

LUCA SILVESTRINI'S

PROTEIN

PROTEINDANCE.CO.UK

(In)visible Dancing

An International Dance Festival Birmingham Production

INFORMATION PACK



Contact:

Franck Bordese

020 8331 9665

Franck@proteindance.co.uk

(In)visible Dancing

A runaway success in Birmingham, Doncaster, Dublin, Kingston upon Thames, Southend on Sea and Coventry in 2010 and 2012, (In)visible Dancing returned in 2014 in Bath, Canterbury, Cardiff and Rovereto, Italy, in 2016 in Bristol and Canterbury and in Hull for City of Culture 2017 and SIRF 2018.

A unique performance intervention, bespoke to each location
Perfect for festivals, community celebrations, carnivals, shopping centres
Adaptable to surroundings and circumstances, working indoors and/or outdoors
Down to earth, with broad appeal, attractive and enjoyable for people of all ages and walks of life

"It was fun, energetic, explosive, just kind of cheers up your day"

"It was just brilliant and it just brightened Coventry up and it was so impromptu"

"they were just randomly dancing ... and you don't know which ... people are going to join in, and you (are) just looking around wondering what is going to happen next"

"it was really spontaneous and fun.... A nice little surprise after work".

Audience members in Kingston, Coventry, Southend and Dublin

"Audiences don't have to seek it out. It happens where they are. And I think that is the major, major benefit of the project. It really does have a big impact and that's what I've been really pleased about... They are so dedicated. You get 100% from them. They really, really want to make it work. I felt completely supported by them"

Katherine Woodvine, Kingston upon Thames Arts Officer

Promotional video: <https://youtu.be/HMocUnToyzo>



Contents

1. About the production
2. How (In)visible Dancing works
3. Logistics
4. How to promote (In)visible Dancing
5. How to book (In)visible Dancing



1. About the production

(In)visible Dancing is a unique location-based performance intervention, originally conceived in 2010 for International Dance Festival Birmingham (IDFB).

Each **(In)visible Dancing** project takes the form of a piece of contemporary dance/physical theatre about 30 minutes in length, specially created for a particular location by Protein's Luca Silvestrini. It is performed twice a day over a period of up to two weeks in the same place; typically, a busy, outdoor pedestrianised shopping street or indoor shopping centre where there are lots of members of the public.

(In)visible Dancing seemingly grows out of everyday life, developing from what looks like 'incidental' strange behaviour on the street to a fully fledged dance experience that engages with the architecture of the location.

(In)visible Dancing culminates in a big-splash Finale event on the last day of the project, engaging 80+ local amateur/community performers in a high profile performance.

Made as a bespoke piece for each location it is commissioned for **(In)visible Dancing** can be experienced in a number of ways – as a passer-by enjoying a brief event as street entertainment, an avid watcher following the action as it builds daily, a participant in the Finale, or an Apprentice Dancer co-devising and performing the work from beginning to end.

2. How (In)visible Dancing works

How does (In)visible Dancing evolve?

(In)visible Dancing goes from being invisible to visible in two ways. Firstly, the performance content expands from subtle shifts in activity on the street inspired by real life situations, causing bystanders and passers-by to stop and wonder what is happening, and gradually becomes more articulate and complex every day, emerging in front of a growing crowd, before becoming a fully-fledged performance reacting to different elements in the physical surroundings. Secondly, the scale of the work develops throughout its performance run, growing in number of performers from five dancers and one musician at the outset, to a ten dancers and five musicians by the project's mid-way point, before becoming a mass happening with a greatly extended cast for the Finale.

Where can (In)visible Dancing happen?

(In)visible Dancing is best suited to spaces that are naturally well-populated. The event needs a suitable and safe outdoor environment that can both showcase the performance and have an audience to watch it. A pedestrianised high street with a large space is ideal (see photographs for reference), but many other spaces could work, such as a city square, a railway station etc.

The Performers

The piece is performed by a core team of professional dance artists from Protein, which is then supplemented by further recruitment of local apprentice dancers (this can fulfil a professional development brief) and community participants (fulfilling a social engagement brief).

Musical Accompaniment

Live acoustic musical accompaniment is provided by local musicians styled as buskers who shift into a different gear as the performance unfolds, the ensemble growing in size from one musician at the outset to four or five over the period of the project.

The Finale adds an extra layer. Local dance and non-dance groups join the core cast of professionals and apprentice dancers in a specially-created large-scale finale performance on the final day of the project. They are recruited via taster workshops throughout the project and are rehearsed alongside the rest of the cast the day before the final performance. They bring along material they've already created as part of their regular activity and this is shaped and adapted by Luca. As well as these groups, members of the public have the opportunity to join the proceedings 'flash-mob' style. At the end of each performance in the lead up to the finale, Protein's dancers offer passers-by the opportunity to learn a short routine and this forms the basis of their contribution to the Finale. Numbers will vary with location, but the total cast – groups and passers-by included – can be anything between 50 and 100 people.

Costuming

All performers in **(In)visible Dancing** are dressed in a way that does not set them apart from everyday life. Typically, performers wear their own clothes, with the exception of the professional dancers.

Education

The educational opportunities within this project are extensive. Workshops in the evenings provide a mechanism for engaging and selecting a range of community performers for the Finale event. Workshops on the street at the end of performances, led by one of the performers, provide a mechanism to involve people in the Finale flash-mob.



