

## **Dance and disability in the UK**

**Stine Nilsen (Candoco), Emma Gladstone (Dance Umbrella), Caroline Bowditch (Dance / Choreographer) and Claire Cunningham (Dancer / Choreographer) explore the excellent work of British disabled-led dance companies, including world-renowned Candoco Dance Company.**

**One of a series of five short films, capturing the thoughts and experiences of key people from the arts sector and exploring the framework that is enabling UK disabled artists to flourish.**

**A film commissioned by the British Council.**

### **Emma Gladstone**

It's an interesting time I think for dance.

### **Stine Nilsen**

In terms of driving the art form forward I really believe that having dancers with different physical starting points really opens up new doors. Diversity can make the art richer – how it can bring out different ways of moving.

### **Emma Gladstone**

It's a very powerful thing, to challenge people's perceptions.

### **Caroline Bowditch**

It's about working towards excellence.

It's about working within that rigour.

It's about making ourselves, the industry, the best that it possibly can be.

### **Emma Gladstone**

As a country we are leading, certainly within Western Europe and arguably I think in an international scene of a more inclusive way of looking at the possibilities of the body and dance is particularly good at that because it allows you to look at the body in a different way and what the beauty of the body is.

### **Stine Nilsen**

Candoco is the world's leading dance company of disabled and non-disabled dancers.

We work with really experienced choreographers to present artwork, dance work that really brings out the skills and really is bold and exciting and

challenges what people expect to see in dance, who can dance and how it's delivered.

### **Claire Cunningham**

While there's still big issues in terms of the UK of making community arts inclusive and acceptable for disabled people and really accessible, those things don't exist in a lot of other countries.

### **Stine Nilsen**

Alongside the performances we do a lot of learning works, so workshops from development for disabled artists, non-disabled artists and through all of this – through, through the work we do – we really hope that that advocates for changing people's perceptions of disability, maybe of what our expectations are.

### **Emma Gladstone**

Dance Umbrella is London's international dance festival and we're all about 21<sup>st</sup> century choreography.

We take place in October every year across London.

I'm not linked to a particular style; you know, I've got hip hop, I've got flamenco, I've got ice skaters, I've got a company that are working with mentally disabled performers; I've got work for children, I've got you know, it's like, I enjoy that range.

### **Stine Nilsen**

It's a good sign of people's thinking going beyond the immediate physical to looking at the art and the content of what's being said or being made.

### **Emma Gladstone**

It's growing up as an art form...dance, I think, and I'm excited by where we're going.