Aim
Scottish Dance Theatre is a model of excellence for the quality and depth of our international engagement.

Priorities
Develop a holistic, longer-term programme of activity that enables the company to engage in deeper and more meaningful relations with carefully selected overseas artists, companies, and producers, to reach new audiences, and to diversify sources of income.
“The artist is really the advance guard of society, a forerunner of a new way to look at reality”

Veenapani Chawla (1949-2014)

The Blinding Light tour was an incredible experience for all artists and technical team members of Scottish Dance Theatre; an uninterrupted, two month absorption of luminous creativity. The total experience of the tour changed our perceptions, deepened our knowledge and our relationships to our practice and each other. The transformative nature of this tour has already seen fruition in the company ethos and practice, and crucially, has increased the success of our relationship with our audiences – domestic and otherwise – meaning that in a very real sense, all our audiences benefit from this tour, whatever their location.

The conjoining of two significant country-wide tours gave the company a privileged perspective on two starkly different Asian cultures, and allowed both introspection and the growth of a more worldly perspective – helpful knowledge for any artist and producing company. If the role of an artist is simultaneously inside and outside culture; inside so as to craft a specialism that can articulate and shine light; and outside so as to pass comment, resist institutionalisation and foster never-ending growth; the artist must constantly displace to know other worlds, other possibilities, other realities. Even in the midst of this Information Age, Asia remains wholly other to our domestic culture and the Blinding Light tour made connections – practical and conceptual – that become pathways for future endeavours with individuals and organisations on the ground in this important continent.

Most significantly, the tour demonstrated the viability of international touring as a generator of bigger audiences, and the opportunity to develop significant artistic exchange with audiences, partners, peer artists and agencies. The enormity of the market for the company in these territories, and its apparent eagerness to engage, shows the importance of committing to these markets as an artistic priority and business strategy. On a theoretical level, the company already knew these countries were an untapped market, but sitting in full houses in theatres in Delhi or Beijing was a visceral experience of the size of audiences we can reach when beyond our domestic scale. Dance travels. The potential is excitingly limitless.
The *Blinding Light* tour made sense of Scottish Dance Theatre’s ensemble model. The company became extremely close and the tour turned colleagues into community. We were a very successful team on the road. Injuries were infrequent but handled in-house as the company re-divided performing responsibilities. The purpose of art is to bring people together and when the practice of art brings its makers closer, the company perform better, and audiences connect to this palpable sense of family. This peripatetic building of community increased job satisfaction within the company and has lead to 100% dancer retention beyond this season (with the exception of one dancer who is retiring).

Touring with partners like British Council leads to far greater audiences than we could reach and their networks and involvement in presentations introduced us to many new audiences. The appetite for work from Scotland is huge.

Contemporary dance is an international pursuit, the form transcends language and dancers travel to train and perform. By the nature of their practice, dance artists are international and innovative. Dance remains a live experience which necessitates travelling to meet audiences. And, displacing formulas and orthodoxy, the form thrives by overthrowing the dominant and following new pathways of dance expression.

Artistically, the tour enriched the company’s practice through regular exposure to large audiences – the work grew from each performance. The artistic team grew as teachers and facilitators of the art form and significantly deepened our public profile as educators and innovators. In India, our educational residencies with grass roots organisations including AdiShakti, Attakalari and Ranan saw the company share its expertise with peer professionals, vocational dance students, and rural communities with little or no exposure to contemporary dance.

The China leg of the tour was most notable for our 4 performances of our children’s show at the Shanghai Children’s Art Theatre – each show selling 600 tickets. Further proof of the size of international audiences for us.