3. Logistics

Agreement about the best performance site, the most appropriate rehearsal space for the entire duration of the project, the selection of the apprentice dancers, musicians and local groups will be made by Director Luca Silvestrini over the negotiating phase with the host organisation/festival or other. It's advisable to organise a day visit (or a few days visit internationally) for Luca to:

- visit possible sites
- meet the music fixer
- meet interested local groups leaders to discuss their involvement (they can all come to the same presentation/meeting)
- hold an audition for local apprentice dancers

Core team of performers: Five to six professional dancers from Protein.

Apprentice dancers: Five to six apprentice dancers (or more if is financially and logistically viable) audition for the project as a professional development opportunity. Typically, the apprentice dancers are students and recent graduates, but anyone with performance training or suitable experience can apply. These cast members are sourced via audition call-outs. They receive expenses only.

Musicians: Four/five professional musicians to form an ensemble, sourced through a local agent or fixer.

Finale performers: The performers in the finale are made up of various high standard local dance and non-dance groups and individuals. It is essential that the particular dance specialism is in a sector of dance which is significantly different from the contemporary dance style Protein uses. Here are some examples:

Dance styles:

- Street/Break and B-boying
- Ballroom and Latin American
- Sequence dancing
- Flamenco
- African dance (dancers and drummers)
- Bhangra group (dancers and drummers)
- Jiving
- Tango
- Salsa
- Zumba
- Belly dancing
- local/national traditional and/or folk dancing

Non-dance activities:

- Capoeira
- Tai Chi
- Parkour
- Skateboarding
- BMX
- Roller skating
- Other martial arts

Recruiting the groups can be done in a variety of ways: call-outs to local groups, presentation to interested groups, and word of mouth. Recruitment works best when it's done by someone with **thorough** knowledge of the local dance and recreational scene, who has **personal** contacts with the people involved in community dance in the city/town. Luca Silvestrini and a couple of his professional cast attend one of each group's regular sessions during the *(In)visible Dancing* residency. This effectively becomes a workshop for the Finale as Luca selects and shapes the material he wants to be part of it. Attendance at the Finale rehearsal (the day before the performance) and a walk through on the day of the Finale itself are expected as part of the commitment.

Rehearsal & Performance schedule / timings

Once on site, the project is in rehearsal throughout its entire duration of up to two weeks. Performances are timetabled to coincide with times when the location is at its most populated. Usually, there are 2 performances of *(In)visible Dancing* each day around 1.30pm and 4pm. The Finale is on the last day (usually at a weekend) around 4pm.

Other Considerations:

- How the project will be staged on site
- Associated activity that will happen alongside the performances (e.g. on-street workshops)
- Identifying/organising how the project can and should engage with the community.
- Budget (informed by context e.g. site, duration, etc.)
- Licenses to perform
- Other licensed events in the vicinity
- Stewarding
- Leafleting (see “How to promote (In)visible Dancing” below)
- Weather conditions for working outside (inclement weather plan needed)
- Planned construction works in and around the performance space during the proposed time of the project
- Convenience of main rehearsal space for the performance period in relation to the performance site (max. 10 minutes’ walk away)
- A large rehearsal space to create the finale
- Working with musicians and their ability to adapt and improvise
- Audition processes for local dancers
- Requirements and procedure for engaging community participants
- Accommodation near rehearsal site and travel



4. How to promote (In)visible Dancing

As a naturally-occurring audience will grow day-by-day through word of mouth, **(In)visible Dancing** does not necessarily require a large-scale promotional campaign in advance or significant marketing budget. It works incredibly successfully as a spontaneous “flash-mob style” event. However, for those locations/venues wishing to build a campaign in advance of the performances, promotion via printed materials, local press, e-marketing, and social networking channels can help in raising awareness; as can spreading the word in the location of the event through shops, street vendors and surrounding businesses.

During (and in the hours immediately prior to) daily performances, handing out leaflets to the gathering crowds and passers-by is a good way of raising awareness. This doesn’t just attract people’s attention and encourage them to stay and watch; it can also serve to engage potential community performers for the latter stages of the project. It’s also a useful way of highlighting the Finale

The Finale can be promoted in advance in a number of ways, dependent on budget available (e.g. leaflets and posters, paid-for advertising in publications or outdoor within the performance location, online, via e-marketing, through local media and PR activity). Leafleting the crowds about this finale performance (in advance and as it happens) is key. Promotion through the community participants’ networks is also a useful means of engaging audiences.

One idea for engaging students and younger audiences and broadening the reach of the project via social media is to recruit a group of Youth Ambassadors to film the daily happenings using camera phones. They could also keep an online blog/diary of the daily event. This adds to any social media activity that will happen naturally as a result of dancers, community participants and audiences posting comments on Facebook, tweeting, or posting photos/videos online.

5. How to book (In)visible Dancing

To discuss **(In)visible Dancing** appearing in your city or town as part of a festival, community celebration event or as a stand-alone performance, please use the following contacts:

Franck Bordese, Executive Director
Franck@proteindance.co.uk | 020 8331 9665

Last updated: 25/02/2020

Photos by: Tim Cross, Neil Michael, Ed Moore, Francesca Moseley and Tangle Photography