

The physical benefits and career advantages of healthy dance practice are becoming increasingly understood by every sector of the dance community in the UK, writes Safe in Dance International's *Maggie Morris*

Dancer health and safety

Applying knowledge early to help forge a long-lasting career

Edel Quin, SiDI
Registered Provider
delivering a Healthy
Dance Session to student
teachers at bbdance

Dancer health is becoming increasingly prominent. In the UK, much of this is led by One Dance UK's Healthier Dancer Programme (HDP) and the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science (NIDMS) and their partners who are carrying out extraordinary and continually ground breaking work. All of us in the healthy dance sector now need to look at how we can further disseminate this knowledge to dance teachers, producers and choreographers and encourage them to implement it. It isn't enough that someone attends a course on nutrition, warm up and cool down or periodisation, it is essential that they fully understand and apply this knowledge. Only then can the healthy dance sector be sure that our key aims of optimising dance performance and reducing injury, regardless of age, level or style are being achieved.

I know from my own experience, when starting out as a dancer, the feeling of invincibility. I also know that my professional career as a dancer would have been extended if I had known then what I know now. It often takes those first aches and injuries to start a dancer questioning how they are using their body, wondering whether there might have been a different way to achieve the same dance result, or perhaps an even better result. We know the importance of a cool down after dance, but how many young performers want to do that before they meet their audience and friends or go out to celebrate? Knowledge alone isn't enough, understanding the importance of utilising that knowledge at all times is what is needed.

So how do we achieve this? How do we ensure that current research and

developments in dance science are filtered into education and then remain with students as part of their daily practice as they become dancers, teachers and dance practitioners? Safe in Dance International (SiDI) is working with NIDMS and HDP and other international agencies such as Healthier Dancer Canada (HDC) and the International Association of Dance Medicine & Science (IADMS) to do just this.

There is some great work going on in vocational schools, colleges and universities to establish safe and healthy dance practice in the curriculum, and to ensure that young dancers and developing dance teachers really are able to implement correctly the principles of healthy dance practice. Increasingly these colleges are integrating the SiDI Healthy Dance Practice and Healthy Dancer Certificate into their curricula.

One of our most recent applicant providers, Christy Anson-Harries at the University of Wales explains, "... (our course) has an emphasis upon vocational skills and employability. We feel the SiDI Healthy Dance Certificates will support our students with their transition into the dance industry whether it be as a performer, choreographer, teacher etc."

The embedding of the Healthy Dance Practice Certificate means that graduates leave their course with both a degree or diploma and the international, professional endorsement that they know what healthy dance principles are and can implement those principles in their work: evidence that they have reached an internationally-agreed standard in healthy dance practice. They leave having become a part of our healthy dance community which will update



them throughout their careers on new developments and research in Safe and Healthy Dance Practice. It also links any college offering the certificate into a network of healthy dance experts

Educational institutions worldwide who are adding the International Certificate into their provision, are becoming SiDI registered providers and deliver part time and weekend courses on SiDI's internationally recognised 10 core Principles of Healthy Dance Practice. Most importantly, SiDI's endorsed CPD can also be undertaken as independent study for individuals who have the knowledge of healthy dance practice and want to attain the international endorsement of that knowledge.

For more information on this or other of SiDI programmes contact maggie@safeindance.com or go to www.safeindance.com