

**NEWS RELEASE EMBARGOED UNTIL Tuesday 19 January 2021, 10am**

**#LoveDanceScotland Commissions award £70K to two independent dance companies**

**Three leading dance organisations in Scotland have collaborated for the Commissions, created to help sustain Scottish-based independent dance artists during the coronavirus pandemic.**

1. **The artists selected for the commission are Shotput who will debut *Totentanz,* a playful live performance and photography project, and FRAN.K who will present the durational film installation *Living in the Space Between.***
2. **The Commissions will enable a step-change in the career of the artists and employ 33 freelancers across the two projects at a critical moment for the independent dance sector.**
3. **The Commissions are supported through the Scottish Government’s Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund and they aim to reconnect artists, audiences, venues and communities and to celebrate the dynamism of dance in Scotland, and the diverse array of voices that make it what it is.**

**Dance Base Scotland, Dundee Rep Theatre and Scottish Dance Theatre & Tramway, Glasgow have today announced (Tuesday 19 January 2021) the artists selected for their new #LoveDanceScotland Commissions.** It is the first time that the three organizations have come together as commissioning partners and pooled together their expertise and resources to support independent artists.The commissions have awarded £35K respectively to Shotput and FRAN.K as well as a substantial in-kind support package from the venue partners. The other five shortlisted artists were given £1K each to further develop their practice.

**#LoveDanceScotland is a campaign created to showcase and celebrate dance in Scotland highlighting the benefits not just to dance artists and performers but to the wider community.** The campaign emerged from the desire of many dance organisations in Scotland to collaborate more closely in response to the challenges experienced by the performing arts in Scotland and to highlight the need for support to ensure the sector’s survival.

***Living In The Space Between* by FRAN.K is a durational performative video work, hybrid virtual/live club night and immersive dance installation.** Featuring 12 dancers over 9 hours of footage, this show is a representation of the years they have spent dancing in clubs across Scotland & featuring a creative team that they have either met or connected with in these spaces. It places an emphasis on social dance, exploring clubbing in a time of its absence and celebrates dancers from different schools of technique and thought colliding with each other on the floor in a rotating duet with the camera. Resisting traditional dance forms, mimicking our fleeting interactions in the club & shot in a POV perspective that gives the audience an intimate journey through the show and 3 reimagined clubworlds, it is a love letter to this community, a statement, and a record of queer resilience through dance.

**FRAN.K said: “Receiving this commission has opened new avenues and doors for making on a scale I haven't before, and I'm so excited to share the work of this incredible team.”**

Looking at the ugly, unaccommodating, extreme phenomenon of death, ***Totentanz* by Shotput is a new danse macabre for 2021**. Collaborating with a composer, designers, and a photographer, Shotput navigates the line between life and death, existential joy and despair. This is a dark comedy about dying for our plague times, **a manifesto to connect through death rather than be isolated by it.**

**Lucy Ireland and Jim Manganello, Co-Artistic Directors of Shotput said: *“We’re thrilled to be making Totentanz across 2021. And we’re very honoured to have been commissioned through #LoveDanceScotland.*** *This commission allows us to continue innovating our rehearsal and performance methods. It gives us the opportunity to experiment with our expanding ensemble of collaborators and with our relationship to different communities in Scotland. In 2020, death did a fantastic job of isolating us. Now is the time to dance together, to let death enchant our living world.”*

**Morag Deyes, Artistic Director of Dance Base Scotland said:** ***“At the start of lockdown back in March 2020 many of Scotland's key dance organisations gathered in solidarity and created #LoveDanceScotland as a mark of our willingness to share and collaborate in supporting Scotland's dance artists through the incredible challenges everyone was, and still are, facing.***

*In August 2020 three of those organisations, including Dance Base Scotland, received Scottish Government Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund support, and all three committed to use a portion of this money for #LoveDanceScotland Commissions to provide support for artists to remain ambitious, and to put their collective resources at the artists’ disposal.*

*We are delighted to be able to reveal the two successful applications today. As well as supporting these artists to develop their ideas and bring them to audiences, we'll be working with all shortlisted applicants to ensure that there will be a future for other proposals too.*

***The chosen artists reflect so much that is original and unique to our sector and we are eager to experience and share the result.****”*

**Joan Clevillé, Artistic Director of Scottish Dance Theatre said: “*The selection process for the commissions has made manifest the richness and vibrancy of the dance sector in Scotland.*** *The panel was impressed by the boldness and the originality of the applications and we are grateful for the invaluable input from our three external panelists, who brought a rigorous and insightful perspective to the decision-making process.*

***“We are delighted to be working with Shotput and FRAN.K and support them to realise their ideas in a moment of step change in their career.*** *Their projects share an interest in re-connecting with audiences and communities, in gathering us back (sometimes literally!) around the dance floor. The team at Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre are thrilled to be part of this journey with artists and audiences, and to be working in such close partnership with Dance Base Scotland and Tramway."*

**LJ Findlay-Walsh, Senior Performance Curator at Tramway, said: *“It's heartening to think that this period of crisis has presented an opportunity to stop and consider new ways of serving Scotland's dance sector.*** *Tramway was delighted to come together with Scottish dance partners Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre, and Dance Base Scotland, to imagine how we might work more closely together to support Scottish dance artists through the newly formed #LoveDanceScotland initiative.*

***It was a truly invigorating experience working with a panel that included artists Alesandra Seutin, Laura Jones and Seeta Patel, and humbling to engage with the projects of a myriad of innovative Scottish artists.*** *We were particularly impressed with the work of Shotput and FRAN.K, who really centered a community approach in their proposed working, allowing dance to weave both in and out of traditional arts spaces. We look forward to following them and supporting them in their work's future journey.”*

