

DANCE EDUCATION TOOLKIT

FROM BARKING AND DAGENHAM BOY TO INTERNATIONAL ARTISTIC DIRECTOR – A CASE STUDY OF FAR FROM THE NORM AND BOTIS SEVA'S 60 SEC DANCE PIECE.



**Barking &
Dagenham**

This pack will help you explore the work of Botis Seva and his company Far From The Norm. The toolkit will take you through the different roles in a dance company, an investigation of the choreography of 60 sec, and exercises for you to try yourself.

Inspiring Futures: The Barking and Dagenham Cultural Education Partnership commissioned this Dance Education Toolkit. Inspiring Futures creates links between cultural organisations and schools to work towards every young person having the opportunity to be creative, either in school or beyond.

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BOTIS SEVA BIOGRAPHY - WHO IS BOTIS SEVA?

Botis focuses on making a difference - using his real-life experiences to create stories through dance.

Botis Seva is an award-winning dance artist, choreographer and director of hip hop, physical theatre, and contemporary dance. Botis' unique style has placed him in the spotlight of Hip Hop dance theatre in the UK and internationally.

Botis experiments with form, structure, and theatre to re-invent his approach to creativity both in live and digital performances. He borrows techniques from film, text, art and other dance genres, giving audiences a rich hip hop visual experience.

Born and raised in London, Botis was introduced to dance aged 15 at his secondary school in Barking and Dagenham, where he regularly competed in school talent shows. After leaving Barking Broadway college after a year aged 17, and a brief performance career with Avant Garde Dance, Botis decided to pursue a career in choreography – out of the conventional dance career paths.

At 19, Botis founded his Hip Hop dance theatre company Far From The Norm. Practising in Youth League UK, a space in Dagenham Mall, the company was original, fearless, and experimental.

In 2012, Botis was taken under the wing of Breakin' Convention, the powerhouse of UK hip hop theatre



and dance. Botis was given his first 'schooling' on theatre craftsmanship, it was here that his career was seeded.

After this, Botis was nominated for the Bonnie Bird Marion North Mentoring Fund and asked to curate two Wild Card nights at the Lilian Baylis Theatre at Sadler's Wells. Botis began working internationally, in Tunisia, Copenhagen, Oslo, Norway, Denmark, Columbia, and more, winning handfuls of prizes along the way.

Botis' success continued, working with choreographers such as Wayne McGregor and Robin Friend to create work which premiered on BBC2. He also created the critically acclaimed BLKDOG, performed as part of the Sadler's Wells 20th anniversary commission, and won the 2019 Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production. In 2020, BLKDOG began its UK, European and USA tour, before the pandemic hit and halted everything.

Throughout the 2020 COVID pandemic, Botis remained creative and was one of the BBC Arts and Arts Council England's Culture in Quarantine commissions, producing CAN'T KILL US ALL.

For more information on Botis Seva, visit:

www.botisseva.com



A MESSAGE FROM BOTIS SEVA

"From the age of 15, I spent most of my time developing my artistry in Barking and Dagenham. I studied at Sydney Russell School, and that's when I met and fell in love with dance. In our school, we were lucky enough to have choreographers from the professional industry to teach us, which helped and gave us a chance to perform at our yearly talent shows. From then, I knew that this was something I wanted to do. And so from the age of 19, I started a young company, which is now Far From The Norm at the local youth club in Dagenham Heathway."

WHAT ADVICE OR INSPIRATION CAN YOU LEAVE FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF TODAY?

"For any young person who would like to embark on this journey, I would say to stay consistent in what you do. Dance is something I fell in love with. It gave me a sense of hope to just continue and not stop. A lot of the time, family or close ones will tell you that it's not possible because this is a job that may not feel stable enough. But if you have a passion for dance and you really want to make it professionally, try and speak to as many people as you can. Speak to your teachers and see if they can email other dance choreographers, because some of them can get back to you, just to have conversations, where you can ask how people got to where they got to.

It's not about the success of anything, but more about the vision that they had at the beginning. You're always going to have an idea at the beginning, so you'll need to stay true to it. And the best way to do that is to continue to understand that idea as it grows and understand these things take a long process to get there. Anything that feels like a rush to get a result may not be worthy in the end.

