



## NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2022

### A NEW PHASE FOR SAGE

#### **"Doin' it for ourselves"**

We live in troubled times, but Sage has managed to survive and thrive through these difficult last few years. We are now heading for a new and exciting chapter in the life of the company.

As our supporters and previous members are fully aware, it was thanks to Simon Rice that Sage came into being. He started the company in 2010 so has been our Artistic Director and company choreographer for more than 11 years. Simon's expressed aim in setting up the company was that, one day, we would run it for ourselves, and over the years he has equipped us to do just that. Therefore when he made the decision to leave the company earlier this year to take up a permanent new position in a media company, we were saddened to see him go, but not despondent. It was time to decide for ourselves what we wanted to do and how we wanted to develop as a community-based company of older dancers.



There is no doubt that Simon has left us a very important legacy. He has created many memorable works for the company, including *Dreaming*, *Song of Love*, *Pieces of Eight*, *Zadok*, *Gitanes*, and his most recent work *Ciaccona*, which was performed for the first time in October 2021 at the Bloomsbury Festival.

He challenged the company to produce work of a standard and technical complexity not usually associated with non-professional older dancers, and we benefitted greatly from his range of experience as a professional dancer when putting together our very successful Every Body Dance shows.



Simon will be hard to replace and we have decided that, rather than rushing into appointing a new Artistic Director, we will take this opportunity to work with a number of different choreographers and explore different dance styles, although we will remain true to our original ballet-based roots.

So far this year we have enjoyed working with Fionuala Power, a former Royal Ballet and Merce Cunningham dancer who has worked with us before, to create a new lyrical piece called *I Am*. We have also been fortunate enough to work with Marie Forbes, an experienced and talented dance teacher who specialises in Limón technique. She has worked with us to create a lively and very enjoyable piece in this style. And, of course, we have continued to dance with Manifest Nation to keep us in the hip-hop groove. We have even ventured into the realms of tap with expert guidance and encouragement from our good friend and mentor, Kim Mendez.



## ***The positive power of dance***

The pandemic prevented us all from carrying on with our normal lives, and Sage was no exception. We had two important events planned for March 2019 just before Covid struck, which we obviously had to postpone. One was a repeat of our *Every Body Dance* show at the ArtsEd theatre, and the other was an evening *In conversation with Irek Mukhamedov*, our illustrious patron. We managed to stage the former at the Conway Hall in October 2021 as part of the Bloomsbury Festival, and we certainly haven't given up on trying to revive the latter.



As is becoming the norm for our *Every Body Dance* shows, our Conway Hall show was a joyous programme of different dance styles involving performers of all ages and abilities.

It was even more important this year to celebrate the positive power of dance and to demonstrate how dance can help to get us to get through even the darkest days. Our aim has always been to show that everybody can and should dance for life, and our motto, "*You don't stop dancing because you get old, you get old because you stop dancing*", took on an even more important meaning given the life-threatening experience the country, and indeed the world, has been through during these last few years.

## ***What's new for 2022?"***

We are very pleased to announce that we have a new show coming up in November. It will be held on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November at the newly-opened Marylebone Theatre. We are very fortunate to be able to perform in one of London's newest performance spaces. Once known as the Steiner Hall, the theatre has undergone an extensive refurbishment, and is now a versatile state of the art venue.



Sage will be performing the newly choreographed pieces that we have been working on during the year, and we will be joined by old friends and new to create our usual joyful programme of dance for all. Please do join us.

## ***New arrivals***

We are delighted to welcome some new members this year. Claire Turner joined us in 2021 and is a beautiful dancer with extensive ballet training. Linda Foster joined us this term. Linda has a wide experience of different styles of dance and her enthusiasm and vitality will be a great asset. We also welcome back Barbara Berkeley-Hill who left us during the pandemic but thankfully has returned, having decided that life without Sage just wasn't quite the same.

We have much to look forward to in the months and years ahead. We hope to continue to attract new members to keep the company on its toes, and to work with a range of new choreographers to help us explore all that dance has to offer. We sincerely thank Simon Rice for all he has done for us and wish him well in his new role. We look forward to inviting him to our next performance. Let's hope he's impressed!

