



# Annual Report

## 2011 - 2012

MDI, 24 Hope Street, Liverpool, L1 9BX | [www.mdi.org.uk](http://www.mdi.org.uk)  
Registered Charity No. 1040463 | Registered Company No. 2873008

## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Having delivered a highly successful artistic programme of dance in 2010-11 as part of our designated Year of Dance in Liverpool, MDI spent 2011/12 developing new partnerships and ideas and identifying new sources of income including new ways of doing business.

An improved year financially resulting in a small surplus to reinvest back into the organisation, made possible through:

- Securing a contract to manage a project (Decibel PAS for ACE)
- Tighter financial control and accounting
- Reduced staff costs due to resignation of a senior member of the team (not planned)
- Successful outcomes from Liverpool PCT

The first six months were originally set to reflect, consolidate and plan for the future. However, due to a successful bid as Event Producer for Decibel PAS 2011, MDI spent April – December, managing and delivering that project on behalf of Arts Council England (ACE).

Our plan was that the artistic programme would reflect the need to consolidate and reduce our activity whilst using the time effectively to lobby, advocate, resource and plan the next three years effectively, however as can be noted below we still continued to deliver some great art.

Some highlights included:

- 5 dances in 5 days project with Gary Clark
- Big Dance NW hub lead as part of Big Dance 2012 was an opportunity to shine a light on community dance across the nation at a particular point in time. Appointing Mira Balchandran Gokul as NW Coordinator, she set up sub hub leads across the region and managed our Big Dance commission – 25 artists produced a choreographic framework with Jeanefer Jean Charles and Lisi Perry
- Produced a two-hour platform of dance as part of International Day of Dance and the Blitz Commemoration supported by Liverpool Central BID team where we presented 6 community and professional companies to an estimated footfall of 50,000.
- Produced and delivered Hope University's Community Dance module
- Set up the seminar 'Dance Conversations' about dance and health for artists and health specialists
- Produced Topsy Turvy featuring regional artists over a weekend at the Capstone Theatre
- Offered 264.5 free hours to 6 artists and CPD programme 'Dance Intensives'.
- Rachel Rogers was a key note speaker at the National Dementia Conference
- Regular studio classes at MDI continued throughout the year

On a personal note I was delighted to be a finalist for The Merseyside Woman of The Year Award and Runner Up in the Arts and Culture Category, and then find out that I was awarded an MBE for my services to dance in the New Year Honours list was the icing on the cake!

I noted it briefly last year but I would like to include a short tribute to Clive Taylor who passed away last year on 5th October.

“Clive was so committed to the organisation and to me personally. He appreciated all that the team did to make it a success and he genuinely cared. .... he truly appreciated all aspects about the organisation and would attend virtually everything and his enthusiasm was contagious, he became very articulate in his appreciation of the more abstract work that we promoted as well as our social programme and his real passion the classical. He loved the work of Matthew Bourne and I know one of his personal highlights with MDI was when he met and stood beside the man himself as he welcomed everyone to our year of dance in 2010.

Clive was an absolute joy to know and I will miss him very much. He was generous of spirit, he was kind of heart, he was devoted to life”.

The full tribute features on page 4.

I would like to say a big thank you to Chris Lowther who resigned from MDI in 2011 to take up a post elsewhere. With us for over 5 years, Chris worked for MDI with great commitment and diplomacy and his skills in keeping us on track operationally will be missed, all at MDI wish him the very best in all he does.

I would as always like to take this opportunity to thank the MDI team, the board, artists, participants, venues and funders for their continued passion and commitment to MDI and dance development as a whole.



**Matthew Bourne, Karen Gallagher & Clive Taylor**

## A Tribute to Clive Taylor 27/3/28 – 5/10/11



I first met Clive when I took up post at Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI) in 1994, he was an advisor with Business in the Arts NW and had come in to help put the first business plan together – something he continued to do for the next 17 years, and continued to contribute right up to a couple of weeks before he passed!

I remember our first meeting, he looked at me and said “I don’t get this organisation”, I was quite naïve, my first time managing an company, I said “neither do I, but I’m thinking.....” And as Clive would put it diplomatically “went on one”! The thing is we just clicked, Clive has been a major support ever since, and as he finished that first plan he was so taken with MDI he became a board member and then later the chair.

Clive loved to talk and he made some great welcome speeches on our behalf, he was a great advocate – in 2008 in welcomed 500 delegates to Liverpool for British Dance Edition and I struggled to get the mic off him, he was in his element.

He was loved and respected by board members and staff alike and the most recent members talk of how much Clive welcomed them to the fold and ensured that they contributed and were included. As Adrian George, a former trustee said “ Clive was open, enthusiastic, committed, determined, passionate, focused, considered, patient and on top of that a genuinely warm and welcoming person”. Which says it all really.