Make sure you have the right values in the people around you. Even when you start young, and get these early successes, it's about maintaining a humble way of understanding and living. So, remember:

- Trust the vision and continue in that vision as much as possible
- Take feedback and keep applying new ways to create to understand what your work could be like

It always starts with a small seed, which may be just you as a dancer in your room. From there, just keep practising, keep researching, try and study as much as possible, to find out more about the industry and what you're going into."



HOW IS FAR FROM THE NORM SET UP?

The core company consists of:

- An artistic director**
- A producer**
- A production manager**
- A composer**
- Seven dance artists**

The company works on a project-by-project basis. Everyone in the team is self-employed and works on other external projects, as Far From The Norm isn't set up to employ anyone full time. It can be tricky to coordinate everyone's schedules, and avoid clashes with other projects, so we work in short bursts of four to six-week blocks. This does mean that not all seven dancers do every project. They choose projects that suit their interests and skills, depending on their availability.

Far From The Norm refer to the members of their company as Normads.

FAR FROM THE NORM BIOGRAPHY

Established in May 2009 in a youth club in Dagenham, Far From The Norm was founded by artistic director Botis Seva and is a collective of artists renowned for experimenting with hip hop form whilst tackling social-political concerns. As an independent company, we are committed to creating evocative, authentic work by taking audiences on journeys.

Far From The Norm came together as a collective of creatives thinking about creativity and moving in a different way to what was considered the norm. After years of presenting work in community settings, through talent development schemes and investing in our own productions, Far From The Norm is celebrated for their difference; recognised nationally and internationally as ones to watch.

2019 marked our 10th anniversary. Since Artistic Director Botis Seva's debut of the shorter version of BLKDOG as part of Sadler's Wells Reckonings in 2018, Far From The Norm have been producing the full-length production, which has its world premiere at Sadler's Wells in London in 2021.

For more information on Far From The Norm, visit: www.farfromthenorm.com

OUR ARTISTIC VISION

We are committed to the pursuit of making honest, relevant, and needed work for our generation.

Through hip hop dance theatre, we can communicate to a culture of people misunderstood, villainised and cast out from society, which is still engaging for a wider audience. We are a young company, but we demand the best from ourselves and Far From The Norm is invested in the process both in and outside the studio. Far From The Norm work with a core team of artists, collaborators and partners, which relies on trust and encourages us to be who we are needed to be to convey a bigger message.





A TYPICAL DAY IN THE LIFE OF A NORMAD

Far From The Norm tend to work Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm and rehearse in various parts of London or residencies within the UK. The company work on many projects, but also train in Hip Hop styles. With fitness being a core value of the company, mornings consist of drills, circuit training and movement tasks. This will be followed by a range of various activities, depending on the objective of the day. This can consist of using different stimuli (usually with words that contrast), writing and speaking tasks, singing etc. The sessions are normally challenging but will always bring growth to the individual by giving new insights on incorporating these ideas into their art.

HOW TO BECOME A NORMAD

Botis has met all the dance artists except for one, through community settings. A couple of the dancers started working with Botis after he saw them performing on local platforms. Others were recommended, and one came through an audition. Generally, Far From The Norm doesn't hold auditions, as collectively, we feel the pressured and quick turnaround environment doesn't allow for dance artists to present their best selves. It is also hard for Botis to understand how compatible they are, both with his choreography and the wider company. Botis and producer Lee Griffiths are working on setting up other routes into the company, including placements and internships.

To have insight on Hip Hop foundations is always a good start. You don't have to be an expert in these styles, but you should be able to understand and differentiate one style from another.

You must have a mindset that is willing and open enough to break apart many ideas of dance. Almost start at the beginning again, but don't discard the knowledge. Rebuilding new ways to move and explore a style through a different lane will also expand your palette of movement, giving you more range and vocabulary.

What is most important? Having a good mentality and personality. You must be able to work with the group and move and work as part of a collective.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR BOTIS SEVA

Botis' responsibility as the Artistic Director of Far From The Norm is to drive the creative vision for the company and lead on all projects. This includes working closely with the whole team, leading and briefing collaborators including lighting designers, composers and costume designers and working with the producer to ensure the structure and budget is viable to enable his vision.



PRODUCER LEE GRIFFITHS

Lee's role as producer is about acting as a bridge between the company and the wider dance/theatre world, including partners and funding bodies. Her main responsibilities and day-to-day duties are controlling the budgets, structuring projects, contracting, scheduling, planning and partnership development, working closely with Production Manager Andy Downie to ensure everything is done safely, and planning the company's future with the Artistic Director Botis Seva.



