



Dance through History - Social History Programme

For over 40 years, Nonsuch History and Dance Company has continued to maintain its position as a leading force behind projects connecting dance history to schools and the community. As an educational charity, Nonsuch has extensive experience of teaching historical dance and social history in schools and the community, with an extensive company of teachers, directors, choreographers, actors and dancers, expert in performing historical dance from the medieval period through to the early twentieth century.

Nonsuch is a company of professional dancers and actors who use historical dance to explore social history in live performance. We provide unique theatrical presentations and workshop experience tailored to the needs of specific projects. In schools, we immerse children in the historical world through theatrical performance, dance, and interactive role-playing exercises.

Our professional performers, dressed in detailed period costume, will provide instruction in the dress, manners, etiquette, and culture of the historical period and explore how dance can give interesting insights into the wider context of social history, presenting characters and situations from the specific historical period.

Our educational workshops offer a chance for everyone to participate in an historical event that will make a real difference to how they view history and imagine the physical materiality of the past. They will feel part of their past by being part of the history and the dance!

To give you an idea of our unique way of interweaving theatre, role-play and presentation with dance instruction, we have included information on our recent collaborations with organisations such as "Historic Royal Palaces" and the "British Museum."

In 2014 – National Tour, Film & TV

The Nonsuch Dancers and their Artistic Director Darren Royston have been involved in many exciting projects including a tour of a newly devised piece of dramatic contemporary dance-theatre; "The Dance of the Deadly Sins". Adapted from the 1554 Spanish Dance Play 'Danza de los Siete Pecados' by Diego Sanchez de Badajoz, the work uses historical dance from the 16th century courts of Europe to explore the themes of different sins and excesses as can be found in modern society.

Big Dance said of the piece: *"With comedy and spectacle throughout, this is certainly an evening not to be missed!"*

Other quotes: - *"Excellent scholarship of love of subject evident, which resulted in enjoyment and achievement for us all". "I liked the teachers being dressed in costumes of the period, showing the effect on style".*



Lucy Worsley and Darren Royston in rehearsal for *The Devil's Work?*
Nonsuch Dancers in background



"The Dance of the Deadly Sins"

Other work for the Nonsuch team this year includes a major project for the BBC with Darren Royston teaching historical dances to TV stars Lucy Worsley and Len Goodman in BBC's *Dancing Cheek To Cheek: An Intimate History of Dance*; uncovering the British love affair with dancing, exploring the nation's favourite dances from the 17th to the 20th centuries. Each of the shows culminated in historical balls with Nonsuch providing the costumed dancers. Some of the team have also performed in the movie *"Queen of the Desert"* starring Nicole Kidman - due for release in 2015.

BBC Radio 3 - Nonsuch and a host of celebrities put the swing back into the 18th century with *Dance Baroque for Comic Relief*, a live concert from Lyons Concert Hall at the University of York on Friday 15th March. The celebrities - including ex-footballer, Pat Nevin, former *Emmerdale* actor Kurtis Stacey and stars from *Dinnerladies* were taught steps to Baroque dances by Nonsuch and tried out their new-found skills in front of a live audience, with music by Purcell played by the University of York Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, under the guidance of Peter Seymour. The concert was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and was presented by Lucie Skeaping and Adam Tomlinson.

"Rexesexus" at The Place - The Nonsuch Dancers performed a new dance piece devised by Artistic Director; Darren Royston, at the Resolution Festival to rave reviews. Combining dance, drama and historical intrigue, the performance explored the scandalous dance of the Tudors – *La Volta* – exposing deadly consequences of invading royal privacy.

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Nonsuch Dancers in Rexesexus at The Place

“Candlemas Revels” at Middle Temple, Inns of Court - During the 16th and 17th centuries it was traditional to celebrate Candlemas to signify the end of Christmastide. For the legal students and lawyers of the Inns of Court this meant the climax of a festival of misrule; the Revels. Under the madcap leadership of the “Prince of Love”, they celebrated with dance, drama and banqueting, all trumpeting their manly prowess! As finale to an academic conference exploring “Renaissance Men in the Middle Temple” the Nonsuch Dancers recreated this annual event with a performance of works collected from the contemporary manuscripts.



Middle Temple, Inns of Court – Elizabethan Candlemas Revels

Kenwood House – Before its recent renovation Kenwood House launched the “Suffolk Collection” of Jacobean portraits, Nonsuch produced a “Jacobean Celebration” of 17th century dances to “bring the art of life”.