**Fleur Darkin**

*Artistic Director*
India
Performances
The company performed in four Indian cities during the tour, all with the following repertoire:

**Winter, Again**

*Choreographed by Jo Strømgren*

Radical Norwegian choreographer Jo Strømgren mixes beautifully poised dance with all means necessary to tell the story of a community struggling to hide their dark misdemeanours under winter’s snowy blanket. Punctuated with the devastatingly fragile songs of Schubert’s *Eine Winterreise*, Scottish Dance Theatre takes us on a journey through the cycle of the coldest, darkest season. A renowned choreographer, director and playwright, Jo’s work is sculpted by an attitude to dance that is wild and rigorous.

“Magical, transforming and unifying power of music and dance.” *The Telegraph (Metro) Kolkata*

“Dramatic, grotesque, bleakly comic and delivered with theatrical and technical prowess.” ★★★★ *The Herald, Scotland*

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**Revelator**

*Choreographed by Ruth Janssen*

Janssen’s powerfully intimate duet reveals the frailties and the absurdities of humans as they pursue enduring relationships through the seasons of life. Drawing on her extensive career as a dancer, Janssen presents delicate moments and subtle gestures that build to a graceful and effective emotional whole.

“leaving the spectators mesmerised.” *Hindustan Times Kolkata*

“Ruth Janssen’s dancing has the depth of poetry.” *The Stage*

Oguike is “one of the brightest hopes of British Contemporary dance.” *The Daily Telegraph*

Expect “thrilling musicality.” *The Herald* and “fierce precision.” *The Observer*
“simply outstanding... make for a spectacular view.” *Deccan Herald*

“Flawless, visually stunning and impeccable performances.” *Metrolife*

“Enthralling experience and left me wanting more.” *Metrolife*

**In This Storm**

**Choreographed by Henri Oguike**

Edinburgh International Festival 2013 commissioned Henri Oguike to make the original, shorter version of this piece, which received great critical acclaim and was described by *The Guardian* as “a turbulent clamour of bells, voices and drums, which Oguike translates into layers of urgently questioning gestures and roiling, combative moves.” ****

Exploring the meeting point between cultures, Henri Oguike creates a brand new work for Scottish Dance Theatre’s powerful dancers. *In This Storm* sees Oguike draw from his intense musicality to create a work of exquisite mystery that pushes the dancers to achieve a balance between speed, tenderness and an earthiness, almost tribal in nature.

“Power packed performance.”

“Pathos of winter was depicted marvellously.”

“Awe-struck by the visual spectacle.” *The Times Delhi*

“Swelling audience... dance of a spellbinding quality.”

“Dancing figures... pure passion and absolute control.” *The Telegraph*
Venues

**Chennai**
1st October 2014, 7.00pm
Sir Mutha Venkata Subba Rao and Lady Andal Concert Hall

Audience of 1,100

Twitter comment:
@SDTDance Fantabulous P’rfmance in Chennai Folks! Destined to C u Scintillating Scottish Folks again in B’lore! Such has Been ur Movements!

**Bangalore**
5th October 2014, 7.00pm
Chowdiah Memorial Hall

Audience of 1,000

Twitter comment:
@Masoomiyat
@SDTDance You guys were amazing tonight! #Bangalore is in awe.

India audience numbers

- Chennai: 1100
- Bangalore: 1000
- Delhi: 1400
- Kolkata: 1000
- Total: 4500
Delhi
8th October 2014, 7.00pm
Siri Fort Auditorium,
Asian Village Games Complex
Audience of 1,400

Twitter comments:
British Council
@BCScotland ‘Blown Away by Talent here’.
Congratulations to everyone involved with the
@SDTDance performance in India
@RobLynes
Congratulations to Scottish Dance Theatre on a
wonderful performance in Delhi on Wednesday
as part of their India tour. @inBritish #dance

Kolkata
11th October 2014, 7.00pm
Kala Mandir
Audience of 1,000

Twitter comments:
@VidushiKhera
Back where time stops for you to breathe in
beauty... watching Forces of Nature by Scottish
Dance Theatre
@SophiaSolanki
#ScottishDanceTheatre’s Revealator and In This
Storm compositions are breathtakingly beautiful!
“Moved by the fantastic #ScottishDanceTheatre @SDTDance. Do catch them while they tour India.” @SHUPTAPAU via Twitter

