

Hip hop dance stars turn out to support Autism with Attitude street dance group

Big names in hip hop, many of them from the highly acclaimed TV show Britain's Got Talent, have signed up to a benefit night for Autism with Attitude street dance group from Hillingdon Manor School.

Boy Blue Entertainment, UMA, Definitive, IMD, Unity and all girl trio Code 3 who were semi-finalists in 2017 have all agreed to perform at the Broadway Theatre in East London on January 20th 2018. "It's a fantastic line-up of mainstream and special needs acts," said their dance teacher Jonathan Baron. "Some of the most influential dance companies out there are lending their support."



Autism with Attitude, a talented and successful street dance group based at the Uxbridge school, have made history by being the first ever special needs dance group to get to United Dance Organisations (UDO) European Championships. This year the championships are being held 11-13 May in Kalkar in Germany.

The organisers are looking at the logistics, finding a local hotel close to the venue and trying to make sure everything is as calm and organised as possible so that the students, who are all on the autistic spectrum, can give of their best.

The first step is to raise money for the trip and Jonathan has been using his industry contacts, networking and taking the students to perform and participate in different events. "This is huge," said Jonathan Baron. "We are taking 12 to 15 young people with autism over to Germany to perform in front of an


international audience. All the artists I have spoken to are really proud of Autism with Attitude and are keen to show their support by giving their time and energy to make the fundraiser a success.”

Some of the students have never been abroad before but they are no stranger to the world of dance performance. They are all highly trained and work hard to build both their physical abilities and their people skills. They know that the staff at Hillingdon Manor School expect them to be ambassadors for autism, showing what young people with disabilities can achieve.

Autism with Attitude have certainly made an impression on the world of hip hop dance and will be meeting some of their idols. “Boy Blue are one of the most renowned companies in the UK,” said Jonathan. “Our students study them for GCSE; now they’re performing on the same bill.”

The performance will take place at 7:00 pm Sat, 20 Jan 2018 at The Broadway, Broadway, Barking, IG11 7LS. Tickets are priced at £13.00 (£9.00 concessions) and can be booked online at <https://www.thebroadwaybarking.com/sales/genres/community/autism-with-attitude-fundraise>

[All this and Jo Brand too](#)

The BETT awards are almost upon us and I can nearly get into my posh frock to join the glitterati at a new venue, the Brewery at the Barbican. This year we are in for a real treat as the awards will be announced by Jo Brand. Even if your company doesn’t win, you are assured of a good night out. I  have been looking down the list of finalists seeing who I would like to see win in some of the key categories. This is a

purely subjective approach. I am not going to support anything which deals with assessment in any form as I now believe that this is just another way to cosh teachers, parents and children into submission and give them an inferiority complex.

There are many shortlisted products that I know and love. I am running two sessions on Audio Notetaker for dyslexia learners on the Sonocent stand C470 on Thursday at 1.30 and Friday at 2pm and they are on the list for the ICT Tools for Learning and Teaching section. I am of course familiar with all the products in the special needs category and I am delighted to see other old friends such as 2Simple, Twig's TigTag, TextHelp and the Yes Programme.

But there are many products which I am less familiar with. Here is my top ten to look out for:

1. For early years one good choice would be Rising Stars Switched on ICT, a step by step approach to get young children using ICT in meaningful ways. I like Rising Stars and have written about some of their other products especially their e books.

2. I like the look of TTS Group's Mini Mobile Phones: 'Children will delight in developing their language using this set of 6 realistic mobile phones. Colour co-ordinated buttons make for easy use.' This will at least stop children using their parents' boring old iPhones. They have also been shortlisted for:

3. The NEW Ultimate Timer, a rechargeable stopwatch with a simple to use, lapsed time function. Anything which saves looking for batteries will be welcome in the classroom.

4. For primary I am going to opt for 3P Learning Reading Eggs a library with over 1,500 eBooks, for specific year groups, as an intervention/catch up tool and to support EAL and SEN requirements

5. Another good choice is Espresso Education – Espresso Coding that teaches students to code and make their own apps to share with their friends and parents. This will help children

develop skills for their future working life which so much of the National Curriculum singularly fails to do.

6. For secondary I am going for English and Media Centre's Arctic Adventure which works on ipads and has authentic video material, images and blogs from the Catlin Arctic Survey.

7. For ICT Tools for Teaching and Learning I like the idea of IGGY ,an online educational and social network for gifted 13-18 year olds from across the world with content for maths, science, history, politics, creative writing and life skills, and a safe environment for students to exchange ideas, debate and learn.



8. It's a pity FlashSticks won't be at BETT because the product looks excellent. It combines low tech post-it notes, foreign language vocabulary and smartphones. The notes are colour coded to help

with gender recall (blue notes for masculine words, pink notes for feminine words) and a Free App channel means users can wave their smartphone or tablet over any note to call up a quick pronunciation video.

9. Visual Education's Wordwall lets teachers make easy learning activities for interactive whiteboards. Apparently you pick a template, type in your content and with a few clicks you're done. Alternatively pinch some ideas from their online community.

10. Finally I am on the look out for good maths resources this year so I am hoping that Jumpido will do the trick. It is billed as: 'an exciting series of educational games for primary school. It combines natural body exercises with engaging math problems to make learning a truly enjoyable experience.'

If your product is in the running for an award, good luck. If not, then just enjoy the entertainment. I am sure Jo Brand will be very good value.

How times have changed



A comparison of grants and costs in 1970 and 2010

A level results are out today and thousands of students will be finding out if they are going to university this year, so I was especially pleased to get this lovely graphic from Kieran Elsby at Prezzybox <http://www.prezzybox.com>.

