance Festival, is set to deliver an iconic season of dance. The festival will open with the annual COCO Awards followed by an evening of dance on Friday October 3, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. at Queen's Hall. Performances will continue nightly until Sunday October 5, 2014. To mark the launch of the COCO Dance Festival 2014, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Sturm, Ambassador of France, will host a private function for media and sponsors in collaboration with COCO and the Alliance Française de Trinité-et-Tobago on Monday September 22, 2014 at the Résidence de France.

As Trinidad and Tobago's singular curated and juried dance festival, the 2014 instalment of COCO will feature a diverse cast of guest and selected choreographers from Trinidad and Tobago, Canada and the USA. The guest cast features New York's Battery Dance Company with support from the Embassy of the United States of America, the University of South Florida's Dance Program and University Dance Company (UDC) of Texas Tech University with support from the TTU's College of the Visual and Performing Arts. Successful applicants chosen by COCO's screening committee include Akuzuru, Brittany Williams, Deliece Knights, Jacob Cino, Jelae Stroude-Mitchell, Jillene Forde, Juan-Pablo Alba-Dennis, Kinesha Charleau, Sade Chance and Santee Smith. In COCO's partnership with the Prime Minister's Best Village Trophy Competition via its community-based outreach initiative, COCO in the Community, finalists from the Best Village competition are selected to perform. This year, Ibis Dance Company

directed by Sherma Burke, New Edition directed by Jodie Daniel and Eh Beh Oui Don Don directed by Kizzy Murray were selected. To round out the festival, the works of two of COCO's founders, Sonja Dumas and Dave Williams, will be presented.

Lovers of dance and the performing arts can look forward to a different programme of performances on each night of the festival. Tickets for the festival cost only TT \$100 and are available at Alliance Française de Trinité-et-Tobago, Bread Basket in St. Ann's and Woodbrook, participating choreographers and during the week of the festival at Queen's Hall.

WHAT: COCO Dance Festival 2014

WHO: COCO Dance Festival

WHEN: Friday October 3, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday October 4, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday October 5, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Queen's Hall

TICKETS: TT \$100

Alliance Française de Trinité-et-Tobago; Bread Basket, St. Ann's and Woodbrook; participating choreographers; and Queen's Hall during the week of the festival.

ABOUT COCO

COCO came to life in 2009 with a mission to inspire, encourage and serve the community through creative processes and collaborative endeavours. An initiative of dance professionals and founders Sonja Dumas, Nancy Herrera, Nicole Wesley and Dave Williams, the festival emboldens choreographers to push the envelope with pioneering choreographic approaches that explore contemporary and post-modern forms of dance and movement. As a collective with a focus on carving a space for a contemporary, post-modern and experimental dance aesthetic, COCO has revolutionised Trinidad and Tobago's dance landscape by steering the development of collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to the production of art, performance and lecture. Through relationships fostered with the University of Trinidad and Tobago's (UTT's) and the University of the West Indies' (UWI's) dance programmes, the festival nurtures and mentors budding choreographers by providing a professional platform for performance and experimentation supported by direction in the development of choreography. Since its inception, COCO has showcased the works of its founders alongside those of dance and creative arts practitioners from multiple disciplines and training centres across Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Canada and the USA.

WHAT'S ON

COCO Dance Festival begins

THE 2014 installment of the Contemporary Choreographers' Collective (COCO) Dance Festival takes place this weekend at the Queen's Hall, St Ann's. The festival, founded in 2009 by dance professionals Sergio Danzón, Nancy Herrera, Nicole Wesley and Dave Williams will present to Trinidad and Tobago a diverse cast of selected choreographers from Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America and Canada.

The festival opens this evening at 8:30 pm with a programme that includes the annual COCO Awards which celebrates those who stand in several different areas of dance. A concert tomorrow at the Queen's Hall venue with an outdoor/indoor spatial presentation beginning at 8:30pm and a show from 7:30 pm and ends on Sunday with a similar outdoor/indoor spatial presentation at 5:30 pm and show time at 8:30pm. Visual artist, Aksumu would be doing the spatial presentations on both nights.

The guest cast features New York's Battery Dance Company with support from the Embassy of the United States of America, the University of South Florida's Dance Programme and the University Dance Company (UDC) of Texas Tech University (TTU) with support from the TTU's College of the Visual and Performing Arts. Successful applicants chosen by COCO's screening committee include Aksumu, Jeremy Williams, Deloise Knight, Jacob Cass, Jerle Stroud-

Mitchell, Ilana Piriz, Jean-Pierre-Alto-Dennis, Karla Clarissa, Sade Chavez and Jennie Smith. In COCO's partnership with the Prince Maurice's Best Village Trophy Competition via its community-based outreach initiative, COCO in the Community, finalists from the Best Village competition are selected to perform. This year, the Dance Company directed by Sherna Blake, New Edition directed by Jodie Danesi and Eli Bell, Oti Des Des directed by Kerry Murray were selected. To round out the festival, the works of two of COCO's founders, Sergio Danzón and Dave Williams, will be presented.