PRODUCTION MANAGER ANDY DOWNIE

Production manager Andy Downie works closely with Producer Lee Griffiths and Artistic Director Botis Seva to oversee, manage and co-ordinate the technical and logistical elements of any production. He is vital in ensuring the company is safe. He liaises with all technical and production departments to ensure the safe transfer of a project or performance from the studio into a theatre venue.



COMPOSER TORBEN LARS SYLVEST

Torben creates bespoke sound scores and music for all of Botis and Far From The Norm's work as a composer. The process usually entails Botis sending Torben a brief about what he envisions the sound to sound like, any references of similar music palettes and rhythms. Then there is a back and forth to edit and layer the music to the final version. Torben is always present for production meetings, working with Production Manager Andy Downie to ensure that wherever the music is played there are good sound specifications with speakers, feedback etc.



FAR FROM THE NORM DANCE ARTISTS

The seven dancers are integral to bringing Botis' vision to life. It is a vigorous process of testing, playing and trialling ideas until Botis and the company of dancers have nurtured a movement language that aligns with the idea or narrative. The dancers must ensure they are physically and mentally prepared for rehearsals and communicate with Botis about what works and is realistic within their bodies. The creation of choreography is collaborative. That means listening to each other and working out the best movement options for everyone, given that everyone has a different foundation and background.

FAR FROM THE NORM ARTISTS STORY INTO DANCE:



DANCER, EZRA OWEN'S STORY INTO DANCE

"In 2004, my father, four siblings and I moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania (PA), USA.

While in PA, I started taking dance classes at a local studio in the area. That's where the passion for dance began. I was shy and unsure of the talent I had at the time. After relocating, I left the idea of dance in Lancaster, PA. I had no idea where this venture would eventually take me someday.

My family later returned home to England in 2008, which was where I originated from. I was then encouraged to take classes at a local art centre, which was when I was introduced to, the hip hop style, breaking. The flow of breaking is heavily connected to the rhythm of the music. Seeing other guys performing these dynamic moves instilled a passion for dance in me. I was shown how to move, flow, and tell my story through the art of dance.

Then I was accidentally put into an all-girls street dance class but decided to stick to it, even though I was the only male. Being the only guy in a class can be quite daunting in the sense that you're

outnumbered. Nonetheless, I soon grew in my confidence.

I later decided to audition to join the Centre for Advanced Training Scheme in Nottingham. Upon acceptance, I was taught a range of other forms, including ballet and contemporary dance.

This passion then led me to Kingston University in 2013. Through this time, my body was being stretched, pushed, developed, and challenged. I found I was being pushed to the extreme physically and mentally by remembering the movements, and gradually my body developed strength.

Around that time, I met a network of dancers and choreographers, and joined The Company, a group of Kingston University graduates, led by Lee Griffiths. This passion then turned into a profession. I was no longer just a dancer; I was an artist.

During my studies at Kingston University, I was also invited to join Botis Seva's dance theatre collective Far From The Norm and after graduating

in 2016, I continued performing as a core company member. Once I joined the company, the transition from student to professional was difficult for me at first. Not only was the physical part important to me, but the emotional part was also important to me. Spiritually I was always connected to my faith. Through my relationship with the Lord, I knew that my faith kept me grounded and always gave me hope, which is what I use as my fuel in dance.

Not everything has been easy. There have been times of anxiety, panic attacks, and long days and nights of preparation. But God used these challenges to mould me into the man of God I am called to be. At a young age, the man in the Bible, David, was spoken over my life. David had to face the "giant." David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day, the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head."

This calling translates into dancing because I had to find my identity and be rooted and grounded in his love. As a performer, I had to find my identity of who I was in Christ and not in what I do. I had no idea that dance would move me to find myself. I am now confident in who I am in him.

If I could encourage an artist in anything, I would say to be honest to oneself. For me, the fact that we can create is a gift where we can join the creator in creating. It's a dance, a movement that we can do together. But ultimately, the creator is creating the dance."

