



Dreams and Ruin - June 2005

The collision of old and new...

Dreams and Ruin was a magical promenade event created in response to and performed within Witley Court, a grade 1 listed ruin in Worcestershire. Ravaged by fire in 1937, leaving only a spectacular façade with sweeping stairs and colonnades, Witley Court was one of the great Victorian country houses of England.

Produced by Dance Fest in partnership with English Heritage, Motionhouse and Worcester Arts Workshop, Dreams and Ruin was conceived and directed by Kevin Finnan. A further layer of collaboration produced the choreography and action with material developed by Kevin and the Motionhouse dancers, Gail Parmel from ACE Dance and Music and Angela Woodhouse. Performed by a cast of 400 performers including school children, adult community dancers and professionals, Dreams and Ruin spanned three days of matinee and evening performances between 16th and 18th June 2005. The epic nature of the site was complemented by striking costumes and sets designed and created by Worcester Arts Workshop.

All partner artists developed their choreography within workshop and devising residencies during late Spring 2005, and all elements were brought together into a cohesive and dynamic whole during a frenetic final two weeks on site. Combining ensemble dances with buckets and sheets, flocks of manacing crows, a bawdy feast at a giant table, glorious ballgowns on dappled summer lawns, and a balcony scene drawing on both Shakespearean and fairytale imagery, Dreams and Ruin presented memories of past splendour and decadence alongside the wild inhabitants who live in the ruin today.