In addition to performances, the community-based outreach initiative, COCO in the Community, will offer a series of master dance classes facilitated by both local and visiting dance experts tomorrow and Sunday. Training will be offered in contemporary/modern, contemporary/American, Zoua Roumette Fleurborn and Modern African-Caribbean techniques. There will also be a discussion entitled "Talking Dance with Dave Williams" on Sunday.

According to a media release, COCO's focus is on creating a space for contemporary, post-modern and experimental dance. "COCO has revolutionised Trinidad and Tobago's dance landscape by steering the development of collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to the production of art, performance and lecture. Through relationships fostered with



REFLECTING the reality that is COCO founder and director, Dave Williams, performs an excerpt of his 2014 COCO piece, 'Only visibility sees us.' PHOTO COURTESY: WWW.COCCO.COM

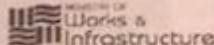
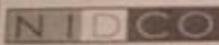


CARMEN NICOLE SMITH and Ben Scarborough of the New York Battery Dance Company perform against New York's city scene during the city's Downtown Dance Festival. PHOTO COURTESY: BATTERY DANCE COMPANY

the University of Trinidad and Tobago's (UTT) and the University of the West Indies' (UWI) dance programmes, the festival nurtures and nurtures budding choreographers by providing a professional platform for performance and experimentation supported by devotion in the development of choreography," the release stated. Since its inception, COCO has showcased the works of its founders alongside those of dance and creative arts practitioners from multiple disciplines and training centres across

Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Canada and the USA, the release stated.

COCO's calendar of events began last Monday when the organisation teamed up with Alliance Française to present "L'Alliance Site la Danse", a series of film nights that ended yesterday. This five series featured four French dance films including "Les Fables A La Fontaine, Eldorado Prejocaj, Barbara and Blanche Neige."



PUBLIC NOTICE

The National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO) in partnership with the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, wishes to advise motorists that there will be temporary disruptions in the flow of traffic at the North Ramp of the CRH-UBH Interchange and on the CRH Eastbound in the vicinity of the West to North Ramp of the Interchange on Sunday 5th October 2014 between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. These disruptions are to facilitate the installation of overhead traffic sign gantries at both locations.

Motorists are advised of the following:

- Reduce speed significantly before approaching the work area.
- Please proceed with caution and observe all directional signs.
- Police Officers will be on site to facilitate the flow of traffic in an orderly manner.

All precautions are being taken by NIDCO and its contractors to ensure proper Health, Safety and Environmental Standards are maintained.

We thank you for your cooperation and regret any inconvenience caused.

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Dance workshop for autistic children

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October 3, 2014

Told they were having a dance session with visiting dancers from New York, the autistic dance students at Goodwill Industries didn't know what to expect. Familiar with the quick steps of the Latin beats and the formal ballroom steps, the students shone on Friday through more contemporary, modern dance moves. They welcomed the opportunity provided by the US Embassy, urged on by Barbara Olumide-Alleyne, chief executive officer of Goodwill Industries. Dressed in their leotards and tees they were ready for whatever was being shared in the hour-long session. Taking them through the paces were visiting Battery Dance Company dancer and choreographer, Carmen Nicole Smith, assisted by her colleague Sean Scantlebury, also a trained dancer with Caribbean ties. He was born in Barbados. The dancers were in Trinidad to participate in the Coco Dance Festival at Queen's Hall.

From the word go, as Carmen took the children through a series of rigorous warm-ups, broad smiles appeared on their faces as they got excited about the different approach. Although some could be heard saying they were a bit tired, their enthusiasm didn't wane and they pushed ahead following Carmen's every move and instruction. Barbara said the children are chronologically between the ages 14-29 but have a mental capacity of those nine or ten years old. Looking at them, you only saw an eagerness to learn.

From tapping feet to crawling into push-ups and jumping jacks, the students' energy filled the hall at the development organisation at Fitzblackman Drive, Woodbrook. By the time the session rolled around to their passing an imaginary energy ball, the dancers' creative body movements were fully on display and there was no shyness. Looking on with interest was one of their dance tutors Gina John, who was invited by Barbara to expose her to a new experience and perhaps help her get some tips.

At the end of the session, Carmen said: "They were great and really sweet kids. They were eager to learn and they worked hard." The children attend Goodwill from all areas of Trinidad and Tobago and are given a variety of vocational trainings, ranging from food preparation to applied arts like glass etching, in addition to dance. The group chosen for the dance workshop was among those who really love dancing. But funding is an issue and Goodwill can only afford about three to four sessions of dance a year. Barbara said sessions like these are really appreciated. "It's an inspirational experience which awakens their ability, when they realise what they can do. This session is not what is commonly known as dance in Trinidad, and I already have the approval of Gina to have a session, perhaps every Wednesday." As for the children, they were thankful for the experience and gathered among themselves laughing and joking about the new way of dance.