FAR FROM THE NORM ARTISTS STORY INTO DANCE:



DANCER, NAÏMA SOUHAÏR'S STORY INTO DANCE

"I grew up in a small city in the Netherlands. Having done ten years of gymnastics, I was looking for a new challenge. So, I started doing street dance classes at a local dance school. After a year, I joined one of the dance crews they had and started doing competitions. I realised quite quickly that I wanted to discover more within dance. So, I joined a pre-dance academy. This included all kinds of different styles, from ballet to jazz to graham and all different styles that would hopefully get me into a dance academy. I wanted to be able to combine these styles with street styles, hoping to create a different kind of fusion.

When I was 18, I was accepted into the Amsterdam University of the Arts, Jazz/musical (later changed to urban/contemporary) dance department. This was an eye-opener for me. Throughout these years, I had been more trained in contemporary than street styles, and I would see myself more and more as a contemporary dancer. But coming into university, I realised that people didn't see me as contemporary, so I felt like I needed to prove to everyone that I was.

In my last year, I started my internship with a Dutch choreographer, Shailesh Bahoran, who I had previously worked with in school for a performance. He was based in popping and breaking, combining this into an experimental style while adding Indian dance elements. This opened my perspective of using hip hop styles in theatre performances. I felt that this was a world I enjoyed working in and was also appreciated for my 'weird' style that is a mixture of everything. I also found that 'experimental' was a style that I 'fit' in, and sometimes I would join experimental battles.

After graduating, I tried finding my way by doing a lot of auditions, but it was quite difficult. I found that having a unique style, it was hard finding work that would suit me or where I'd fit in. A lot of auditions have ballet in their first round, which isn't my strength. So that time after recently graduating can be quite defeating. But it's worth it to keep trying, even though it takes some time. Also, through auditioning, you start meeting new people, who are good to connect with.

After a few months, I got accepted to my first project, 'Requiem for Aleppo' by Jason Mabana. It was based in London, but I didn't mind. I liked going out of my own habitat. It was a great opportunity for me, where I met a lot of new people. And working in London also gave me a point of view of a different dance scene.

After this project, I saw an audition for Far From The Norm. I didn't know the company but saw that it was a hip hop dance theatre company and I was really interested. When I did the audition, I really enjoyed it. I loved that we were working our butt off, and the discipline I saw in the dancers was something I really admired. I just wanted to learn as much as possible from the dancers and their artistic director Botis Seva within this audition and the possible time I would have with them. Luckily it resulted in me joining the new outdoor project. After that, I have been able to work freelance based with Far From The Norm, which has been a blessing. By doing this, I have also been able to combine working with other projects. Because I still felt so new into the work field, I felt it was also important to keep trying other projects and companies, to keep learning from. I love meeting new people and changing environments but coming back to Norm always feels like home.

It has been quite a busy few years, but I really loved it. It's only unfortunate that I relied so much on travelling since I worked with different companies. This was obviously quite difficult during the past year with the Covid pandemic. I felt like I was separate from all the projects I was working with before since I wasn't living in the same country. It was hard trying to stay connected, but I tried to rely on the plans we had for the future, which sometimes was disappointing due to numerous cancellations, but I didn't want to give up on the work we so passionately made as a company."





AN INTRODUCTION TO 60 SEC

“Within 60 seconds, how much energy can move through our sphere? You open your eyes, and the potency remains. All you can endure is the backlash of a boundless flow. Time is too slow for those who must wait, but time is too fast for those who contemplate.”

PERFORMANCE AND SOUND FILES



[Breakin' Convention Luxembourg performance](#)
[Sadler's Wells Gala performance, in collaboration with designer George Oxby](#)

60 Sec is a piece of work that solely focuses on dance and movement. At the time of creation, this piece allowed the dancers to break freely into movement through the sonic sound of the music. The work explores energy, how to create it, how to transfer it, build it and embody it.

It is a short, energetic seven-minute work that balances the new movement language of Far From The Norm's experimental Hip Hop dance movement with classical music.

60 Sec first premiered at the World of Dance competition in London in 2014. It then went on to be presented as part of the company's production, InNoForm at Laban Theatre (2016), Breakin' Convention's International tour at the Grand Theatre de Luxembourg (2017) and the Sony Centre Toronto (2019) as well as Outrageous Behaviour at Battersea Arts Centre (2020) and the Sadler's Wells Gala (2020).

