



## THE TALENT HOUSE: FIRST-LOOK IMAGES REVEALED

### EAST LONDON DANCE AND UD'S VIBRANT NEW CREATIVE HUB IN THE HEART OF STRATFORD'S SUGAR HOUSE ISLAND OPENING THIS AUTUMN



**Thursday 25 March 2021:** To mark the lease completion and start of our fit-out, East London Dance and UD are delighted to reveal first-look images of The Talent House, a vibrant new creative hub on Sugar House Island in Stratford that will bring the two organisations together under one roof.

With high-performance professional facilities spanning across three floors housed in a historic warehouse with a modern extension, The Talent House is purpose-built to facilitate and encourage the passions and aspirations of dance and music artists, supporting young people and local communities on every step of their creative journey.

Designed by Waugh Thistleton with internal design by award-winning architect Katy Marks, from Citizens Design Bureau, and located within a new development by Vastint UK, the building comprises two dance studios, five music production/recording studios, a live room and two vocal booths, a large flexible rehearsal/events space and a tech lab for education and training. The design brief also includes a shared area for building users and members, including a canteen and co-working space, and a central atrium functioning as the main reception of The Talent House and as a space for dance jams and informal gigs.

This new permanent home will enable East London Dance and UD, long-standing champions of the next generation of artists, entrepreneurs and creative leaders, to support even more outstanding but under-represented talent - developing their skills, nurturing confidence and helping to build careers.

An engine room for creativity, The Talent House will create opportunities for early career and more established dance and music artists to connect with one another, to be inspired and create, as well as encouraging the crosspollination of talent, ideas, conversation and performance between art forms. More than 2,100 hours of free access to the building and its facilities will be made available to locally-based independent artists every year.

With professional rehearsal spaces and digital broadcast capability throughout the building, brand new creations and collaborations from bold, authentic and blazingly contemporary east London dance and music creatives will have a vital launchpad to reach new audiences locally, nationally and internationally.

Opening this autumn for everyone with an interest in expressing themselves through dance and music, from first steps to professional heights, The Talent House aims to welcome more than 12,000 people every year with an inspirational public programme, co-curated with young people, artists and local residents.

The Talent House has been made possible with the support of Arts Council England; Greater London Authority; London Legacy Development Corporation; London Borough of Newham; Vastint UK; Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund, funded by Westfield Stratford City and delivered by Foundation for Future London; London Marathon Charitable Trust; The Linbury Trust; Foyle Foundation; Cockayne – Grants for the Arts & London Community Foundation; and Arts & Culture Impact Fund. East London Dance and UD continue to fundraise for the final £350k to reach the £4.1m target for The Talent House.

Sugar House Island is a balanced, mixed-use development that has been carefully curated in line with Stratford's regeneration as a hotspot for successful, forward-thinking creative businesses and communities.

**Polly Risbridger, Chief Executive, East London Dance** said *“East London Dance has been championing and growing east London’s dance scene for over three decades and we’re thrilled to call this incredible new building home and be able to welcome in our local communities. We see a world where creative talent is always met with opportunity, no matter where you come from, and post-pandemic this space will be essential to help the creative community to reconnect, recover and renew their creative endeavours. The Talent House is a building for the young people and artists of east London and their voices will be at the heart of all of our decision making.”*

**Pamela McCormick, Director, UD** said: *“All are welcome at our home, a state-of-the-art new building called The Talent House, at 3 Sugar House Lane in Stratford. At UD, we understand that young people need the resources and space to create and explore their potential. The Talent House provides just that while UD continues to empower those trying to make it in the music industry to realise they already belong, while equipping those who are breaking through into notoriously competitive creative environments with the tools they need: Excellence, structure, confidence, opportunity and networks.”*

**Katy Marks, Director, Citizens Design Bureau** said: *“We design a lot of spaces for the performing arts, but it is exciting to be designing spaces that are specifically for the creative process, nurturing talent and supporting the next generation of artists. In a post Covid world, this project feels more essential than ever!”*

**Andrew Cobden, Managing Director, Vastint UK** said: *“East London Dance and UD’s arrival in Sugar House Island is a boost both to the development and local community – putting the spotlight on east London as a creative and collaborative area to live and work. Sugar House Island is forming a distinct, new community with people at its heart. East London Dance and UD will play a key role in building this community as they continue to inspire thousands of young people.”*

**East London Dance Youth Advisory Board member** said: *“This building sounds like somewhere that I will want to go – and will give me a chance to meet professionals and follow my dream of becoming a dancer.”*

**Amahla, singer songwriter and UD alumna** said: *“There is so much talent coming out of the UK but not enough spaces for young people to experiment and develop before they are swept up in success. Having a space to meet, connect, rehearse, create and build a team are integral to every creative’s development, especially for those making music outside of mainstream music education.”*

