



Biography

Deaf Men Dancing & DMD+

Mark Smith is the founder and artistic director for Deaf Men Dancing, an innovative and emerging all male dance company. It is a collaboration of male dancers/choreographers who, like Mark, are deaf. Together they have created a fusion of differing styles of dance with sign-language incorporated into choreography creating a unique, interesting and original aesthetic.

DMD have performed all over the UK including DanceEast's 1st Anniversary Gala, E4's Battlefront, London's 2012 Deaf Day, DaDa 'Hands On' and Candoco's 20th Anniversary cabaret. DMD have performed *Sense of Freedom* at The Place's Resolution, Brighton Festival, Pulse Fringe Festival, City Lit's Deaf Day, Cloud Dance Festival, Includu Festival and Clin de'Oeil Deaf Art International Festival in France.

Mark received commission from WithoutWalls to direct and choreograph DMD's outdoor production *Alive!* which was a collaboration with visual artist Rachel Gadsden and produced by Greenwich + Dockland International Festival. *Alive!* went on to perform at the Brighton Festival, Greenwich + Dockland's Festival Dancing City, Stockton International Riverside Festival, Liberty Festival, Watch This Space Festival at the National Theatre, Kendal's Minifest - Lakes Alive, Bristol Harbour's Festival and Manchester's Xtrax Festival.

DMD was invited by Amanda Cotterall OBE and Jeremy Hunt (Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media & Sport) to perform *Alive!* at Canterbury Cathedral to mark the United Nations International Days of Persons with Disabilities and DMD's involvement with the Cultural Olympiad.

In 2014, Mark Smith was one of the three artists selected to participate in Integrated ChoreoLAB presented by South East Dance, Pavilion Dance South West and GDance. As part of this commissioned, DMD were offered a period of R+D, an opportunity to develop a new piece and build relations at their symposium.

DMD was commissioned by Greenwich + Dockland International Festival to create a work called *TEN* that was premiered at National Paralympic Day featuring Mayor of London's Liberty Festival 2014. DMD was delighted to invited back by GDIF to perform *TEN* at Greenwich Festival 2015,

Mark Smith was delighted to be invited by Sadler's Wells Theatre, to create and present DMD's new work called *Hear! Hear! & Rosa* at =dance (an all year- round programme of work featuring some long-standing partners and others new to Sadler's Wells' stages). *Rosa* was the first time that Mark invited a female deaf

dancer to perform with male deaf dancers. Through this, Mark formed a new company called DMD+.

In 2015, Sadler's Wells & Includu Festival invited Mark to develop and present a new work called *The Soundman* with two new deaf male dancers.

Deaf Men Dancing received commission to perform a new work 'Embrace' inspired by Argentine Tango with sign-language incorporated at Mayor of London's Liberty Festival 2015.

In 2016, Deaf Men Dancing performed 'Let us tell you a story' that invites audiences on a journey to explore Deaf history and experiences of deafness in an entirely new way at museums for Exceptional & Extraordinary: unruly bodies and minds in the medical museum. A collaborative project initiated and led by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester with Deaf Men Dancing and in partnership with 8 medical museums and advice and additional support from SHAPE, the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Smithsonian Institution. Inspired by Mark Smith's investigations of medical museum collections that contain hundreds of objects - from exquisite ear trumpets to conspicuously large hearing aid boxes - and the extraordinary untold stories of the people and events, the innovations and technologies that have shaped Deaf experience and identity through time.

In 2017, Mark Smith received commission from Without Walls, to conceive, choreographed and directed '*Corazón a Corazón*', in collaboration with the internationally acclaimed circus artist, Leo Hedman. '*Corazón a Corazón*' was inspired by Manuel Puig's 'Kiss of the Spider Woman', and commemorating the 50th anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in England and Wales. '*Corazón a Corazón*', explores themes of sex, love, passion, betrayal, politics, oppression, tension and power.

Through British Council's support, Deaf Men Dancing was honoured to be invited to perform '*TEN*' at Tbilisi International Festival of Theatre in Georgia and '*Embrace*' at Dubai in 2018. DMD was the first dance company to perform outside Dubai Opera House. DMD was delighted to be invited back to create a new work for Sharjah Mime who performed the show at Dubai Opera House.

Website: <https://www.deafmendancing.com>

DMD's video showreel: <https://vimeo.com/user36957587>

