

Chess Dillon-Reams

Sarah Trist
Dance Management Agency

M-Othering



“Detailing the endless ups and downs of female lives and friendships, Dillon-Reams offers a gorgeously sensitive work that bounces off humour and love.”

Dive(rse) Dance

“The choreography and movement work here are beyond impressive.... almost flawless”.

The Spy in the Stalls ★★★★★



M-Othering is a fiercely physical, comedic and deeply moving dance work from dance artist and performer **Chess Dillon-Reams**. The piece explores the many ways women care for one another, including the momentous joy of learning how to mother ourselves. Involving an intergenerational female cast, ranging from age 7-77, the piece brings to life and to stage the joy of *other* motherly relationships.

“its theatrical humour and wit back choreography that switches from goofy to richly expressive... Tender without oversentimentality and unafraid to broach the darker pitfalls of women’s lives, M-Othering breaks expectations of who can be motherly.” Dive(rse) Dance

“A hallmark of Chess’ work is managing to make the audience laugh and cry simultaneously in a show that feels like it was made for them.” Audience member



Aunties, Teachers, Godparents, Grandparents, friends ... ***M-Othering*** is a celebration of all *other* Motherly relationships that exist. Where there is perhaps an absence of Mother there is also space for *others*. Dillon Reams uses her unique blend of highly physical dance, theatre, comedy and ability to connect to audiences regardless of their prior experience of dance. As an optional extra, a local community cast of approx. 8 women, spanning every decade from teens to late 70s, can be engaged to perform alongside the professional company.



“I could watch it again and again” Audience member





After graduating from Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Chess Dillon-Reams trained & toured nationally with Jasmin Vardimon's JV2. In 2014 Chess co-founded the multi-award winning, critically-acclaimed, comedic dance-theatre company, The Hiccup Project.

From 2014-2020, Chess worked as co-Artistic Director of The Hiccup Project; co-creating & performing in three full-length works, including May-We-Go Round?, which won The Pebble Trust Brighton Fringe Award, The South East Dance Award & The Fringe Review Award for Outstanding Theatre. The Hiccup Project's work

was performed over 200 times, including multiple sell-out UK tours, received critical acclaim, and was consistently supported by Arts Council England. Since the end of her work as The Hiccup Project, Chess has focussed on dance education whilst also researching M-Othering. In 2020 she received seed funding from Surf The Wave which she used to make a short dance film Peach of The Sun. The film was screened at several international film festivals winning the outstanding achievement award at Berlin Flash Film Festival and was a finalist at Koise International Film fest. Peach of the Sun was the starting point for M-Othering and features at the beginning of the live performance.

Chess values dance education and advocates for a holistic and inclusive approach within the industry. She is currently Programme Lead for Dance at Varndean College where she prepares young people for dance training at conservatoire level and produces new choreography annually. Chess teaches a regular adults contemporary class at Smikle Space & often works to commission for Smikle Youth Dance Company (SYD) amongst others. Chess is a Jasmin Vardimon Company associate and was recently commissioned to create a new work for JV2, which toured nationally in Autumn 2025.

CREATIVE TEAM:

Artistic Direction, Concept & Choreography: Chess Dillon-Reams

Dramaturgy & Creative Mentoring: Lisa Watkin-Stevens

Assist. Choreography: Wins Burnet-Smith

Dramaturgical support: Ben Duke

R&D Assist. Choreography: Martha Canning

CAST/collaborators: Milly Bajpai, Martha Canning, Chess Dillon-Reams, Olive Engler, Ellie Kavner

Lighting Design: Zoé Ritchie

Costume: Chess Dillon-Reams (with support from Elen Agasiantis)

Production Manager: Simon Booth

Producer Support: Rosa Firbank

Music Design: Chess Dillon-Reams

Music Edits: Chess Dillon-Reams & Lisa Watkin-Stevens

Original Music: Alfie Dillon-Reams

Music: Max Richter & Grace Davidson, The Velvet Underground, Garbage, The Vernon Spring, Pulp, Kokoroko, Barry Louis Polisar, Yehezkel Raz, Doris Day, The Spice Girls, Tchaikovsky, Boyzone, Michael Kiwankuka, Liz Lawrence, Fourtet, Paul Simon.