Bushey Academy – Nonsuch produced “Dancing the Glorious Revolution - a day in the life of the royal court” a curriculum enrichment day of late 17th century dancing exploring the ascent to the throne of King William III and Queen Mary II and focusing on the preparation for a celebration to be presented for William and Mary’s arrival at the Baroque palace at Hampton Court.

Medieval Summer Workshops at The British Museum – Alongside their summer exhibition – “Treasures of Heaven” the British Museum invited Nonsuch to produce and run Medieval dance workshops in the Great Court delighting large audiences of children of all ages throughout the Summer holidays.



Nonsuch Dancers at the British Museum Summer 2011

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Hampton Court Palace - Visitors spent time with King William III, Queen Mary II and other colourful characters from the Stuart Court. They heard the gossip, admired the architecture and delighted in the dancing. Nonsuch provided spectacular dance displays to entertain the new Royal family and the 21st century visitors alike, during full-days of role playing and interaction.



Nonsuch Dancers at Hampton Court Palace

Dance in Art Lectures at The National Gallery - Covering diverse periods and representations of “Dance in Art” from medieval and Tudor to baroque and ballet. Paintings and famous artworks are brought to life as dancers recreate the dances, scenes, and characters in a theatrical format. We are currently working with the “Leonardo – Painter at the Court of Milan” exhibition.

Channel Four – Fern’s 5 O’clock Show - Fern Britton invited the Nonsuch Dancers to teach her “La Volta” a favourite dance of Queen Elizabeth I on live TV.

Hever Castle, Kent - “Merrie-making with the Tudors”. The Nonsuch Company performed exciting dances to usher in spring, in the presence of King Henry VIII and his new wife Anne Boleyn.

Rochester Cathedral - “Travels back in time with Tudor feasting and dancing” – over seven hundred visitors came through the doors of Rochester Cathedral to learn to dance the Tudor way with the Nonsuch Dance Company.

Morpeth Town Hall - “Grand re-opening of the iconic building originally designed in 1714 by Sir John Vanbrugh after its £1.2m facelift” – Baroque and Tudor dancing with Nonsuch.

Croydon Council - “A Celebration of Tudor Croydon and Schools Workshops” - Nonsuch dancers worked with local children over a period of 3 weeks to produce a Tudor show where the children danced with the Nonsuch team in the open air in the Queens Gardens, Croydon to entertain the public.

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery - “Matthew Boulton Bi-centenary Exhibition Launch” – Nonsuch Company performed and taught dances from the Regency period.

Old Spitalfields Market, London - “A celebration for St Georges Day”.

The Royal Shakespeare Company - “Strictly Tudor Dancing” with cast members of the RSC in Stratford-Upon-Avon.

Move It Dance Festival 2005 to 2012, London - “Nonsuch annually provide classes and demonstration dances exploring different historical periods”.

To discuss your requirements further please contact Jo Bartlett.

For further information on the Nonsuch Dancers and to view video footage of the company in action please visit our website:-

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What organisations say about working with Nonsuch

What were our English dance traditions? What can we learn from history of dances of the past? In the 16th and 17th centuries we were known throughout Europe as “The Dancing English” because of our complex jigging, weaving country dances, and energetic Morris dancing. Yet nowadays we can’t seem to take these traditions seriously. Nonsuch are taking another look at our past dance traditions and recreating them for today. Why not join us, take a look at some of the feedback we received from organisations that have worked with us.

“Thanks so much. You were all fantastic. What audiences! And great participation.”

- Ms I Cornwall-Jones, Schools and Young Audiences Education Manager, British Museum

“Nonsuch was a joy to work with. They went above and beyond what was required throughout the project and behaved with creativity, enthusiasm and professionalism at all times.”

- Ms D Christmas, Croydon Council Arts Development Officer

“I liked the combination of taught dances and pupil involvement. The children thoroughly enjoyed the combination of dance and the opportunity to look at and touch small artefacts.

I hope we will be able to have you back in school on a future occasion so that many more children can benefit from your enthusiasm and expertise.” - Ashford Church of England School

“The value in terms of an experience that is highly educational cannot have a figure put on it”

- Mrs F Dawkins, Chipping Norton Community Arts Coordinator

“The Company is flexible, understanding, friendly, helpful and easy to deal with. The content was extremely well constructed and the interests and knowledge of the audience were carefully considered. It was a pleasure working with Nonsuch and I’d be delighted if we could have the opportunity to do so again.”

- Mrs A Cox, Friends of Kenwood