**Althea Loderick, Chief Executive of Newham Council, said:** *“We’re delighted that The Talent House will be opening in Stratford later this year. I’ve long been familiar with East London Dance’s brilliant work but it’s especially good that UD is returning to the borough where they started way back in 2000. In providing educational and vocational opportunities to the young people of our borough, this exciting and ambitious new venture will inspire new generations of entrants into the*

*creative industries. It's been an extremely challenging year for the arts, of course, so The Talent House represents shining new hope for the future."*

**Tonya Nelson, Area Director, London, Arts Council England said:** *"I want to congratulate East London Dance and UD for their move to The Talent House this summer. Fostering creativity is as crucial as ever and I am pleased that funding from the Arts Council is enabling investment in long-term space for artists, regardless of their background, to develop their career and creative skills. Places like The Talent House, that bring London's diverse cultures together to connect them to new audiences and opportunities are vital for the continued success of London's creative industries."*

**Sarah Nelson, Director of Programmes and Communications, Foundation for Future London said:** *"Foundation for Future London's grant to UD and East London Dance's new Talent House build and programme is the biggest investment we've made from our new Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund, supported generously by Westfield Stratford City. The grant signals our commitment to diversity, inclusion and access in dance and music talent development and creative sector growth in east London. We believe that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, emerging local talent and community businesses deserve a chance to be nurtured and to flourish in London's fastest growing new cultural district, along with East Bank and other Olympic Park developments. We want them to benefit and be part of the exciting changes taking place, and we are confident The Talent House will offer an inclusive creative learning and educational space for decades to come."*

## **Notes to Editors**

[Press images can be downloaded here.](#)

### **Press contacts:**

For East London Dance - Ben Stanley: [ben.stanley@eastlondondance.org](mailto:ben.stanley@eastlondondance.org)

For UD - Chloe Longstaff: [chloe@canoeinc.com](mailto:chloe@canoeinc.com) / 07870 188838

## **East London Dance**

East London Dance is here to champion and grow the east London dance scene.

Our doors are open to all, from those with a budding passion for movement, to those who go on to lead professional dance companies. 60% of the people we engage with are amongst those least likely to engage in the arts.

We are a catalyst for creativity - for dance artists, producers, and for their careers. We are passionate about connecting creativity to opportunities and creating pathways, particularly where they're lacking or don't currently exist. Each year we provide artistic and business investment and support to over 100 local artists and producers. Throughout our history we have launched the careers of many successful artists, choreographers and companies.

We build vibrant creative communities and connect them to the broader cultural sector by collaborating locally, nationally and internationally. Through our participation and training programmes we offer opportunities for people of all ages to get dancing and perform in a raft of styles including hip-hop, contemporary and south east Asian. We embed local creatives as role models within our communities to share valuable life skills and build healthier lives, supporting physical and mental wellbeing. Each year we engage more than 4,200 participants and bring dance to audiences of more than 53,000 people.

We trust in the ambition of others and place the artists and participants we work with at the centre of our decision making. Together we produce boundary-breaking projects and events in unexpected spaces, exploring contemporary themes through dance. It's how we give light to the issues that matter and drive the social impact we and our communities want to see.

[eastlondondance.org](http://eastlondondance.org) [twitter.com/EastLondonDance](https://twitter.com/EastLondonDance)

## **UD**

### UNAPOLOGETIC ABOUT BLACK MUSIC CULTURE

UD is a London-based music organisation bringing communities together around Black music and Black music culture. With over 20 years of experience in nurturing and supporting Black and culturally diverse artists when they need it most, UD acts as a bridge between burgeoning talent and the music industry.

At UD, we are passionate about excellence, and the potential for excellence in every young person we encounter. Aligning professionalism and business acumen with an understanding of youth and subculture, we run industry-led events, artist development and employment support programmes. Those that have come through our doors can now be found working at institutions including Island Records, Nike, Rinse FM, GRM Daily, Beats and SBTU. Artists we have helped and showcased at early stages of their career include Wretch32, Little Simz, Ghetts, Andriya Triana, Maverick Sabre, Devlin, Labrinth, Skepta and Paigey Cakey.

Since 2000, when UD was co-founded by a group of hip-hop artists, we have understood that young people need the resources and space to create and explore their potential; UD works for a world where young people who make and love Black Music, are recognised as equal to any excellent creative individuals, and are celebrated and supported as such. Whether they're on their first steps into music, just breaking into notoriously competitive creative environments, or about to make it big, we provide the tools they need: Excellence, confidence, structure, opportunity and networks.

United in development, UD stands for you.

[udmusic.org](http://udmusic.org) [twitter.com/udmusicldn](https://twitter.com/udmusicldn)

## **Vastint UK**

Vastint UK is a real estate organisation that creates large-scale, mixed-use neighbourhoods balancing working, living and leisure spaces.

All developments are designed to complement and add long-term value to local communities.

Established in 2010, Vastint UK has schemes in London (Sugar House Island), Leeds (Aire Park and Cardiff (along the Embankment).