Cathy Butterworth who is now our Chair said “I think his selflessness and generosity were just unbelievable, he always put other people first and even right towards the end of his life he was still thinking about others and looking at the bigger picture when he should really have been focussing on himself. And he always had a little twinkle in his eye, even when he was putting his foot down about budgets!!” She was not wrong there: Clive loved to pick over the finances with relish! He really kept me on my toes!

As mentioned Clive attended most things we did and as Rachel Rogers our Project Development Manager said: “ It was also fantastic to see him genuinely enjoying the work he came to support - a real dance lover!”

For me personally Clive was a mentor, someone I looked up to and cared about dearly, I will miss our lunches and dinners when we would put the world to rights when he would provide me with advice and sort me out! But also when he would talk of his lovely Liz and the holidays they shared. A massive fan of Turkey, I know he was sad not to visit a final time - so now each time I go I will take him with me in my heart!

I have two stand out memories of Clive that I will treasure. One was at BDE in 2008, in order to really immerse himself in the whole event he stayed in a hotel in Liverpool and attend the whole 4 days – but the image I will never forget was Clive, just a month before his 80th birthday throwing some shapes on the dance floor with his good friend Trevor at 1 am at the Magnet Club at our final project party – priceless!

And finally in August 2010 when at the Dance on the Waterfront, the pair of us finally got to dance together as we did our version of the Argentine Tango.

Clive was an absolute joy to know and I will miss him very much. He was generous of spirit, he was kind of heart, he was devoted to life.

RIP lovely man and God Bless you.

**Karen Gallagher MBE**

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

This has been another fantastic year for Merseyside Dance Initiative, and one that has seen the organisation build on its fantastic success in 2010/2011.

This is a year that saw MDI deliver an amazing amount of work on a local, regional and national level, with characteristic energy and innovation, and to an amazingly high standard. With that in mind I would like to begin this report with congratulating - on behalf of myself and the board, and also on behalf of MDI's former Chair Clive Taylor - Karen Gallagher for being awarded an MBE, a much deserved and highly auspicious recognition of Karen's tireless work, commitment, energy and dedication to MDI and to dance on a local, regional and national level. Clive Taylor played a significant role in ensuring that the organisation, and Karen's work were recognised in this way, and although he sadly passed away before Karen received the award, we know just how delighted and thrilled he would have been.

One of the major successes of the year was the delivery of the Arts Council's Decibel programme that MDI managed and delivered from April to September. MDI also produced and presented a wide range of performances and projects throughout the year including: International Day of Dance, Featherstonehaughs, a number of performances and showcases of work from the region and opportunities for community groups to present work to audiences of over 50,000.

During 2011/2012 MDI were also commissioned to deliver the Big Dance, a high-profile national event that was presented in line with the 2012 Olympics.

Other successes of the year include: supporting 54 artists across a range of CPD opportunities and support initiatives, providing platform opportunities, mentoring, master classes and free rehearsal space, as well as developing an arts and health strategy that provides the framework for continued innovative practice within this area of delivery.

MDI were successful in achieving NPO (National Portfolio Organisation) status from Arts Council England. This brings with it some new opportunities, considerations and challenges regarding how MDI work in the future, but we look forward to developing our relationship with Dance in Greater Manchester (DiGM) over the next three years.

In financial terms the organisation has strengthened its position, building up reserves and bringing in a significant amount of income through a robust mix of income sources.

There are, as usual far too many successes and highlights to mention them all in this report, suffice to say that MDI delivered a huge amount of projects, initiatives and performances to their usual exceptionally high standard.

For all of this and the many other fantastic achievements the Board wishes to give special thanks to Artistic Director Karen Gallagher and all of the staff of MDI for their consistently hard work and high performance. The board would also like to thank MDI's funders and sponsors who continue to support us. Special thanks are also due to all of the partner organisations, venues, and artists who work with MDI and help us to develop and strengthen dance activity in the region.

**Cathy Butterworth, Chair of Trustees, MDI**

## **WHAT DOES MDI DO?**

Merseyside Dance Initiative is one of the UK's leading strategic dance agencies, whose mission is "inspiring people through dance". From our Liverpool base we work with partners to create a healthy and vibrant infrastructure for dance.

We support dance artists through a professional development programme, offering information, free studio time, regular dance intensives and opportunities for freelance work in educational, corporate and community settings.

In our role as creative catalyst we work with artists and partner venues in the Merseyside Dance Promoters Network to create and present original, groundbreaking and captivating dance. We promote dance as a means to mental and physical wellbeing, and offer a wide range of classes in our studio and in the community.

Through our dance and health strategy we aim to reach people who might not traditionally get involved in dance, including people living with asthma and dementia.

