

TAVAZIVA



Image by Foteini Christofilopoulou

Tavaziva is renowned for its beautiful and dynamic performances, bringing a unique synthesis of contemporary, ballet and African dance to the UK stage. Led by Zimbabwean choreographer and Artistic Director Bawren Tavaziva, the company has been producing and touring his powerful, political, technically brilliant, and deeply personal work since 2004.

One of only a handful of African Diasporic dance companies in the Arts Council's National Portfolio, the organisation plays an important role both in nurturing and training the next generation of dance artists, and in reaching audiences across the UK and globally.

The Company's latest powerful new production of *BOY'S KHAYA* premieres on 28 September 2021 followed by a national tour heralding an exciting new chapter of development. As we look forward, we remain focused on growth, relevance and producing our best work to date.

Tavaziva is supported by Arts Council England as an NPO and from a variety of Trusts and Foundations. The company is based in Battersea and holds up to 8 Board meetings each year.

The Board is chaired by Mercy Nabirye, PhD FRSA, FWL who is also founder and Director of Kauma Arts, and until December 2020 was Head of Dance of the African Diaspora (DAD) at One Dance UK. The current Directors are Mercy Nabirye (chair) Marie McCluskey MBE, Amanda Saunders and Mykaell Riley. Peter Kyle OBE is Tavaziva's Honorary President.

Shortlisted candidates will be contacted by 26 October 2021 and interviews will take place week commencing 1 November at bbodance (or online).

If you would like to arrange an informal chat, please contact mercy@kaumaarts.com.

For more information about Tavaziva, visit our website at www.tavazivadance.com.

About Tavaziva

Bawren Tavaziva's Zimbabwean heritage and his unique hybridisation of African and contemporary choreography and music lie at the heart of all Tavaziva's work. Through performance, training, learning and participation, Tavaziva shares a culture of diverse creative exchange, opportunity, excellence and innovation. Dynamic, bold, risk-taking and beautiful, the work is popular with venues and audiences.



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Our work celebrates vibrant cultural diversity, and the organisation represents and advocates for the importance of the arts as a tool for social cohesion. Tavaziva is also a 'go-to' place for professional and post-graduate training, offering placements and apprenticeship opportunities as career routes into the industry. Our distinct artistic voice contributes to the empowerment of Black communities and audiences and is loved by people of all cultural backgrounds.

Equality, diversity, inclusion, challenging discrimination, and professional excellence are at the heart of our policies and priorities throughout all our activities, and the Black Lives Matter movement is an important anchor for this work. Our Business Plan commits to fully embracing the Arts Council's new *Let's Create* Investment Principles: Dynamism, Ambition and Quality, Environmental Responsibility, and Inclusivity and Relevance. We also embrace our role in contributing to the repositioning of dance of the African Diaspora in the UK and advancing its impact globally.

During 2020, despite the challenges of the global pandemic and cancellation of live performances, we were able to adapt without compromising on quality. We maintained engagement with audiences through online work, built partnerships for future creative projects, touring, and learning and participation work, and provided opportunities for professionals and dancers in training to maintain their skills and fitness.

We remain committed to our core vision and to engaging and enriching people's lives through dance, creating dynamic and bold artistic work and providing opportunities for a diverse range of people to participate. This year we have produced Bawren's next major production, *BOY'S KHAYA* for which we have a small national tour lined up and plan to continue our wide range of learning and participation work both online and live.

While we are fervently a live performance company, we are also flexible and can respond to changes in circumstances swiftly. We have planned our year ahead with careful consideration of the on-going changeable circumstances of Covid-19 and government restrictions. We are seizing the opportunity to diversify our skills and activity by developing filmed work and adapting live work to outdoor stages, and to reach new audiences by taking our work online and developing digital distribution strategies. We are also unlocking new audiences through online learning and engagement work with hard to reach and community groups.

We are currently developing partnerships with venues throughout the UK as well as Wandsworth Council, the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD), Theatre Peckham, Roehampton University, Woking Dance, Swindon Dance, Activity Station, Wind and Foster, ArtsTrust and a range of community groups locally and London-wide.

About Bawren Tavaziva

"We are a company that approaches productions by thinking big and we don't believe in being restricted by resources, for example the quality of the dancers that we work with are worth more than gold, the productions are worth more than any money in the world. As a choreographer, I am surrounded by very creative people and a fantastic production team, and they put their hearts into the work, which is priceless.



Image by Jevan Chowdhury

We are ready to push on forward to create more amazing work and in my mind, what I create must have meaning. As an African I have been taught that African dance is always about storytelling, and that storytelling carries a lot of history. Based on this fact, I want my audience to experience a piece of work that moves them. I need my audience to hold a strong memory of a Tavaziva Dance performance or think and speak about it for a long time afterwards." Bawren Tavaziva

Bawren Tavaziva's creative journey continues to form the basis of the Company's music and dance aesthetic. He grew up in a rural village near Masvingo in Zimbabwe. Football, Michael Jackson, New Edition and Kung Fu movies viewed at the local community hall provided inspiration to Bawren and his friends. Bawren's musical talents also developed at this time on a guitar made by his brother from a 5 litre tin can and fishing wire.

At the age of 12 he attended an outreach ballet project with the National Ballet of Zimbabwe at his local community centre. From day one, his determination and talent led him to a life-long passion for dance. He danced with Tumbuka for five years and toured Africa. He came to England to join Phoenix and Union Dance and in 2004 he presented his own choreography and music as a finalist at The Place Prize with a deeply moving quintet entitled Umdhlalo Kasisi, in memory of his sister who sadly died of HIV.

After this, Bawren formed his own company and became Artistic Director of Tavaziva Dance and in the same year won a fellowship with Dance of the African Diaspora's Trailblazer programme. He went on to produce further works for his own company, including Boy's Khaya, 2021, Izindava 2017, Africarmen 2015, Tavaziva Ten 2014, Greed 2013, Sensual Africa 2012, Double Take 2011, Wild Dog 2010, Heart of Darkness 2009, Chatsva 2007, Bophelo 2006, and Soul Inspired 2005.

In 2015 Bawren Tavaziva and South African dancer Bafana Solomon Matea choreographed a large-scale dance piece called Madiba. It took place along Mandela Walk and the Riverside Terrace at London's Southbank Centre, and was performed by degree and graduate dancers from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance.

In 2016 Artistic Director of Rambert Mark Baldwin OBE invited Bawren to work with Polka Theatre's Artistic Director Pete Glanville to create Mud Child, a new work for children and family audiences. In 2018 Bawren choreographed a piece for Phoenix Dance Theatre's Youth Group, that was performed in Leeds and London as a part of a collection of works that had been conceptualised with the aim to raise awareness on, understand, and communicate issues around HIV/AIDS. He was also invited as a Shona Dance Consultant for Black Panther star and Tony-nominated writer Danai Gurira's striking play 'The Convert' at Kwame Kwei-Armah's Young Vic. Bawren gave guidance on Shona Dance techniques and led a Q&A teaching the cast about traditional Zimbabwe in the 19th Century, and the Shona tribe in particular.