Vastint UK is part of the international real estate organisation, Vastint, which has more than 25 years of experience developing and managing properties and commercial real estate. Vastint is active across Europe including in 14 different countries.

[vastint.eu/uk](http://vastint.eu/uk) [twitter.com/vastintuk](https://twitter.com/vastintuk)

## **Citizens Design Bureau**

Citizens Design Bureau is a diverse company of Architects founded by Katy Marks in 2013. Their aim is to make good design beautifully humane - to be used, to be touched, to be wondered at; working with interesting people to make unusual things happen. Their design approach is rigorously practical, sustainable and woven with an ingenuity that reflects the ethos of a building's users at every scale. For a small, emerging practice, they have an unusual range of experience that straddles arts, theatre and community buildings, workspace, housing and conservation. Citizens Design Bureau was recently featured in the Architecture Foundation's book of Britain's best emerging practices of the last ten years and Director Katy Marks was a project Architect for the Stirling prize winning Everyman Theatre in Liverpool (whilst at Haworth Tompkins).

[citizensdesignbureau.net](http://citizensdesignbureau.net)

## **Arts Council England**

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

[artscouncil.org.uk](http://artscouncil.org.uk)

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of several bodies administering the Government's Culture Recovery Fund and unprecedented support package of £1.57 billion for the culture and heritage sector.

[artscouncil.org.uk/covid19](http://artscouncil.org.uk/covid19)

## **Foundation for Future London**

Foundation for Future London is an independent charity created to connect communities, the new East Bank and its globally renowned arts, innovation and cultural partners to ensure East Bank is London's must-visit destination and becomes a resilient, thriving, world-class neighbourhood of local and global significance. We're fundraising to expand grant-making opportunities for East Bank communities and partners and facilitating creative placemaking, to support local places, learning, training and employment through arts, education, culture and innovation. Our vision is for a vibrant and inclusive creative East Bank, creating authentic engagement with local people of East London in the boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

[future.london](http://future.london)

## **Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund**

Westfield East Bank Creative Futures Fund is an ambitious five-year programme that aims to invest £10 million in to local communities of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Waltham Forest. This flagship project will provide new jobs, learning, training and educational programmes through the means of arts, culture, innovation, public realm and creative placemaking. The programme aims to transform and catalyse the lives and careers of people in east London by

putting funding, resources and support straight into local people's hands. The fund is supported by Westfield Stratford City and delivered by Foundation for Future London.

[future.london/programme/westfield-east-bank-creative-futures-fund](http://future.london/programme/westfield-east-bank-creative-futures-fund)

### **Westfield Stratford City**

Westfield Stratford City is London's most popular shopping destination by footfall, located in London's fastest growing area, and now has over 51 million annual customer visits. The centre has been a catalyst for the regeneration of the Stratford area, bringing around a million shoppers every week, as well as jobs, tourism and investment to the local community. As a group, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) has invested over £1.75 billion in Westfield Stratford City with further investment of £670 million on 1,200 new homes in the surrounding area. The Group investment continues to include significant public realm improvements and green space provision, from new pedestrian routes to sustainable open space. This has created environments people want to visit, live and work in – in turn bringing further economic and social benefits.

[uk.westfield.com/stratfordcity](http://uk.westfield.com/stratfordcity)

### **Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park**

Spread across 560 acres of stunning parklands, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is home to beautifully landscaped gardens, historic waterways, famous sporting venues, a vibrant arts and events programme and the ArcelorMittal Orbit visitor attraction.

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park opened in April 2014 following the 18 month transformation programme of the London 2012 Olympic Park. It is now home to six former Olympic and Paralympic venues, the Copper Box Arena, Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre, Lee Valley VeloPark, London Aquatics Centre and London Stadium where visitors can take part in sport, enjoy watching world class athletes compete or experience concerts or arts and culture events. Visitors can also enjoy a birds-eye view of the Park from the two viewing platforms of the ArcelorMittal Orbit, the UK's tallest sculpture, before experiencing an exhilarating ride on The Slide, the world's tallest and longest tunnel slide.

As the new heart of east London, the Park is still transforming and will soon provide future homes, jobs and an unrivalled education and cultural district housing Sadler's Wells, BBC, V&A East, UAL's London College of Fashion and UCL East.

The London Legacy Development Corporation promotes and delivers physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the surrounding area by maximising the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

[queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk](http://queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk)

[twitter.com/noordinarypark](https://twitter.com/noordinarypark)

### **The Arts & Culture Impact Fund**

The Arts & Culture Impact Fund, managed by Arts & Culture Finance, brings together a mix of public, private and philanthropic investors – Arts Council England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Big Society Capital, Bank of America, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Freelands Foundation and Nesta. The fund is the world's biggest impact investment fund for the creative arts and builds on the success of the Arts Impact Fund, a pilot initiative launched in 2015 to demonstrate how impact investment could transform the arts and cultural sector.