

mapdance

2020

A Souvenir





Gwen, Beth, Kate and Madison

A window into the world of *map*

This is the story of a year to remember, a year that had consequences across the globe because of the Coronavirus pandemic. A group of MA students at the University of Chichester lost part of their longed-for degree experience through lockdown because of the government's decree to 'stay at home'. They were members of *mapdance* and they had spent months preparing a tour, and time before that dreaming about it. Students on other MA programmes - Advanced Practice; Choreography and Professional Practice; Dance Research - also found their studies disrupted, and while the university did its collective best to keep things going, it was curtailment of the performers' tour that made the biggest difference to the individuals concerned. Besides, long before *mapdance* 2020 revealed itself in performance, the word on campus was that this was an exceptional group.

mapdance is the University of Chichester's MA dance company (the name is an amalgamation of initials from MA Performance Dance). A group of selected students engage in an intense programme of practical and theoretical study. The character of each year's *mapdance* is formed by a combination of individuality and group harmony. The dancers 'grow' into a company through working (and socialising) together, spending months in class and rehearsal - and taking time off to do what twenty somethings do. Then they go off on tour.

Chichester's *mapdance* is a force to be reckoned with among postgraduate dance companies. This is for many reasons, not least because of performances that win audience acclaim and because of the number of aspirants who apply to join the company.

To win a place with *map*, candidates undergo a rigorous day on campus of auditions, including morning classes in ballet and

contemporary dance. In the afternoon, repertoire sequences to test speed of learning steps and style, are taught by members of the previous year's *map*. The audition day ends with an interview in which auditionees need to show both a passion for dance and their potential to engage with serious academic study.

mapdance's cumulative history over thirteen years enables co-artistic directors Yael Flexer and Detta Howe to secure work from dance makers of international standing, including Liz Aggiss, Richard Alston, Lea Anderson, Jonathan Burrows, Lucinda Childs, Kevin Finnan and Shobana Jeyasingh. They also give choreographic opportunities to mid-career and emerging artists. For 2020, Gary Clarke, Noa Shadur and Ceyda Tanc were commissioned to make work while Jose Agudo's *Inside the Animal* was revived from 2019.

Over the course of a year *map* dancers work hard and become disciplined team members. The group ethos matters. They will be challenged by combining intensive periods of work in the studio, and on stage with research projects, for at the end of their year of study, all *mappers* must produce a dissertation. This requires a substantial piece of writing, often presented in tandem with practical work and choreographic research.

Membership of *map* brings something more than marks and reports. It is a way of 'being' that the graduates will take on into whatever career opens up to them.

What follows in this souvenir booklet is the account of a year of disaster and triumph, one that ultimately saw thirteen young women emerge as stronger individuals, better performers and more confident thinkers. It is the story of what was lost - and of a brilliant recovery initiative.

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With special thanks to Nadine Meisner

Cover: *mapdance* 2020, Xi *Inside the Animal*

Back Cover: *AYIN*, under a moonlit sky

Below: *mapdance* 2020, after the performance



A bunch of fierce women

Ask what is special about *mapdance* 2020, and Madison's answer is immediate. 'We are a bunch of fierce women,' she says. 'Thirteen fiery females in the space, which is epic.' The idea of ferocity is, the dancers say, because they are highly motivated and drive themselves uncompromisingly into all that they need to do.

'I think there is this underlying notion that if you are a male dancer you kind of get the spotlight; no matter what, you are super-empowered,' continues Madison. 'This year we don't need men to lift us up. It's nice to have female empowerment. We lift each other up.'

Beth agrees: 'We are women working towards empowerment together. We are all very individual, and quite clear about who we are as people, but when we come together the dynamic really works.' Sophie develops the point, saying, 'Even in technique we might all be doing the same things, but we are not trying to be copies of each other'

The team is certainly diverse. Olivia points out, 'We come from different parts of the world, but I have never before been in a room full of dancers who are unafraid to show they are individual. No one is afraid to dance as they want to dance, and this is like a breath of fresh air.'

Gabrielle presses the point, observing, 'There is something about dance that invites comparison, competition and doubt, but with the group this year I haven't felt that. I don't feel judged but instead feel supported by everyone. This has been an incredible group of people.'

Inside the Animal, The ShowRoom



mapdance 2020

Detta Howe and Yael Flexer

artistic directors of *mapdance*

'Every year we bring a group of dancers together in the hope that they will grow as dancers, as people and as a company. This year has surpassed our expectations by bringing us talented and inspiring young women who, together, have brought to life four challenging pieces of choreography. It is always a privilege to watch the company grow and this year has been exceptional. We know the dancers will all go on to achieve great things.'

mapdance 2020 have turned out to be an extraordinary group of intelligent, fierce and powerful women. It has been an honour and privilege to teach them this year and we are incredibly proud of each and every one of them. Watching them work in the studio and perform on stage prior to Covid-19, and for our September shows, is remarkable. They were already hard working and rigorous prior to lock down, now we feel we are working with fully fledged professionals who know what needs to be done and take full responsibility for the repertoire, themselves and each other. Despite having to dance and train at home since the end of March they have worked tirelessly to keep fit and rehearse and have grown through the process.

