

# DISCO QUEEN

*By Ella Tighe*

Underneath the fake tan, glitter, and trophies, Disco Queen is a show about women, judgement, class, community—and the hierarchies and snobbery that exist in dance.

I wanted to make *Disco Queen* because Freestyle shaped me. It's where I learned to perform, to move, to graft.

Coming back to Freestyle now, I found myself asking: *What stories get told in dance? And why is this world—so full of strength and discipline—still dismissed by some as “not proper dance”?*

This show is my way of honouring the culture I grew up in, while also holding space to question and celebrate it.

*Disco Queen* is a solo—but it's been made collectively, entirely through the lived experiences of Freestyle dancers past and present. From the making and production, to the voices and movement you'll see on screen and stage, this show is shaped by the community that built it.

The process began in early 2022. It's been a layered journey—interviewing dancers, ex-dancers, professionals from the Freestyle world; returning to competitions, studios, and events; revisiting old routines in my body now; and collaborating with artists who know this world inside out.

One of the biggest challenges was returning to a space I'd stepped away from and confronting my relationship with it. But what surprised me most was the joy—how quickly it came back. The glitter, the music, the energy in the room at comps... it's

epic! And I was reminded just how much support, resilience and creativity there is in this form. Thank you to everyone who welcomed me back.

In the show, you'll see different versions of Freestyle. The early-2000s style I first learned and have now re-embodied in my 30s. And today's Freestyle—extremely athletic and fierce—performed by dancers in the film and in the curtain closer.

Let's just say that back in my day, a walkover (*kind of like a cartwheel*) was about as fancy as it got. Watching these dancers now, I know I won't be entering a competition anytime soon!

I'm especially proud that the show's main track, *Endless Now*, was originally composed by Ed Heaton, with vocals by Narelle Hill. Ed and I wrote the lyrics together, and he worked his magic to shape them into a proper pop track that carries the heart of the show.

Dancing to pop songs was important to me because that's what Freestyle is, and it's often dismissed in contemporary or “*high art*” spaces—as if dancing to a great tune isn't enough (*It is!*)

I hope *Disco Queen* opens a door for audiences who've never seen Freestyle before—and shines a light on those who've lived it.

***Enjoy the show! You're invited to clap, cheer and shake your poms poms in support*** — Ella Tighe.

## CREDITS

### Created and performed by:

Ella Tighe

### Text written by:

Ella Tighe with support from Kirsty Taylor

### Freestyle Dancers in Film:

Abbie Knowles, Chloe Gordon, Edith Horsfall, Emilia Tolley, Fearne Weedon, Lillianna Clifton, Reeve Wedderburn and Roma Alexander.

### Creative Support:

Produced by Sarah Shead (Spin Arts)  
Tour Project Management by Andrew Wilson  
With thanks to MARF, Keira Martin, Andrea Heaton, Eva Martinez and Natalie Davies.

### Sound & Music

Original soundtrack composed by Ed Heaton  
*Endless Now* - Lyrics by Ed Heaton & Ella Tighe  
Vocals by Narelle Hill.

### Voiceovers:

Compere – Andrew Wilson  
Ella's Mum – Jill Tighe  
Freestyle Community – Phoebe Jones, Anna Jones, Angela Booth, Stacie Bennett-Worth, Edith Horsfall, Chloe Gordon and Dolcie Ward.

### Design & Styling:

Costume by Nicky Dunn (The Curious Wardrobe)  
Disco Queen tracksuits by Lily Dunn (Lily Doll Boutique)  
Make-up by Paula Hopwood (Hustle Make Up)  
Set design by Matt Sykes-Hooban

### Lighting & Technical:

Original lighting design – Alan Dawson  
Tour Technical Management – Joe Moorhead

### Film:

Filmmakers – Danny Hardaker & Rowan Stothard  
Video archive footage from Disco World, Maxine Glasby, and trophies from Bingley Dance Studio (honouring the legacy of Maureen Carr)

### Special thanks to:

Bingley Dance Studio, Unity Dance, Dazl, Soul Dance Academy, Generation Next, Stacie Bennett-Worth, Rachel Gildea, Hannah Abraham-Ninan and Anna Jones.

### RUNNING TIME

*Disco Queen* is approx. 55-60mins.  
There is no interval.

### CONTENT WARNING

*Disco Queen* contains flashing lights, high-energy loud music, film projection with captions, and references to body image, class, and judgement. Please feel free to step out and return whenever you need—our front-of-house team will support you.

### SUPPORTERS

*Disco Queen* was supported using public funding from Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grant, Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Levelling up funds from UK Government, Bradford 2025, Kala Sangam, The Civic Barnsley, Stage@Leeds, Yorkshire Dance, Middle Floor, The Place and Wainsgate Dances.

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