



The Research

Prince dissected and studied each of Sting's songs, the lyrics and the meaning of each song. The whole process started by workshopping with 14 dancers for two weeks some of the songs and an idea for the narrative which was then performed to Sting – he agreed for the piece to be made and for some of the songs to be rearranged with new music or vocals.

For two years Prince listened to Sting's music and after seeing disturbing images in the media of refugees – the story narrative started to take shape as she was deeply moved by this. This led to further research of documentaries including 'Escape from Syria' and 'Human Flow' which inspired ideas for the fictional narrative.

Planning the Story



'I would best describe how I arrived at creating the final piece by using the analogy of a piece of string. If you think of a long piece of string with a bow tied exactly at the centre. The bow represents choreography, dance and steps. At one end of the string are the music and poetry. At the other end of the string is a story about a family of refugees. I gradually moved each element closer and closer to meeting each other in the centre. When they get to the middle, they can undo the bow... and that's when the choreography can start'. – Kate Prince.

The choreographic process itself is a journey. Choreography is the third layer of the work – following structure, storytelling, music and lyrics all working together before choreography is created. This ensures each step and movement the dancers make has intention and purpose to reflect the story and the themes to the audience.

Links to other works

In previous productions created by Prince such as 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party' and 'Some Like it Hip Hop', the story would be created first through writing of a script with stage directions and dialogue and music would be written around the story.

As the songs used in MIAB already existed, Prince changed her usual process for the show and instead wrote a full story and broke it down into musical numbers which included descriptions of both character and story development – this helped Prince to form the story with the music and the characters and allowed her to share ideas with the producers and creative team. She shaped the story around the stimulus of the music rather than the other way around as previously done. Sometimes, the music would inform the story (**Roxanne**) and sometimes the opposite to create the emotional intention (**Don't Stand So Close To Me**).

Collaboration

The visual treatment document accompanied the script and included images and direction for each scene. It was particularly important for Kate Prince to work with the designers to create the set, costume and video design. Prince worked closely with each Head of Department to discuss the designs in more detail using imagery visuals as inspiration for research.

HoDs are set a budget by the Producers and they have to bring Prince's vision to life in the constraints of the budget. Set, Lighting, Costume, Video and Sound Design were crucial in bringing the story to life and some moments emphasise Departments working together in harmony (**Inshallah**). This enables the audience to be fully transported and believe they are watching people travelling on a journey.

Choreographic Process

Imagery

'Imagery is really key for me and I take a lot of inspiration from pictures that have a lasting impact on me – whether that be a real-life picture or even sometimes a fashion or artistic picture'. – Kate Prince

Production examples: life vests for Inshallah, prison bars for refugee camps etc to create connections to what we are used to seeing visually in the media and the story. Inspiration taken from the visual treatment document.

Movement examples: Imagery of the triangle the siblings create or the repeated arm gestures to tie the characters together for the audience, no matter if they are together or separated.

Key Sections: Desert Rose, Message in a Bottle, Inshallah, Every Breath you Take

Diary Method

Kate Prince tried a new method when working collaboratively with the dancers. Each dancer was given a diary and a character name. They went through the story in chronological order and each day she would tell them something new about their character and what they were about to experience. In response, the dancers wrote in their diaries 'in character', imagining how they would feel and would then share these with each other. Prince wanted the dancers to be thinking about story before steps, story before music, story before anything else and about the journey their characters would be taking and to stay connected to the truth-based story of refugees.

Developing Movement

The process always begins with storytelling. Beats of the story are mapped out first to create the structure and flow of the beginning, middle and end, then steps are created. Prince often utilises the styles and talents of her assistant choreographers to create partner work, floor work and technically difficult movement. Specific direction may be guided by Prince in terms of formations and connections to the next section. (**Fields of Gold**).



Practical Explorations

Workshop 1: Repertoire

Task: Learning repertoire from Every Little Thing She Does is Magic from a video of a professional ZooNation dancer breaking the movement down into sections. Learning the movement accurately in unison and then developing this in groups using choreographic devices.

Focus of workshop:

- Stylistic features of the repertoire performed accurately using physical/interpretative skills.
- Use of choreographic devices to develop repertoire
 - Representation of the theme of the section accurately using interpretative skills.

Workshop 2: Connections

"We all have some connection to family. We can understand what it is like when your family is broken by something that is not your fault" – Kate Prince

Task: Create connections using contact in duets and trios in still images, then breaking these connections. Using RADS content to develop the transitions between the connections.