THE BEGINNING OF THE 60 SEC PROCESS

When looking at devising material for 60 Sec, alongside the movement, there are other elements and layers that all aid in bringing the work together, such as music, lighting and costume. However, music and choreography are the main elements in 60 Sec.

MUSIC

Botis looked at original scores of music and collaborated with Torben Lars Sylvest, a self-taught Music Producer and Sound Designer, who has created original scores for Far From The Norm, and many other hip hop dance theatres and films.

For more information on the composer, Torben Lars Sylvest, please visit his website: <https://www.tlsylvest.com>

A Q&A WITH COMPOSER TORBEN LARS SYLVEST AND BOTIS

How did you begin creating 60 sec?

Botis: Music was my main inspiration. I heard this track 'Thunders and Lightnings-Ezio Bosso' around four years before choreographing to it. The track had given me a lot of inspiration, and one thing I loved about the orchestral music was its speed through the combination of predominately strings and keys. This really inspired the movement! One thing I would always do is give myself some time to play with different movement concepts to see what works. In this case, the company and I were looking at the idea of energy.

Torben: When thinking about this work with Botis, two words come to mind: rhythm and tension. One of our biggest challenges and goals was to explore these two elements in unconventional ways that felt both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time.

Botis came to me with the question: "How can we make new rhythms with just the breath?" He had recorded a bunch of takes of himself experimenting with breathing patterns, ranging from very slow and relaxing to fast, random and erratic. Botis sent me these files and thus began the meticulous challenge of sorting through them, chopping them up, rearranging, stretching and reversing, to create an ordered rhythmic collage.

To create the rhythms themselves, I used a technique where I sketched them out with a few very basic drum samples to get a sense of the patterns I liked. Then, I would go through and replace them with all the little clips of breath I had chopped up until eventually, the drums become superfluous.

Botis: I also began by using some keywords that would connect to the music. As I listened to the music, I would write some words down; sometimes I would also draw abstract images that I would feel from the music. For example, looking at the word 'water', I would start focusing on what movement water would look and feel like. I would then look at a different image like 'rocks' and apply that same method. After mixing these two images, I would see what water and rocks look like. Then I can begin to build movement around that. Other devices that I would use would be looking at the different dance styles that I would connect to, like House, Krump, Poppin. I would look at breaking down these styles so that they no longer look like their traditional form.

How did the music and sound merge to make the work become one piece of work?

Torben: Visualisation is very important in my work as my soundtracks always accompany a visual performance. And so Botis had described to me an idea of dancers moving to/against and amongst quickly changing passages of energy/wind. This idea led me to play with directionality on stage and heavily panning the little bursts of breath from hard left to hard right, creating a sense of movement blowing through the stage, giving the dancers something more tangible to relate to.

The supporting textures in the piece are a mixture of slow breathing samples from Botis, and very subtle, almost inaudible mouth sounds inspired by 'ASMR' recordings. These very close sounds aimed to bring a layer of intimacy and familiarity in an otherwise otherworldly setting. These layers rise and fall as if the whole track is breathing, with the intention to build a tension that ultimately releases and lets go into the energetic string section of the next track.

Had there been any challenges in creating this work?

Botis: The main challenge was in the music. Because it was super-fast, trying to put choreography on a fast piece of music, I would have to look at how clearly movement can be read at this speed. Focusing on this brought the idea of the energy and passing that energy, which is what the piece was mainly based on. It's almost like walking through a busy road in Central London. With all that rushing,

if you can imagine seeing it at full speed, that type of energy being passed in different ways was what I was looking at.

LIGHTING

Although, when creating the work, a lot of focus had been on the relationship between music and movement, lighting the work couldn't be as dynamic. This was because Botis didn't want to heighten the

attention on all the elements of the work, making the audience lose focus on what was needed for the work. By decreasing the lighting states, it balanced out the contrast of intensity and subtleness.

Another reason was that this piece had been built for competition purposes, so there wasn't a guarantee that the specific lights would be available in all venues. Botis saw fit that it would be better only to implement general lights.

On some occasions, dependent on budget, venue capacity and the type of project. We can't always hire a full creative team and that is why it is important for Botis to understand lights himself. Botis designed the lighting for 60 Sec, and it explores how energy can be segmented on stage through spotlights, corridors, and washes, all generally in white colour.

COSTUME

Like lighting, Botis simplified the costumes to emulate the dancers being vessels transferring energy and allowing those moments to stand out.