Photographer: Chloë Martin & Josh Hawkins

Videography: Chess Dillon-Reams and Patrick Reams



Booking Details

Running time:	90 minutes (no interval)
Age guidance:	7+
Number on stage:	6 x core cast (Chess Dillon-Reams, Martha Canning, Milly Bajpai, Olive Engler, Ellie Kavner, Mabel Mallen-Evans). Plus Community Cast (optional).
Content warning:	Some mild swearing, some flashing lights. There are moments within the work that could be interpreted as touching on themes of fertility, death & loss.
Number on the road:	10 (6 x performers, 1 x technician/stage manager, 1 x chaperone, 1 x rehearsal director/chaperone, 1 x tour manager)
Get in:	Day before the performance
UK touring fee:	2 x shows inclusive of travel & accommodation: £2,000 + £500 for optional Community Cast
Overseas touring:	Details on request
Video promo:	Video Link
Full length performance:	Video Link Please email sarah@stdma.com for the password
Community cast documentary:	Video Link Password: cdrmotheringcc
Audience reaction:	Video Link Password: motheringaudience2025
Workshops:	Community cast workshops to be arranged in advance to involve local community members in the performance. A minimum of 6 hours will be needed for the cast to learn the section of movement. (See below for more detail). Other workshops focus on the empowerment of performers as movers, and using movement as a way to connect, spark joy and better understand how to 'mother' ourselves. Workshops will be tailored to different ages, abilities and dance experience.
Technical requirements:	Minimum performance space of 8m (width) x 8m (depth) Clean black harlequin dance floor to cover the entire performance area, free from any holes or breakages. Dancers will be performing barefoot and in various costumes throughout. Upstage, Mid and Downstage wings are required on both sides of stage for quick change and prop storage. A clear route from dressing rooms to the stage is required, without being seen by audience members.

Full range PA system free from any noise, pops or crackles; stereo playback from Qlab via touring company laptop at control position; on stage foldback monitoring required.

Overhead lighting plus 6x booms and 11x floor stands; control via ETC ion, or similar eos compatible lighting console – company to provide touring show file. OSC Network cues to console from Qlab via company laptop; Haze to be used throughout performance, lights will flash but not strobe. – warnings to be arranged at the discretion of the venue.

Front projection onto upstage back wall, to be projected onto black drapes covering the whole surface. HDMI output from Qlab, via company laptop at control position.

Company tours

(6x) wooden storage boxes (3x) wooden shipping pallets

(1x) 20 litre bag of dry topsoil

(1x) clothes rail on wheels

(3x) hessian sandbags filled with polystyrene

Hessian covered paddling pool to be filled with topsoil (sat in by dancers during the performance.) 2 metre long, free-standing aluminium ballet bar.

Handheld radio with cassette decks (no power required; prop use only)

A combination of various real and plastic plants in plant pots.

Contact:

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Audience Feedback at Preview:

"I never thought I would cry at a contemporary dance to Boyzone. It felt like that movement was really honest, heartbreaking and funny all at the same time."

"A raw, honest, beautiful account of personal experience. It felt like a conversation between viewer and audience."

"I couldn't tell if Chess was performing or just being herself and I really enjoyed that mild confusion"

COMMUNITY CAST:

Chess Dillon-Reams will work with the Presenter to identify local community members to participate in the performance. The call-out and communication will be managed by the presenter, unless pre-arrangements are made. Presenter will also need to provide the following:

Resources needed: Studio space to rehearse with community group

Rehearsal time: a minimum of 6 hours to work with the group

Ideally the cast will comprise of a small group that already know each other and are a mixture of ages. A love of dance/movement is necessary to take part. Previous community cast have included women spanning every decade from teen to late 70s with a mixture of level of dance experience.

“I felt truly part of something so special, this experience has stayed with me and will for a long time. A truly joyful experience and I have made some life long connections.”

Community cast member 2024
(Aged 40)

“A magical experience, something I will never forget. The process brought me back into my body and opened up a whole new world of possibility.”

Community cast member 2024
(Aged 55)

