

# TRAINING

## Movers and shakers

Youth Dance England's Young Creatives project aims to develop the skills of talented young choreographers by offering them mentoring and a final showcase, writes **Susan Elkin**

Imagine the scene. We're in the Royal Opera House at an event fronted by Wayne McGregor and Richard Alston. A 16-year-old boy, Lee Bales from Yateley School in Hampshire, is performing a solo piece he has devised and choreographed himself. It is a powerful piece about a man thrown into prison, where he finds himself descending into madness. Unsurprisingly, Lee has ambitions to take dance further, beginning with an AS course – the first half of an A level.

This was the culminating event in the 2009 Youth Dance England's Young Creatives – an annual mentoring and performance project

aimed at talented young choreographers aged 15-19. Now in its third year, it offers advice, support and a showcase. Like Lee, Alex Mason and Sally Bower, both 17 and at school in Derbyshire, were in last year's group and are thrilled with what they learned and achieved during the project.

"We had to send in a video of our work – a duet we had already devised on a summer 2008 course – and then we auditioned in London," says Alex, explaining that they first found out about Young Creatives at Derby Dance, where she and Sally have been learning ballet, tap and other styles since they were five or

opportunities to work with different groups and different mentors."

Both girls are now taking AS dance – the first in their school to do so. Alex has taken a Centre for Advanced Training course with Dance 4. She plans to study dance further and hopes to make it her career. Sally is more interested in musical theatre.

Last year's participants were selected from ten different secondary schools and specialist training establishments across the country. Almost half were male.

Looking forward to receiving applications for 2010, Claire Somerville, YDE's dance performance manager who runs the Young Creatives project scheme, says: "We want to see work that is fresh and communicates with an audience. It could be based on anything that inspires you – your life view, dance itself, what is happening in the world, relationships, interpreting a piece of music, a film, an image or a novel."

She adds: "We are open to presenting a range of work – whatever truly inspires you, will probably inspire us. The works must have

been made by you and can use any dance form, such as ballet, breaking contemporary, jazz, Kathak, street, tap or a combination."

Submitted pieces need to be performed by between one to five people and the maximum length is seven minutes.

YDE Young Creatives is supported through funding raised by YDE and through in-kind support from project partners. That means that YDE is able to offer places on this project at the subsidised rate of £50 per person. Fund-raising advice is available for participants unable to pay this.

London auditions will be held in January for shortlisted applicants. The residential weekend and public performance will be in April.

Let's hope YDE is snowed under with applications, reflecting the healthy state of youth dance and choreography in the UK.

*Applications for YDE's Young Creatives 2010 opened on September 1 and there are 15 places. The closing date is November 20. Details are at [www.yde.org.uk](http://www.yde.org.uk), click on programmes and events*