As the journey of 60 Sec continued, Botis and designer George Oxby collaborated for the Sadler's Wells Gala Night. This allowed the costumes to have details that were highlighted when moving in the material, reinstating the flow of energy being transferred.

CHOREOGRAPHY

Botis would ask dancers to freestyle, respond to words, music and imagery and set the dancers tasks. This enabled Botis to understand how the dancers all individually responded to the music and the concept of energy.

The dance also journeyed and developed along the way. The movement, which was originally set around the music score, Thunders & Lightings, had extended to a longer piece of work, using Torben's added sound score. This permitted the build-up in the music to happen naturally, helping the audience understand how the energy has been established; and, therefore, building into the original music score.



SUGGESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION AND STARTING YOUR OWN DEVISING PROCESS

Now that the company have broken down how they started devising 60 Sec using choreography, costume, lighting, and sound, **how can you devise your own piece?** There are many ways in which you could approach this:

- **Breaking ideas and themes down, and simplifying it**
- **Writing words, drawing images, looking at texts and films**
- **Using your dance foundations from different dance styles and working within your dance strengths.**

You can use different kinds of stimuli to help build your resources and research, such as poems, images, films, etc. Once that has been established, you can begin to add different layers and combine these.

Example: You may have a dream of running. How can you implement running in your choreography? How can you maintain the element of running for five minutes of the dance? Is it literal, or can it be done in an abstract way? How can running be adapted and developed into other movements?

Suggested tasks:

1. (Partner work)

- Give your partner a stimulus (it can be an animal, fruit, emotion).
- Then, give them two minutes to play a character based on the stimulus given.
- Each time you say 'change', your partner must find another way to perform the stimulus.

2. (Group task)

- Think of a theme or scene in your head. You have five minutes to create a story through movement with your fellow group members.
- Perform the work to your peers and see if they can guess the theme or scene behind the movement.

3. (Partner work)

- A song of the teacher's choice will play. Spend five minutes alone, and begin to write your thoughts based on whatever you feel from hearing the music.
- Once that time is done, swap your notes with your partner, and begin to cross out random words from the text.
- After doing so, read out the text, leaving out the crossed-out words. See if the text reads differently. Do any new ideas emerge from the text?
- Choreograph a 30-second movement piece, inspired by the words left in your partner's text.
- Share your work with your partner, and watch their performance inspired by your words.

FUN FACT:

Originally, the work was called 65 sec. The company were at an airport in Austria and had just missed the boarding notification for their flight back to London. Once they realised, they had only one minute to rush from the gate onto the plane-literally 60 seconds!

This moment allowed Botis to relate this experience with the piece of work. By only having 60 seconds to catch the flight, there was a constant rush to get there, and even after arriving, there wasn't any time to settle, which reflects the piece's journey, with a constant rush of movement.

BOTIS SEVA'S CREATIVE QUESTIONS

Here are a few questions and keywords, which you can refer to when creating your own movement. Reflect on the information and tasks you have completed so far, but now try to add your individual creative style and identity.

What is inspiration?

A sudden brilliant idea that motivates you to make something creative.

What inspires you to create dance? Write three things below.

1.

2.

3.

What is stimulus?

A stimulus can be defined as something that gives you an idea – an inspiration, a starting point. It is the beginning of the choreographic process. The stimulus forms the basic impulse behind the work. Often several stimuli collectively will influence the work, and perhaps the stimulus accompanies the dance. (Quick definition: Something that excites or evokes.)

Think of a simple idea that influences or interests you, and write it down.

What other stimulus can you use to accompany the work? (e.g., music, place, text, costume etc.) Write three things below.

1.

2.

3.

How could you use other elements to show your idea?

Music:

Set / Props:

Lighting:

Costumes:

Documentation

It can be hard to keep track as your ideas start to develop. Try keeping notes at the end of every session, or use a camera to record your ideas. This will help you make decisions and inform how you approach your next choreographic session.

Get in groups of two or more. Tell your group/partner about the idea you have described above.

Set a timer for 30-seconds, and watch as your group/partner improvises to the idea you have explained to them. Record the dancers, movement, or take notes of movements that you like.

Tell the dancers three things you liked about their improvisation. Use this as inspiration, taking movements and style from the dancers to create your own 30-seconds choreographed phrase.