Focus of workshop:

- Creative points of contact to create and break connections between dancers.
- Use of RADS content to develop transitions to tell a story.
- Representation of the theme through performance.

Workshop 3: Story Task

Task: Creating still images in groups to represent key moments in the characters journey without being told the next focus of the still image to represent the diary method. Using RADS content to develop the transitions between still images.

Focus of workshop:

- Still images which communicate the story/journey effectively through the characters.
- Use of RADS content to develop transitions to tell a story.
- Representation of the theme through interpretative skills to tell a story to the audience.

Rehearsing and Refining

- ✓ Responding to a stimulus to generate ideas for performance/design material
- ✓ Exploring and developing ideas to develop material
- ✓ Discussion with performers
- ✓ Setting tasks for performers
- ✓ Sharing ideas and intentions
- ✓ Teaching material to dancers
- ✓ Developing performance material and outcomes
- ✓ Organising and running rehearsals/production process
- ✓ Refining and adjusting material to make improvements
- ✓ Providing notes and/or feedback on improvements

Physical/Technical Skills

- ✓ Control
- ✓ Posture
- ✓ Balance and coordination
- ✓ Extension
- ✓ Dynamic Range
- ✓ Accuracy
- ✓ Alignment
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Movement memory
- ✓ Strength
- ✓ Energy (physically)

Interpretative Skills

- ✓ Interaction with other performers
- ✓ Focus
- ✓ Confidence
- ✓ Energy and commitment
- ✓ Awareness and appreciation of sound/musicality
- ✓ Rhythm and Timing
- ✓ Emphasis
- ✓ Stage Presence
- ✓ Facial Expression
- ✓ Use of space
- ✓ Awareness of the performance space and the audience
- ✓ Projection

Choreographers sometimes create all of the movement before the rehearsals and then teach it to the dancers. Other choreographers choose to work more collaboratively and set the dancers tasks to create some of the movement. Most choreography is created through improvisation to generate movement spontaneously and refine it to develop motifs. To create a piece of choreography choreographers usually follow a process of finding and researching appropriate stimuli, improvising to generate movement, refining and developing motifs, selecting and discarding material, choosing a choreographic structure and performing the final choreography.



Performance Processes

Health and Safety:

- Dancers warm ups and cool downs during rehearsals and performances to reduce risk of injury.
- Rehearsing specific movements and tricks (E.g., breakdancing tricks).
- Dismantling and building of sets
- Use of spatial awareness in smaller spaces/rehearsals
- Awareness of lights/props/set backstage or wires at the side of the stage (e.g., tripping hazards).
- Rehearsal of using the set and lifts etc before performances.

Rehearsal and Production:

- Rehearsal process over numerous weeks to refine the piece and adapt based on choreographer notes and feedback.
- Rehearsals for different casts to rehearse (or understudies etc in case of injury – important for timelines!)
- Tape used on the floor to replicate Sadlers Wells stage (first performed)
- Production team in rehearsals to look at movement, work with dancers and choreographers on ideas to then design and rehearse elements.
- Rehearsal with some production elements (e.g., hat or, breakdancing) - allows production team to adapt and change before technical rehearsals.

Technical Rehearsals:

- Involves dancers, choreographer, lighting, projection and sound teams. (Some or most costumes may be involved to check impact on lighting/projection)
- Lighting plans created, plotted and programmed.
- Blocking of key lighting/projection moments and entrances/exits, transitions to next song/scene. Adaptation made to improve and refine and address any issues in the performance space.
- Needs to be repeated when touring in different performance spaces.

Dress Rehearsals:

- Involves dancers, choreographer, lighting, projection and sound and costume teams.
- Final rehearsals and focus on costume/props to combine all elements together (including feedback from technical rehearsal)
- Check of timings if any costume changes needed and costume fittings – loose/tight with sustained dancing.
- Final choreographer notes and refinements made.

Performance and Touring:

- Warm up pre performance – specific to dance styles when needed. Rehearsals of lifts/tricks and/or set and props.
- Performance – communicating the intention and purpose, everything coming together.
- Touring – adapting to different spaces, style of floor, entrances/exits, amount of space etc, moving of equipment by touring production team, lights being repositioned, change of cast where required.
- Some adaptations of dancers/movements may be required.
- Filming – where to position the camera.

Post-Performance Review:

- Choreographer notes/feedback after each performance to continue to refine/adapt.
- Audience feedback and reviews used to further refine elements.