**Councillor David McDonald, Chair of Glasgow Life and Depute Leader of Glasgow City Council, said: *"Scotland's renowned cultural sector like many other sectors has faced huge challenges in the last year.*** *It's encouraging to see fresh approaches to partnership working across the country having positive impact on Scotland's dance sector. The #LoveDanceScotland Commissions strand is important as it centres the development and resilience of artists and creative freelancers while also reconnecting artists and audiences in enriching creative experiences."*

*Commissioned by Dance Base Scotland, Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre & Tramway as part of #LoveDanceScotland. Supported by the Scottish Government’s Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund.*

**Web and social media links:**

**#LoveDanceScotland**

**Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre:** [www.dundeerep.co.uk](http://www.dundeerep.co.uk) | [scottishdancetheatre.com](http://scottishdancetheatre.com) | Twitter: @SDTDance | Insta/fb: @scottishdancetheatre

**Dance Base Scotland:** [www.dancebase.co.uk](http://www.dancebase.co.uk) **|** Twitter: @dancebase | Insta: @dancebase

**Tramway:** [www.tramway.org](http://www.tramway.org) **|** Twitter: @GlasgowTramway | Insta: @GlasgowTramway

**Shotput:** <https://www.shotput.org/> | Twitter: @ShotputTheatre | Insta: @shotputtheatre

**FRAN.K:** <https://www.facebook.com/frankiemulholland> | Insta: @fran.k\_\_\_\_

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

**FRAN.K**

**FRAN.K is a Queer performance artist working with choreography, persona and visual art in club spaces.** Through the mediums of durational based art and cabaret, their work interrogates identity, time, intimacy and dance as a form of healing. Their interests also lie in the intersection of fashion, technology and dance, creating highly striking live art dance work. They believe in the importance of connection and the shared experience of dance we have in club spaces, as a space of sanctuary and protection for queer communities and how dancing and celebrating can be used as a transformative tool and one for healing.

**Shotput**

**Shotput creates dance-theatre that investigates human relationships and the darker corners of contemporary experience.** Founded in 2018, Shotput makes physically and visually rigorous work, rooted in experimentation and collaboration. The company's work includes Untitled Discotheque Project (developed as Accelerator Artist at Imaginate), accompanying podcast The Slow Dance (released in February 2021), and Ferguson and Barton (touring Scotland in autumn 2021). Led by Lucy Ireland, Helen McIntosh, and Jim Manganello, Shotput is actively developing an ensemble of associate artists. The Totentanz team includes photographer Brian Hartley (stillmotion, We Dance, wee groove), composer Cat Myers (KT Tunstall, Mogwai, Honeyblood), and designers Anna Yates (Berberian Sound Studio, Donmar) and Emma Jones (Lament for Sheku Bayoh, NTS).

**Dance Base Scotland**
**Dance Base, Scotland’s National Centre for Dance, exists to encourage and celebrate the potential for dance in everyone.** Providing classes and workshops for the community, masterclasses and residences for professional dancers, and an extensive programme of outreach work, Dance Base strives to inspire wellbeing and creativity, and cultivates a future for dance in local, national and international communities. Dance Base is a Creative Scotland Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO).

Dance Base Scotland is led by Chief Executive Jim Hollington and Artistic Director Morag Deyes MBE.

Throughout the year, the £7m dance facility is usually visited over 50,000 times, for 130+ different classes and workshops. Alongside this, Dance Base’s professional programme exists to support and nurture professional dancers and their work at all levels through classes, workshops, and a programme of residences.

During lockdown, Dance Base moved its dance classes online and from April to August 2020 it offered 275 completely free classes with nearly 6,000 attendances.

More recently Dance Base started to offer paid online courses in five-week blocks, offering participants the chance for progression.

Dance Base has continued to offer its Dance for Parkinson’s Scotland classes and social cafés online, together with Scottish Ballet, as well as creating new digital offerings for families with young children and older adults in care settings.

Staff at Dance Base worked hard to support freelance artists and the dance community throughout the pandemic, many of whom lost all of their work overnight. The organisation honoured contracts and has continued providing new opportunities like rehearsal space and commissions.

**Dundee Rep Theatre and Scottish Dance Theatre**
**The story of Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre is one of its people: its artists, creatives, staff, participants and audiences.** At the cultural heart of Dundee, we create and deliver work for local, national and international audiences, and provide year-round opportunities for learning, performing and sharing in the community. Together our twin ensembles have established a reputation as one of the UK’s leaders in theatre and dance production, a model that makes us unique in the UK, carrying the Dundee brand far and wide.

Working at the forefront of the art form, **Scottish Dance Theatre** collaborates with internationally acclaimed choreographers and artists, supports the development of emerging and home-grown talent and promotes a plurality of voices. With more than 30 years of history, the company has developed a distinctive identity that brings together artistic integrity and social commitment, reaching a wide range of audiences and participants locally, nationally and across the world. **Scottish Dance Theatre** has received multiple awards (including the **Critics’ Circle National Dance Award for Outstanding Company Repertoire**), and has built a strong international profile, becoming Scotland’s flagship dance company and a creative ambassador of Dundee.

**Tramway**

**Tramway is an art space supporting established and emerging artists, both local and international, who focus on experimental and contemporary dance, visual art and performance.** For thirty years Tramway has built a reputation for to its unique performance and exhibition spaces and ambitious and inspiring programming. It is managed by Glasgow Life, a charity that delivers culture and sport on behalf of Glasgow City Council.