Editing

Don't settle for the first idea or the first version of anything you create. EDIT. EDIT. EDIT. This way, you are refining your choreography to the best version it can be.

Look at the phrase you have created, be critical, how can you improve this phrase – think about:

Dynamics (use of body, action, space, time and energy)

Positioning (could you face/change direction? Could you do the phrase further back in the room? Travel more?)

Choreographic devices (unison / canon / repetition)

Try different variations of the phrase until you find the best way to convey your story in an interesting, visual, and exciting way.



Now you have developed your phrase; it is time to think about performance!

One of the Far From The Norm artists, Joshua Nash, shared insight on their process in preparing to perform 60 Sec.

PREPARATION/WARM-UP

Physical

"When it comes to preparing myself to perform 60 Sec, it's more of a physical preparation. For my upper body, I would do some lateral movement to warm up my back. The movement that I do in the piece, I relate a lot of it with Krump, which consists of a lot of arms and upper body movement. I normally start with some light drills for my arms: jabs, arm swings and some general movement in the arms to get the blood flowing. As we travel a lot within the piece, I focus on some light jogging and cardio to warm up my legs. I would also do squats, star jumps, and high knees."

Mental

"I find the piece quite freeing, so I like to be relaxed before the performance, playing a few games before, by myself or with the other dancers. This just helps with the morale of the group as one of the concepts in the piece is about energy transfer, so having that connection in the changing room is important. I also go through certain sections of the piece to feel extra confident before performing it. Listening to the music really just helps with putting me in that space and world which the piece creates."

Food

"This all depends on how long our day has been, but I won't normally eat something heavy or a lot of food. Instead, I will only have a light sandwich with something sugary to keep me energised. I always make sure I have water and some other juices."

Technical

"This normally doesn't take too long. The main thing for me is to focus on my spacing, where my lighting points are, knowing where everyone is in the space and knowing my bearings. I also map out the space and even make notes on certain marks on the floor to use as reference, as we don't normally use spikes to map out the space. But in general, just getting used to the space that I'm performing in."

Post-performance

"It can go one of two ways for me; by the end of it, I can feel quite drained, as the piece at times is quite explosive. This depends on how big the space is and how much I must travel. So, I like to have time to lay down and catch my breath, rest and stretch. Or my energy is still high, and I'm not as tired or fatigued. In this situation, I would normally just relax with some light stretching, depending on what I did in the performance. As a group, after every performance, we would always talk about how it went and how it felt for us individually, which is a nice way to end a show."

VIDEOS

Use the videos below to follow a warm-up, creative tasks, Far From The Norm repertoire, and a cool down with Botis Seva and Far From The Norm artists.

 videos available on [Vimeo](#)

Warm-up with Botis Seva

<https://vimeo.com/560332138/80a44971dd>

Creative task – solo – led by Botis Seva

<https://vimeo.com/560341403/90dd97ab6a>

Creative task – 1 – led by Botis Seva with Victoria Shulungu

<https://vimeo.com/560360331/53d14cd134>

Creative task – 2 – led by Botis Seva with Jordan Douglas

<https://vimeo.com/560369091/7cfa305fbc>

Creative task – Duet 1 – led by Botis Seva with Jordan Douglas & Victoria Shulungu

<https://vimeo.com/560373825/4e6011bf60>

Creative task – Duet 2 – led by Botis Seva with Jordan Douglas & Victoria Shulungu

