



## **CandoCo's Celeste Dandeker OBE wins two awards at the Critics Circle National Dance Awards**

**Celeste Dandeker OBE**, founder of **CandoCo Dance Company** was presented with the **De Valois Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance** and the **Jane Attenborough Dance UK Industry Award** at the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards on 22 January 2008 at London's Royal Opera House.

Celeste's awards dominated the awards ceremony, on a day where her achievements as a dancer and as Artistic Director of CandoCo Dance Company were recognised by both the dance industry and the critics. Celeste, who retired as Artistic Director in September 2007, says:

*"I'm absolutely thrilled to receive these two wonderful awards and would very much like to thank the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards for honouring me in this way. I am so proud that CandoCo, as the UK's leading professional, contemporary dance company of disabled and non-disabled dancers, has been instrumental in broadening our already rich and diverse dance culture."*

Celeste Dandeker started her career as a dancer with London Contemporary Dance Company. After an accident on stage in 1973, Celeste returned to the world of dance in 1990 when choreographer Darshan Singh Bhuller invited her to dance in a short film. This led to Celeste and Adam Benjamin co-founding CandoCo Dance Company in 1991 – a pioneering company of disabled and non-disabled dancers. Since then, Celeste has commissioned over 30 original works from world-class choreographers, in a commissioning policy that has resulted in a host of awards for the company. It is fitting that in the year of her retirement from CandoCo, Celeste herself is honoured for her achievements.

Lauren Scholey, Executive Director of CandoCo says:

*"Celeste has fundamentally changed the world of dance forever, without losing sight of the most important thing of all, creating great art. That she should be recognised for this achievement in the year of her retirement is not only fitting, it is a lasting reminder to the whole of the dance world how much richer our world is with the range of dance that is now created and performed. We're all delighted for her and feel it's thoroughly well deserved."*

The **Critics' Circle National Dance Awards** is a celebration of dance and dancers in Britain. Founded in 1999 the awards draw together the entire industry in sharing the very best of dance in the UK. The National Dance Awards aims to highlight the astonishing diversity of dance in Great Britain, to say congratulations, and thank you. For further information and the complete list of winners for 2007 please visit [www.nationaldanceawards.com](http://www.nationaldanceawards.com)

The **Jane Attenborough Dance UK Industry Award** honours an individual working in dance who has made an outstanding contribution to the art form and who, through his or her knowledge, skill and generosity, has had a significant effect on dance. It aims to highlight the important but often unacknowledged contributions made by individuals that make a real difference to how dance is created, supported and seen. The winner is chosen following an open nomination process, making him or her someone who is truly respected and admired by their colleagues.

The **De Valois Award for Outstanding Achievement in** is the pinnacle of the Critics Circle awards ceremony. Previous winners have included Ivor Guest (2006), Monica Mason (2005) and Sir Peter Wright (2004).

**CandoCo Dance Company** is the leading contemporary dance company of disabled and non-disabled dancers. Since its inception 16 years ago, CandoCo has produced creatively ambitious and high-quality contemporary dance performance. As a successful repertory company, CandoCo pushes the boundaries of what dance is, and who can dance. It challenges traditional conventions of contemporary dance, resulting in work of extreme physicality and expressive emotion.

CandoCo Dance Company is currently touring work by Rafael Bonachela and Arthur Pita with the next tour date on Wednesday 12 & Thursday 13 March 2008 at artsdepot, North London. For all tour dates please visit [www.candoco.co.uk](http://www.candoco.co.uk)