

## Mark Smith's Biography

### Choreographer & Artistic Director of Deaf Men Dancing/DMD+



Mark Smith is a freelance Teacher, Workshop Leader, Movement Director, Choreographer & Director. He studied at the Royal Ballet School and Bridget Espinosa's London Studio Centre.

He was one of the five choreographers for the Sadler's Wells production *Shoes*, directed by Stephen Mear and written by Richard Thomas.

Mark choreographed the all male version of Gilbert & Sullivan's *Iolanthe* at The Union Theatre, directed by Sasha Regan. *Iolanthe* (Critic Choice & Time Out's top 10 musicals of 2010) transferred to the Wilton's Music Hall. For this production he was nominated as Best Choreographer in the Off- WestEnd Awards and 2011 Broadway World UK Awards.

He choreographed Graeae Theatre's Rhinestone Rollers' *Wheels On Broadway*, which was performed at Greenwich Dockland + International Festival and Liberty Festival and *Sequin & Snowball*, a Christmas special showcase at Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, London, *Aladdin* with director Steve Marmion at The Lyric Hammersmith, *The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe* with director Dale Rooks at Chichester Festival Youth Theatre and Graeae Theatre's UK tour production of *Reasons To Be Cheerful*, directed by Jenny Sealey MBE. He choreographed Hugh Whitmore's world premiere play *A Marvelous Year for Plums* with director Philip Franks at Chichester Festival Theatre. Mark was delighted to be invited back to choreograph *Noah* with director Dale Rooks for Chichester Festival Youth Theatre as part of CFT's 50th Anniversary.

Also he choreographed *Call Me Madam* at Union Theatre with director Michael Strassen (where he was nominated as Best Choreographer for Off

WestEnd/Broadway World Awards UK 2012), *Die Fledermaus* at Den Norske Opera & Ballett (Oslo Opera House, Norway) with director Laurence Dale, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* at Arts Educational & the workshop of Big Broad's musical *Crush* with director Thom Southerland, *The Boys From Syracuse* at The Union Theatre with director Ben DeWynter, *Marry Me A Little* & *Starting Here, Starting Now* at Chichester University with director Edward Burnside, *Noel Coward's Ace of Clubs* at The Union Theatre with director Jack Thorpe-Baker (Mark was nominated as Best Choreographer for Off-West End/Broadway World UK 2014), *As You Like It* presented by Oxford Shakespeare Company with director Michael Oakley, *101 Dalmatians* at Chichester Festival Theatre with director Dale Rooks, *The Threepenny Opera* presented by Graeae Theatre Company/New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich/ Nottingham Playhouse Theatre Company/Birmingham Repertory Theatre Company/West Yorkshire Playhouse with co-Directors- Jenny Sealey MBE & Peter Rowe, *Carousel* at The Royal Academy of Music with director Ken Casswell and *The Who's Tommy* at Greenwich Theatre with director Michael Strassen.

Mark's biggest moment as a choreographer was *London 2012's Paralympic Opening Ceremony* with co-Artistic Directors – Jenny Sealey and Bradley Hemmings. It was a very exciting once in a lifetime opportunity for him. He is proud to be part of the UK's history event that changed people's perspective of deaf and disabled.

Mark was commissioned by Michael Nunn and Billy Trevitt - Artistic Directors of Ballet Boyz, to choreograph a 3 minutes short film called *My Silent World*, where he collaborated with film director Luke Aherne for Channel 4's Random Acts.

Mark Smith was one of the three artists selected to develop new work with his choice of collaborators to add value to Mark's creative choreography process at Integrated ChoreoLab, co-produced by Pavilion Dance South West/GDance/South East Dance. Mark's company Deaf Men Dancing presented his new work at The Integrated Dance Summit in Bournemouth.

Mark Smith is a founder and artistic director for the all-male dance company, Deaf Men Dancing. DMD had performed at DanceEast's 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Gala,

E4's 'Battlefront', London 2012's Deaf Day, DaDa Disability & Deaf Arts' 'Hands-On' and Candoco's 20th Anniversary Cabaret. DMD have performed and toured *Sense of Freedom* at The Place's Resolution, DaDa South's Up-Stream Showcase at Pavilion Theatre - Brighton Festival, New Wolsey Theatre's Pulse Fringe Festival, City Lit's Deaf Day, Cloud Dance Festival and Clin de'Oeil Deaf Art International Festival in France. Mark Smith received commission from WithoutWalls to direct and choreograph Deaf Men Dancing's outdoor production called *Alive!* with a collaboration with visual artist Rachel Gadsden and it was produced by Greenwich + Dockland International Festival. *Alive!* was performed at the Brighton Festival, Greenwich + Docklands Festival's Dancing City, Stockton International Riverside Festival, Liberty Festival, Watch This Space Festival at National Theatre-South Bank London, Kendal's Minifest Festival-Lakes Alive, Bristol's Harbour Festival and Manchester's Xtrax Festival. DMD was invited by Amanda Cottrell OBE (Chairperson of Visit Kent) & Jeremy Hunt (Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport), to perform *Alive! at Canterbury Cathedral* to mark the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities and DMD's involvement with the Cultural Olympiad. 2014 turned out to be an exciting year for DMD because Mark Smith was commissioned by Greenwich + Dockland International Festival to create DMD's new work called *TEN* that was premiered at National Paralympic Day featuring Mayor of London's Liberty Festival 2014. Also Mark Smith was delighted to be invited by Sadler's Wells Theatre, to premiere DMD's new work called *Hear! Hear!* at =Dance (an all year-round programme of work featuring some long-standing partners and others new to Sadler's Wells' stages). *Hear! Hear!* was the first time that Mark invited a female deaf dancer to perform with male deaf dancers and through this, Mark set up a new company called DMD+. Recently Mark Smith was invited to developed and presented his new work called *The Soundman* at Incloodu Festival and Sadler's Wells' Equation with two new deaf male dancers who will be joining DMD in the future.