@SDTDance pure brilliance. Great evening. @Hockapop

@SDTDance wows #Bangalore dance aficionados by superbly choreographed contemporary works – next Delhi and Kolkata @UKinIndia @inBritish @FairbairnJudith

@SDTDance Fantabulous Prformance in Chennai Folks! Destined to C u Scintillating Scottish Folks again in B'lore! Such has Been ur Movements! @praveentd @BCScotland ‘Blown Away by Talent here’. Congratulations to everyone involved with the @SDTDance performance in India British Council @RobLynes

Congratulations to Scottish Dance Theatre on a wonderful performance in Delhi on Wednesday as part of their India tour. @inBritish #dance @Masoomyat

@SDTDance You guys were amazing tonight! #Bangalore is in awe. @Masoomyat

Facebook

Observations: Our social media during the India leg of the current tour resulted in a huge increase of Indian Facebook followers, 212 in 1 month, more than double our usual monthly subscription.
MILES TRAVELLED

Dundee to Chennai 5215
Chennai to Bangalore 181
Bangalore to Delhi 1083
Delhi to Kolkata 812
Kolkata to Dalian 2259
Fireworks and Insight

"Once again, a heartfelt thank you to Scottish Dance Theatre from Ranan for the wonderful engagements we have shared over the past ten days. I look forward to discussing more and deeper possibilities with you for the future, and to speaking with you about individual practice which you had touched on while we drove back yesterday.”  

Vikram Iyengar, Ranan

Dawn Hartley, Scottish Dance Theatre’s Head of Creative Learning reflects on an extensive programme of activities that involved the entire company:

Organised by the Prakiti Foundation, which was founded in 1998 to play a leading role in the changing face of Chennai culture, the company delivered a series of workshops.

We delivered 8 workshops for experienced dancers and also at orphanages.

These workshops were all well received and many participants came to the performance.

These included some inspiring sessions for staff and pupils at Vidya Sagar, a school for young people with additional support needs (ASN).

In Kolkata our partners included Ranan, a performance company working in production creation, dancer training and partnership programmes. They programmed three dance workshops for Akshar School working with pupils with and without ASN. We all found this an interesting model to integrate abilities that could be replicated in Scotland more often.

At Ranan’s base, we participated in an Adda – a meeting with fellow dancers – an interesting event to exchange ideas and debate approach.

We were treated to a fantastic demonstration of Bharata Natyam, Kathak and Odissi dance through their fundamental movements and gained an insight into Bharata Natyam.

One of the Bharata Natyam teachers pointed out that “…There is no place for the individual’s translation – the dancer is part of the world and if s/he is in the wrong place, the universe is out of alignment”. This is very different to Scottish Dance Theatre’s approach where the contemporary choreographers we work with begin with a request to our dancers to explore their own movement. It proved fascinating to discuss these different approaches.

Ranan also supported our work in the Sunderbans, a large natural area of Bengal, that is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There we worked with 35 participants aged 12 – 18 yrs in the outside school playground for 10 days.

“Thank you for such wonderful experiences and your generous sharing.” Dana Roy, Ranan
Our aim of this extended period of time was to empower the participants to develop their choreography through tasks that gradually drew out their creativity. Together we made a sharing of work for their families to be performed on the last day, which was incredibly well received by all who attended.

“It was one week, out of two months which validated the entire India and China tour for me. It was a boat trip under the stars and the 5am wakeup call as the local elders sang their prayers past our window. A communication black spot to the outside world. An hour of laughter and serenity as we bounced in the back of the tuk-tuk to our school. Scores of children, with boundless energy and optimism. You speak English? It didn’t matter... we shared our morning warm up dance, through the language of dance. We created together, we laughed, pulled out all the tricks to communicate, baked under the sun and performed on concrete. We interpreted to interpreters. It was hard and it was tiring, but we achieved a journey with those young adults. One young man was taking his experience with him to his local village (an island a good distance away) and teaching them all what he was learning. We rippled. It was a shock coming back to the city. It was inspiring to see children with so little materially have such rich and generous spirits. It was a week to treasure, full of energy, colour and generosity. We shared our knowledge and they shared theirs.”