## **YOUTH DANCE**

2011/12 was a big year for youth dance at MDI with our dedicated Youth Dance Co-ordinator Mira Balchandran-Gokul (in partnership with Youth Dance England) working to deliver specific youth dance projects. The main of these events was our CATS (Centre for Advanced Training) open day – 60 young people attended (May), two sessions for contemporary dance and one session for South Asian Dance. Along with the Big Dance project, the success of this project has led MDI to change the focus of its youth dance provision. Instead of Saturday drop in sessions, we are auditioning for a youth dance company with junior and senior arms who will participate in an October 2012 half term intensive leading to a performance during Black History Month. The youth company will continue in January 2013 and will be project-led, with performances planned after the spring and summer terms. This will allow MDI to deliver more consistent quality teaching and monitor and evaluate the development of participants.

## **TOPSY TURVY**

In March 2012 MDI presented two nights of dance at the Capstone Theatre in Liverpool. The programme included 12 performance pieces over 2 nights. All pieces were choreographed and / or performed by artists from Liverpool and the NW region. The event included the culmination and performance of the Gary Clarke Performance project where 5 dances were created in 5 days by professional artists working with Gary in a studio environment - this model is now being replicated by Gary as a basis for future dance / performance residencies. The event also included 5 premieres of new work and 2 pieces from this programme were selected by an external programmer as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.



## COMMUNITY, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

MDI worked on numerous education and outreach projects across the year. Some of our highlights were:

- The annual African Dance and Drumming summer school with showcase took place in the summer led by Lamin Dumbuya, culminating in young people performing as part of the MDI Community Dance Stage, run by Brouhaha as part of their Carnival event (July)
- Ashworth Hospital – series of workshops led by Maxine Brown for patients in maximum security psychiatric hospital
- Spider Project – Adult performance project with people in recovery from addiction– Andrea Buckley and Paula Hampson led performance project (October – March)
- Granby Care Home – taster sessions with elders, culminating in being filmed by Scottish BBC on 29th Sept
- Produced the community dance programme for The Liverpool Irish Festival, setting up Set Dance workshops and other resources
- Produced Family Dance Day in Partnership with the Floral Pavilion, New Brighton, attended by an estimated 400 people (March).
- Chosen as the Big Dance NW hub lead - Big Dance 2012 is an opportunity to shine a light on community dance across the nation at a particular point in time. Led by the Foundation for Community Dance (FCD) and Big Dance 2012, it will 'wrap around' Big Dance London, London's Legacy Trust UK programme. Appointed Mira Balchandran Gokul as NW Coordinator and set up sub hub leads across the region



**Artist Wendy Thomas working with adults with dementia**

## **DANCE AND HEALTH**

MDI's production of a dance and health strategy has been a challenging, time consuming and deeply rewarding process. Starting in 2010, when MDI was a cultural ambassador for the Year of Health and Wellbeing, we have been involved in developing research projects, identifying funding sources, forging partnerships and delivering dance and health workshops to many marginalised groups. Participants have included people living with dementia, adults with learning difficulties, primary age pupils from a special school, elderly residents from a re-ablement centre and elders from the African-Caribbean diaspora. We secured funding from Liverpool PCT towards our three-year dance and health strategy and programme and won a contract from Liverpool PCT, in partnership with Asthma UK, to deliver a pioneering project helping asthma sufferers. MDI also became English National Ballet's North West partner in their Dance for Parkinson's project, involving artist training and participatory workshops. MDI outlined its work to arts and health professionals at three conferences in 2011-12.

## **ARTISTIC SUPPORT AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Highlights for this year include:

Gary Clarke - 5 dances in 5 days project. February 2012

A free, week long choreographic and performance project for artists within the North West and nationally. This was an experimental way of working, to see if 16 people, including choreographer Gary Clarke could create a dance a day for 5 days, which then could be performed as part of Topsy Turvy.

Freelance Day - 2nd September 2011

Recruiting new freelance dance artists on to our database, providing free professional level class with Sarah Black, for all Liverpool and North West based artists. An artist forum was also hosted this day to allow contribution and conversation about the needs of artists in our region. The current dance Intensive programme was the outcome of this.

Weekly Professional Level Class with Bernard Pierre-Louis Until December 2011

Support to local dance companies, taciturn dance company, House of Suarez and China Pearl with provision of free rehearsal space and mentoring. MDI also supported taciturn dance company through the Northern dance platform, helping to secure performances of their work at National dance agencies across The North, including Dancebase Aug 2011, Yorkshire Dance Nov 2011 and Dance City March 2012. This has had a huge impact on the reach of taciturn's work, and aided the development of their work through performance.



**Dancer Hollie Coleman rehearsing for '5 Dances in 5 Days'**



## SUMMARISED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2012	2011
	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible assets	8	373
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	47,621	23,441
Cash in bank and in hand	74,002	5,929
<b>Creditors</b>		
Amounts falling within one year (27,810)	(40,838)	
Net current assets	80,785	1,560
Net assets	80,793	1,933
<b>Funds</b>		
Unrestricted funds	1,933	14,343
Restricted funds	66,450	-
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>80,793</b>	<b>1,933</b>