

Uchenna Dance

The Head Wrap Diaries: Fierce and Free

World premiere 17 February 2018,
Dance: Sampled, The Lowry, Salford

Creative Director and Choreographer Vicki Igbokwe
Performers and Creative Collaborators

Shanelle Clemenson, Natalie Bailey, Daniella Selwood,
Nicole Nyemi-Tei, Kloé Dean, Tina Omotosho

Producer Grace Okereke

Assistant Producer Viviana Rocha

Marketing and PR Manager Carol Ann Walters

Rehearsal Director and

Assistant Choreographer Ingrid Mackinnon

Rehearsal Assistant Kella Young

Production Manager Carly Hook

Costume Designer Jodie Simone-Howe

Lighting Designer James MacKenzie

Mentor to Vicki Igbokwe Etta Murfitt

Music Director and Composer Kweku Aacht

Music Ayekoo Ohemaa (Fused Vocal Remix)

Kweku Aacht - Remix and Composition

Lyrics Kweku Aacht, Ama Yeboah, Berimah Osei
Boateng and Nana Asaase

Original vocal sample Ayekoo Ohemaa, recorded
by Reynolds The Gentleman at Vision Inspired
Music, from The Head Wrap Diaries soundtrack.

The making of this show in 2018 was supported by
the Bernie Grants Arts Centre and The Place.
Commissioned by The Movement, a partnership
between Birmingham Hippodrome, Sadler's Wells
and The Lowry, with funding from Arts Council
England Ambitions for Excellence.

About Uchenna Dance

Uchenna Dance is a touring dance theatre company that has grown from an informal explorative company into a tour de force within the dance sector. The company was formed ten years ago under the vision and leadership of choreographer Vicki Igbokwe shortly after she experienced a life-changing trip to New York.

Feeling like a fish out of water throughout her stay, whilst falling in love with the underground dance scene, Vicki was introduced to club styles house, waacking and vogue. Vicki returned to London with a new-found confidence, inspired and encouraged to support others with their journeys enabling them to be the best version of themselves.

Today, the company's overarching aim is to empower, entertain and educate through dance in a diverse programme that includes the creation of dance-theatre production experiences, coaching, dance-based empowerment workshops and teaching in schools and institutions.

A note on The Head Wrap Diaries: Fierce and Free

An uplifting blend of club styles house dance, waacking and vogue fused with African and contemporary dance. This bigger and bolder extract rework is inspired by a section of Uchenna Dance's full-length show The Head Wrap Diaries and focuses on three things: women, elegance and power.



Photo: Foteini Christofilopoulou

Interview with choreographer Vicki Igbokwe

What was your first experience of watching dance?

My first experience of watching dance was at a Nigerian wedding when I was about six years old. I remember us sitting down eating and the next thing there was some serious dancing by my mum and her friends. I realise now they were living their best life on the dance floor.

What inspired you to become a choreographer?

My inspiration came from my love of dance and the need to find a career that I truly wanted to pursue. My mum became ill when I was 14 and I became her carer which was a massive responsibility so going to dance classes was my escape. I remember one day as a 16-year-old working part-time, my manager asking me what I wanted to do when I grew up and I said I wanted to be a choreographer, but in reality, I didn't have a clue how to make it happen or what a choreographer actually did! I just knew they made people happy by creating dances.

How would you describe the work you make to someone new to dance?

My work is all about how it makes people feel and the energy around it that makes people feel good. I want to gift everyone that sees my work with the ability to think fierce, be fabulous and live free spirited. The soundtracks (made by long-time collaborator, composer Kweku Aacht), are so very cool, audience members can expect to groove in their seat!

Which other dance-makers do you admire?

I really admire Kristina and Sade Alleyne (Alleyne Dance), Alesandra Seutin, Alvin Ailey and Matthew Bourne.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

Wow, I am blessed to be able to think of a few!

My top 3 are:

- 1) Working as a mass movement choreographer for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Opening and Closing Ceremonies.
- 2) Booking my first job as a movement director for a new play at The Royal Court called The Woods, written by Robert Alan Evans and directed by Lucy Morrison.
- 3) Celebrating ten years of Uchenna Dance this year!

What advice would you give to someone watching dance for the first time?

Just sit back and enjoy the show, don't overthink it and take from it whatever makes sense to you. Dance has this incredible ability to leave room for your own interpretation and this is an experience you should own and enjoy. I'll let you into a little secret, I'm a professional in the dance world and I don't always fully understand the shows I see. But it doesn't cloud the experience, I just sit back and enjoy the show!



Cast & Creative Team

Vicki Igbokwe Creative Director and Choreographer

Vicki Igbokwe is the creative director, choreographer and founder of Uchenna Dance. She also works as an independent choreographer, movement director, facilitator, teacher and visiting lecturer, and is the facilitator for the Fi.ELD (Future Innovators East London Dance), trustee for One Dance UK (the UK body for dance) and associate artist at The Place.

Shanelle Clemenson



Since graduating in 2009 from Wolverhampton University after studying dance practice and performance, Shanelle Clemenson has worked as a freelance dance artist within her local community. This is her third production performing with Uchenna Dance, following Our Mighty Groove in 2013.

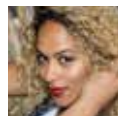
Natalie Bailey



Natalie Bailey trained at Lewisham College, Wac Performing Arts & Media College, The Alvin Ailey School in New York and in artist development workshops like Runway House and the

Keep.It.Moving training programme. Natalie continues to pursue her happiness through the arts. She's tapping back into her singing and plans to start creating shows and assisting creative directors in the near future.

Daniella Selwood



Daniella Selwood is a dynamic dancer with a first class honours degree in contemporary dance. She has toured internationally, performing contemporary, commercial, urban and African dance styles, and has danced with STOMP and on Blue Peter.

Nicole Nyemi-Tei



Nicole "Neolove" Nyemi-Tei started her journey in the award-winning hip hop dance company Boy Blue Entertainment in London. Since 2000 she has trained in street dance styles including hip hop, popping, locking, house and waacking with Boy Blue and Runway House, and afrobeats dance with Homebros as a part of the Homefam group, as well as contemporary and ballet. Nicole performed in the London 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony and for the Queen's birthday celebration at the Royal Albert Hall in 2018. She currently

teaches at Brava Dance Studio in Doha, Qatar.

Kloé Dean



Kloé Dean is the founder, choreographer and dancer of hip hop dance company Myself UK Dance, and is a member of Boy Blue Entertainment. Kloé teaches hip hop dance along with a range of other urban dance styles at Pineapple Dance Studios and Studio 68 in London.

Tina Omotosho



Tina Omotosho is a Nigerian, London-based dance artist, model and choreographer. Her dance styles include hip hop, popping, waacking, locking, vogue, house, contemporary, jazz-funk/commercial and African dance styles. The majority of Tina's training took place at Runway House. Tina has also trained with Boy Blue since 2016 and worked with Rachel Kay as part of her practice, Flight Mode and on Rachel's project The Love Letters Series.