Naomi Murray, Dancer, Scottish Dance Theatre

“I was pretty nervous before coming here, but all of it went away the moment Dawn Ma’am started talking to us. All the warmth and cheer and liveliness and joy in her made me feel super comfortable. It was awesome and amazing. Now I came to know that contemporary dance isn't about learning up steps but expressing your feelings and emotions through movements. Thank you so much. It was amazing. Best of luck for your show tomorrow! :) I'll be there for sure.” Anmol Bharuka, MBWA
In the middle of the tour some of the company were in residence with Adishakti, a laboratory for theatre arts and research, located on a compound on the outskirts of Pondicherry. Fleur Darkin, Scottish Dance Theatre’s Artistic Director reflects on the experience:

The Adishakti residency was a trial of a new way of working. The company’s usual method is to create a product in Dundee that we subsequently tour. The basis of the Adishakti residency was to begin exploring ways of co-authoring rehearsal methods with a view to long-term collaboration that would generate in India and Scotland, in partnership with this highly-acclaimed theatre company.

The residency took place in Adishakti’s compound, a purpose-built, secluded campus outside Pondicherry, which contains living facilities, a theatre and outdoor rehearsal rooms and live-in practitioner-performers who make up the ensemble.

Veenapani Chawla was Artistic Director of the company. Due to her illness the collaborating companies were less able to talk of the future – we focused on exchanging sensibilities; we both taught each other and shared our differing yet connected practices. This was a very successful interchange.

The sharing of sensibilities allowed us to understand our practice as a philosophical discipline and spiritual exercise. As Artistic Director I am developing an understanding of our role in relation to Scotland: if we consider Adishakti as a contemporary theatre expression that draws inspiration from ancient Indian theatre technologies, then surely Scottish Dance Theatre’s role is to explore the ancient rites of Scotland, not to perpetuate clichés or hoary notions of nationhood as an exclusive, bagpipe-blowing parody of itself, but in forming a cultural specificity to our dance that understands itself as an iteration of a longer history, a connecting bridge between different cultures, and, most importantly, recognises that culture is a living organism and belongs to the people.

“We were welcomed warmly in Adishakti. It was a very special experience to see this place that is so driven by its vision. The breath work we undertook was very interesting. It contained about 7–9 emotional elements (sadness, satisfaction, happiness...), all of which were approached from breathing practice. We had the opportunity to teach and share our practice while we were there, which was a pleasure. They were open and beautiful movers.”

Aya Steigman, Dancer, Scottish Dance Theatre
## India Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vidya Sagar Staff Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vidya Sagar Youth Session</td>
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<td>Academy of Modern Danse</td>
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<td>Swingers Dance School</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Studio for Dance Youth</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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China
Performances

In China we performed our triple bill of *Winter Again*, *Revelator* and *In This Storm* and our children's show *What on Earth!?* at the incredible Shanghai Children's Art Theatre.

**What on Earth!?**

*Choreographed by Janet Smith, Sally Owen and Scottish Dance Theatre company members*

Scottish Dance Theatre presents a work specifically designed for young people aged 5+ and their adults. Combining dance theatre and animation *What on Earth!?* takes you on a curious nocturnal journey full of surprise encounters with strange flora and fauna.

This dynamic and playful adventure, with generous helpings of music, dance and animated worlds, creates a brilliant experience for all the family.

We invite you into a world of dreams about planet earth, where friendships are made and battles are won and lost.

“Quickly had the young audience in fits of laughter... the multicultural soundtrack alone is a pure joy.”