We now have twice the number of universities but have nearly three times as many students dropping out and graduates are considerably less likely to get a job in 2013 than they were in 1973.

If they were smokers, the average graduate salary then would buy them 7407 packets of fags in 1973. These days it will only buy 2491 packets. Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer appreciate just how much tax he is losing?

Simple technology makes maths more fun for bright students

Former investment banker turned teacher Narsh Srikanthapalan has been teaching gifted and talented pupils at Caludon Castle

School in Coventry. He still spends a lot of time on spreadsheets but he also exploits all the facilities of interactive whiteboard software too, “We have Promethean interactive whiteboards and I like using the ActivInspire software. I probably use this more than other staff in the school.”



Maths at Caludon
Castle School

For a lesson on rotation he took the theme of Caludon Castle and the pupils made a drawbridge over a moat. They played with rotation and came to realise that if you put the centre of rotation in the wrong place, the drawbridge doesn't just lift up, it twirls like a baton. So it was back to the drawing board and pupils had to find their own solutions.

Similarly he created a cops and robbers game, “I told them that I was PC Srikanthapalan and I was chasing a robber across a field. I had a green rectangle which represented the grass and as I started to ‘follow’ the robber the pupils realised that I could only move horizontally and vertically, not diagonally. The more able students started to ponder issues of programming here.”

He believes that pupils prefer teachers to use interactive whiteboards as it improves the presentation of lessons. Resources can be prepared in advance, are clear and easy to read, can be edited and look professional. He finds that some members of the class will ask to come up to the board to show what they have done as they find it easier than using words to explain concepts and methods. This means that more able pupils can share their knowledge and ideas with others in the class in a very immediate visual way.

He thinks one of the hooks for teachers is that technology improves classroom management. Interactive whiteboard software

has virtual versions of the tools pupils are using, such as compasses and protractors so a teacher can demonstrate how to use these instead of showing each individual pupil. The whiteboard also means a teacher can keep eye contact with the class instead of turning away to write on a board. This year Caludon Castle has introduced a computerised random name generator to choose who will answer questions. It has been very effective for keeping pupils attentive. Since no one knows who will be chosen, it stops pupils drifting off. Now pupils only put their hand up if they want to ask a question.

National Schools Film and Animation Awards 2010



A firm but fair
chair of judges

Children's TV presenter Lady Floella Benjamin is a superstar. She is also a great chair of judges as I discovered yesterday at the Bli National Schools Film and Animation Awards 2010 in Sheffield where a group of educators and journalists spent the day looking at over 40 shortlisted entries covering all the key stages.

We saw reworkings of familiar stories such as the Three Little Pigs and Tell Tale Heart, several pieces on internet safety and lots of entries focusing on environmental issues. There were some strong issues-based pieces covering teenage pregnancy, under age drinking and life in the run down areas found in so many cities in Britain. These would not have looked out of place on Channel 4 and were highly polished

productions which avoided the sanctimonious preaching tone often associated with teenage documentaries. Other pieces were very school based and provided a little affectionate mockery of teachers, their habits and mannerisms.

As judges, we learned a lot about film making and animation as we got a crash course in what works and what doesn't. You could see where entries were under-rehearsed or needed editing. It was obvious where technology dominated and the focus or storyline had become obscured. We talked about everything from the colour of titles to the use of camera angles and sound effects.

Floella is passionate about encouraging children to be creative but she is also a stern critic," 'Good enough' is just not good enough. They should be aiming for the best," she said of one entry. But she was also quick to point out where pupils had conveyed a story or communicated to their audience particularly effectively.

The results of the awards will be announced early in 2011 but you can be certain that whatever form the ceremonies and celebrations take, Floella Benjamin will be there, sharing her passion for creativity and encouraging children to try that little bit harder to be the very best that they can be.

<http://www.floellabenjamin.com/>

[4 Nations, 1 Challenge](#)



Have you got at least 20 good mathematicians in your school? if so, you might like to have a go at The Four Nations Maths

Challenge. This is the UK's biggest ever online maths event and runs from 8th -12th November as a prelude to the international World Maths Day.

There are two parts to the contest: Live Mathletics, a competitive 60 second mental arithmetic challenge and Curriculum Mathletics which has questions allied to concepts and topics from the UK curriculum.

The contest is run via 3P Learning's award winning learning platform Mathletics and is open to pupils of all ages and stages of maths learning. With trophies, medals and certificates this is turning into a sporting tournament and who knows, come 2012 we might have a Maths Olympics too!

To get the whole story go to: <http://www.fournationsmathschallenge.co.uk/>

[Magic Moments in the Maths Classroom](#)



If you want to get pupils interested in maths, your interactive whiteboard is one way of bringing a little magic into the classroom. And how about using Magic Squares? This handy example is from Matthew Reames, a teacher at St Edmunds in Canterbury. He has developed an Excel workbook with a host of different magic square examples. He has used a blank magic square with numbers 1-9. This encourages lots of predictions and questions and gets pupils thinking about why numbers need to be in certain positions. Here is a simple example. Copy it into an Excel file and have a go. Good Luck!

Selling Widnes to Europe

✘ I have just been interviewing Dawn Coupar, a languages teacher at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College in Widnes for gifted and talented article. She ran a great Apprentice style event in the summer term for K3 pupils who were studying French and German. They had to use their language skills to sell Widnes to a European company looking to set up an office in the UK. I don't know what I am more impressed by –the language skills or the persuasiveness. I was born in Widnes and although it has its points, it would be hard pressed to rival the delights of Liverpool, Sheffield or Birmingham but these talented young people found lots of good arguments about location, facilities and local skills and then created podcasts with scrolling pictures to extol the virtues of their home town. Good effort all round.