<https://vimeo.com/560389459/17121254d0>

Creative game – 1 – led by Victoria Shulungu

<https://vimeo.com/560389595/c26be30fe2>

Creative game - 2 - led by Jordan Douglas

<https://vimeo.com/560403554/97dce231d8>

Repertoire phrase 1 – Energy – led by Victoria Shulungu

<https://vimeo.com/560403796/7ed50be783>

Repertoire phrase 2 – Gesture – led by Jordan Douglas

<https://vimeo.com/560413689/37ac004eee>

Repertoire phrase 3 – Travelling – led by Victoria Shulungu

<https://vimeo.com/560415669/2ee50ed7d1>

Repertoire phrase 4 – Energy – led by Jordan Douglas

<https://vimeo.com/560472288/03d60b3a12>

Repertoire phrase 5 – Duet – led by Victoria Shulungu


<https://vimeo.com/560489624/ef4238b69a>

Cool down with Victoria Shulungu

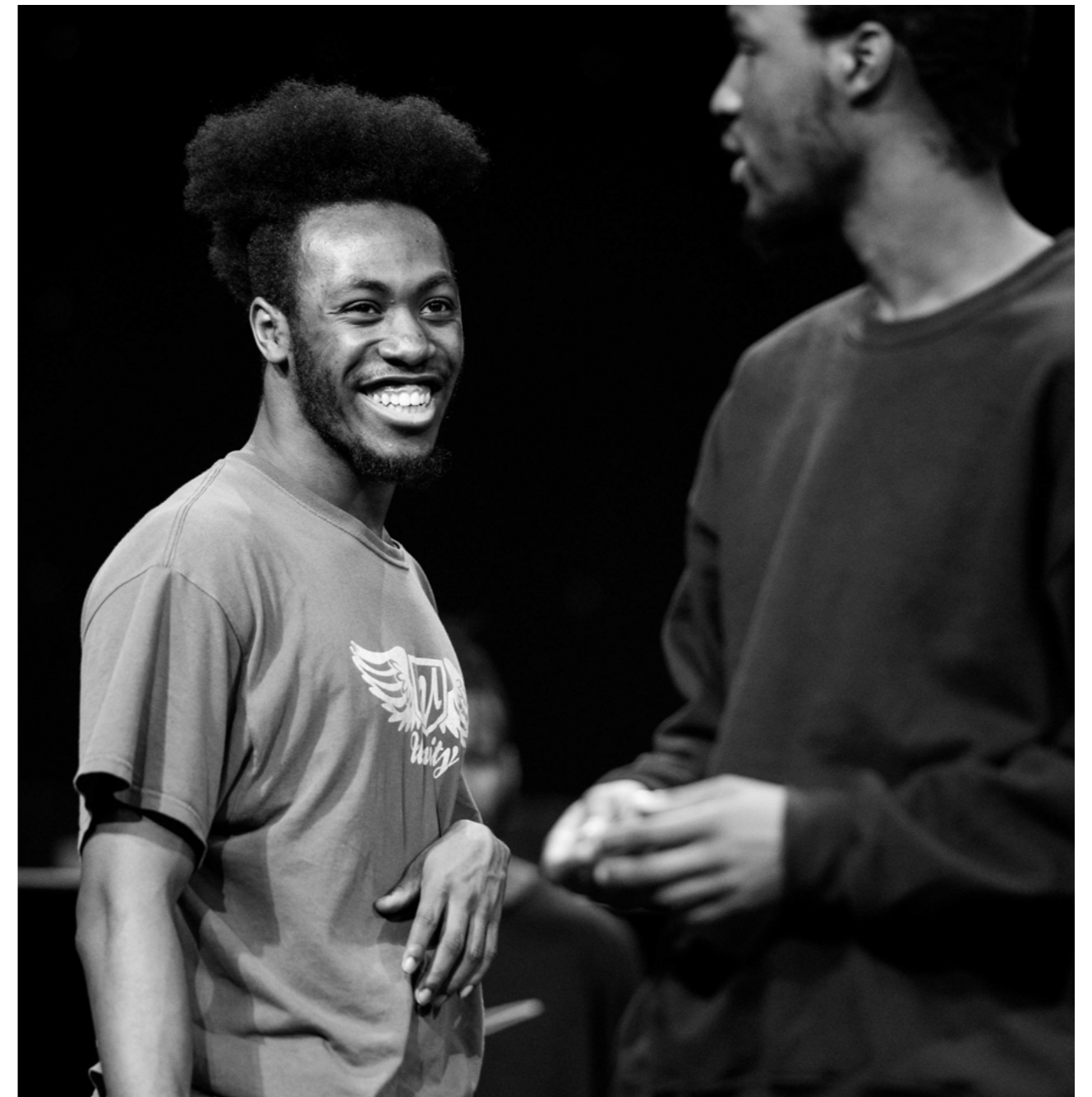
<https://vimeo.com/560477046/11b27cd18f>

SUGGESTED MUSIC

Please find a music playlist below compiled by Far From The Norm dance artist Jordan Douglas that you can use for warm-ups, creative tasks and games, and cool-downs. You can use the 60 Sec soundtrack for the repertoire or find a track at the right BPM for your students.

 music available on [Spotify](#)

[Access music playlist here](#)





Barking & Dagenham