

JASMIN VARDIMON COMPANY AND GULBENKIAN CANTERBURY JOIN FORCES IN SERIES OF INITIATIVES FOR DANCE IN KENT

Today, Ashford based Jasmin Vardimon Company and Gulbenkian Canterbury announce a series of collaborative initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to the various communities of their Kent home and to the development of dance within the region. From training to producing, presenting to reaching out to new audiences, the relationship between the two organisations forms a strategic alignment that aims to enhance their joint artistic contribution throughout the county as a whole.

At the forefront of their work together comes the major co-production of Vardimon's adaptation of the classic 19th century Italian novel *Pinocchio* which premiered at Gulbenkian over the August Bank Holiday weekend as part of the bOing! International Family Festival before embarking on a national tour.

Pinocchio comes hot on the heels of Gulbenkian playing host to the hugely successful Jasmin Vardimon Advanced Summer Dance Project, a five-day summer school exploring the work of the internationally renowned company through its repertoire, creative work and culminating in a performance on the final day of the course.

The two organisations are also launching a new youth dance company in Kent at Gulbenkian led by Jasmin Vardimon Company. This will comprise regular sessions from October 2016 creating a new youth dance company for the region. The vision to provide regular sessions for enthusiastic and talented young dancers in the region extends both the core values and mission of both organisations in providing support, training and development opportunities for young people in dance. Led by Jasmin Vardimon Company dancers, JV2 students from the company's Professional Development Training programme will also mentor and support the young dancers creating an intergenerational and aspirational opportunity.

Finally, in addition to the ongoing development of ART31 in Kent, Jasmin Vardimon Company will be piloting a new audience ambassadors scheme in Partnership with Gulbenkian. A group of young people aged 13-25 have been engaged with Jasmin Vardimon Company to experience and advocate for the arts and dance in the region. Supported by both organisations the new audience ambassadors' scheme increases access for these young people to the arts, with opportunity to see performances, learn more about careers in the arts, training and participatory opportunities, and connections to the sector through personnel in various job roles in each organisation.

Jasmin Vardimon says

"Having been based in Ashford since 2012, the company's commitment both the town and the county of Kent is woven into our fabric. We see the development of our partnership with Gulbenkian as being crucial to this and through these various initiatives we aim to increase our contribution to the region through widening our audiences, presenting our work in the county and placing ourselves at the centre of the regional provision of education and wider opportunities provided by dance".

Liz Moran, Director of Gulbenkian says

"We are very excited to be working in partnership with such an internationally renowned company and innovative choreographer. We have a shared passion and commitment to developing new audiences for dance and providing opportunities for young people as dancers and to inform future dance development in Kent".

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