



dancing with Isaac

Senate House hosts a spectacular event in which dance and science collide as a finalé to Cambridge University's 800th anniversary celebrations. Sarah Furbank finds out more...

Over the years, the walls of Senate House have witnessed countless graduation ceremonies and tense meetings, but this month, in a first for the city, the historic building will be transformed into a dance hall. Cambridge Contemporary Dance (CCD) are stepping up to play their part in some of the final celebrations of the university's illustrious history, with their stunning show *Light Matter: Celebrating 800 Years of Science Through Art*.

Promising an intoxicating mixture of enigmatic movement, energetic live music and stunning visual effects, the performance will be a powerful celebration of Isaac Newton and his determination in the quest to understand the nature of light. Professional and emerging artists will collaborate in the show on December 4th and 5th to create an ambitious production that transforms Senate House into a majestic arena of performance.

With no physical stage to confine any of the performances, each piece will be composed with the dynamic purpose of filling the space of Senate House. Renowned artists displaying world premieres of their latest works include Vanessa Fenton, of the Royal Ballet, who has won many prestigious awards for her work, including the Kenneth MacMillan Choreographic Award and the Promis Award for Choreography. Visual artist and artist-in-residence at Christ's College,



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Issam Kourbaj will be displaying some of his latest work, as will renowned composer David Earl. The list of impressive attractions goes on, with an encompassing array of new work by CCD as well as potent live choral singing. Perhaps most interestingly, a haunting performance on the theremin – the first electronic musical instrument – will be given by its inventor Leon Theremin’s grand-niece, theremin virtuosa and composer Lydia Kavina.

Although Light Matter may seem an ambitious feat for a non-profit dance company founded only two years ago by Cambridge graduates, CCD has rapidly outgrown any sort of a fledgling

reputation. With a prestigious back catalogue of critically acclaimed works such as 2009’s Experience Dante at Robinson College and 2008’s Impressions at Trinity College, it has established itself as one of Cambridge’s most experienced and innovative collections of contemporary dancers.

Senate House actually kick-started the University’s octocentenary festivities in January, with a specially commissioned piece of light art, featuring iconic images from Cambridge’s prolific history as well as illustrations by Quentin Blake, projected on to the magnificent building. Built in 1722 by architect James Gibb,

Senate House has been used to display class lists every year since its construction. Thus it seems a final transformation of Senate House forms the perfect way to bookend the celebrations of the university’s anniversary.

■ **Light Matter: Celebrating 800 Years of Science Through Art** is performed on Friday 4th December at 7.30pm and on Saturday 5th December at 6pm. Tickets available from www.adc.ticketing.com or on 01223 300085. For more information, visit www.cambridgecontemporarydance.co.uk/lightmatter