*The Scotsman*

“Mixes clowning, acrobatics, martial arts and Bollywood Elan with the company’s signature quality and theatrical flair.”

*The Herald*
China Performances

Dalian
24th October 2014, 7.00pm
The Grand Theatre
Audience of 250

Shanghai
31st October 2014, 1.30pm & 7.30pm
and 1st November 2014, 1.30pm & 7pm
Shanghai Children’s Art Theatre
Audience of 2400

MILES TRAVELLED
Kolkata to Dalian 2259
Dalian to Shanghai 532
Shanghai to Beijing 664
Beijing to Xiamen 1071
Xiamen to Dundee 5884
**Beijing**

8th & 9th November 2014, 7.30pm

National Centre for the Performing Arts

**Audience of 1,400**

**Xiamen**

12th & 3th November 2014, 7.30pm

Banlam Grand Theatre

**Audience of 500**

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**China audience numbers**

Dalian 250  
Shanghai 2400  
Beijing NCPA 800  
Beijing NCPA 600  
Xiamen 250  
Xiamen 250  
**Total 4550**
The full support of all the staff of Shanghai Children’s Art Theatre made our performances of *What On Earth!* extra special. The staff decorated the theatre foyer and had a great range of additional activities before and after the shows. We delivered onstage pre and post show activities which gave our dancers additional ‘up-close and personal’ moments with the children (including informal photo shoots!). Dancers also delivered workshops at the International School, which were well received by all.
“At the Beijing Foreign Studies University the company delivered two activities: a workshop with a large group of students and some of Beijing’s contemporary dance artists, and a lecture demonstration for a large audience, which deconstructed the touring show and gave insights into our methods of making and performing.

The British Council did an excellent job here in facilitating, translating and framing these activities and the commitment of British Council, Wu promotions and the University itself meant that we interacted with a significantly large and well informed student body and shared cultural ideas and methods. The workshops were very well received and it was apparent that conceptual exchange had worked and brought all involved to a shared viewpoint on the work of Scottish Dance Theatre. In particular it created space for reflection and refinement of making methods for contemporary dance as a whole, in whichever country it is practised.”

Fleur Darkin
Artistic Director
Tour Finances

Total India costs budgeted at £124,000
British Council India contributed £47,000
Corporate sponsorship, including The Hindu, of £34,000

Total China costs budgeted at £176,000
British Council China contributed £25,000

Cross Tour Support
Creative Scotland International Fund contributed £40,000 to the entire tour
Scottish Government contributed £7,000 to the entire tour
Future for Scottish Dance Theatre

The success of the Blinding Light tour is a blueprint for further working to partner organisations in Asia and other territories.

This pioneering shape of touring creates the opportunity to create a culturally specific way of working in Dundee which pioneers a form that is singular, recognisably original and consistently excellent in the hearts and minds of audiences across the world, and recognises that our market is international.

The infrastructure needed to underpin this pioneering way of touring is fourfold:

1 Partners in each country are critical;
2 Seed funding is critical. The yields are significant but touring is a front-loaded expenditure model;
3 Artistic partnerships take time and care – they cannot be short-circuited or circumnavigated;

And most importantly:
4 It requires leadership to develop a ‘whole team’ approach that is open to exchange and meets both the challenge and opportunity that working internationally, and with other cultures, represents. Our epic India and China adventure moved that forward considerably.

So what is next?

We continue to work with our many strategic stakeholders to develop a series of future international opportunities. The Blinding Light Tour made the benefits of sustained international working explicitly clear. There is significant opportunity to export talent ‘Made in Dundee’ to growing markets overseas. This combined with the important benefits of cultural exchange, at an exciting time of growth for Scottish Dance Theatre and Dundee, makes an important proposition for our future. As 2015 continues apace we look ahead to our next exciting partnership, building links and opportunities with artistic organisations and venues in Mexico beginning with an extensive tour later this year.