They are determined, resilient and, what is even more moving to witness, truly compassionate and supportive of one another, holding each other through what has, certainly for some of them, been a harrowing time. We take our hats off to them and have to admit that we have been moved to tears several times watching them in the studio and performing in front of the September audiences. Their evening of works is one of the most exciting ones we have had and we are confident that this particular group of students will go far; not only are they fantastic dance artists, they are also full of wisdom. Throughout the year we have repeatedly said: "can you be our students every year please!"'

Message to the *mappers*

Please don't be strangers, we are here for you when you need us, beyond graduation - and we do not take our role as mentors lightly. Despite its objective difficulties this has been a wonderful year and we wish you all the best of luck on your onwards journey.

Much love

Yael and Detta

mapdance 2020



mapdance 2020: where the dancers come from



Gwen Ballard

What is your nationality?
British

Where were you born?
Newcastle upon Tyne

Where did you grow up?
Cullercoats (the coast of the North East)

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
BA (Hons) Professional Dance Practice at Dance City, Newcastle

Where is your home?
Newcastle upon Tyne

Where were you for most of lockdown?
Cullercoats - meaning I spent a lot of time walking along the beach!

Where are you today, 18 August 2020?
Cullercoats

Where would you like to be in a year's time and what would you like to be doing?

I'm happy to be based anywhere so long as I'm still able to be involved with dance, ideally working on projects with performance opportunities. I can imagine I will still be North-East based this time next year but who knows! At some point in my life I would love to go and dance elsewhere in Europe.

Madison Burgess

What is your nationality?
Canadian

Where were you born?
Newmarket, Canada

Where did you grow up?
Beeton, Ontario, Canada

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
York University: BFA Dance (Hons), specialising in performance and choreography

Where is your home?
Home for me is where the heart is. I have a little piece of my heart in several places of the world; Canada, England and Ireland.

Where were you for most of lockdown?
Chichester

Where are you today, 18 August 2020?
I was filming a short dance film with *mapdance* alumnus Amy Morvell for her *Lockdown Moving Images Series*, and in the afternoon I was on Zoom training for my new job as Youth Programme Director for Toronto's City Dance Corps, and teaching!

Where would you like to be in a year's time and what would you like to be doing?
I would absolutely love to be back in Chichester, freelancing as a performer and teacher.



Olivia Capon-Russell

What is your nationality?
British

Where were you born?
Kent

Where did you grow up?
Tunbridge Wells

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
Middlesex University, BA (Hons) Dance Performance

Where is your home?
My home is now back in Tunbridge Wells in my own little flat, but I'm hoping to move back to beautiful West Sussex in the coming year.

Where were you for most of lockdown?
Chichester ... whilst it was a lovely place, and I was able to get out and explore SO much outdoor space, I was incredibly lonely until I was reunited with my flatmates.

Where are you today, 18 August 2020?
I was at work, planning a safe return to normality for my department when things start to go back to normal.

Where would you like to be in a year's time and what would you like to be doing?
I would like to move back to the West Sussex area, possibly with access to the South Downs as I love the outdoors. I would like to have a set plan to complete a PhD, with a goal to lecture and make positive changes to the dance world in the future. I would like the world to have come back to some sort of 'normality', and to be part of a dance company, maybe looking into the role of dance animateurs.



Wenyu Li

What is your nationality?
Chinese

Where were you born?
China

Where did you grow up?
Shenzhen, China

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
University of Chichester BA Dance (Hons)

Where is your home?
China

Where were you for most of lockdown?
I stayed in Chichester

Where are you today, 18 August 2020?
Still in Chichester

Where would you like to be in a year's time and what would you like to be doing?
I want to go back to China and I would like to be a teacher.

Sophie Gaffney

What is your nationality?
British

Where were you born?
North-West, England

Where did you grow up?
Bolton, Tonge moor

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
Leeds Beckett University. BA Dance (Hons) Dance

Where is your home?
Bolton

Where were you for most of lockdown?
Bolton

Where are you today, 18 August 2020?
The Bread Basket, my father's bakery

Where would you like to be in a year's time and what would you like to be doing?
Dancing and performing professionally for a company somewhere in the UK or even further afield - internationally.



Yuan-Chen Cheng – known as Orange*

What is your nationality?
Taiwanese

Where were you born?
Chiayi City, Taiwan

Where did you grow up?
Chiayi City, Taiwan until 18 years old and moved to Zhunan City, Taiwan

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
I studied in Taipei, Taiwan, BFA, National University of Arts. My major was ballet; minor, contemporary dance

Where is your home?
Now I am living in Zhunan City

*Orange was the nickname my classmates in elementary school gave me. They felt the pronunciation of my name in Taiwanese was similar to the Taiwanese for "orange". So I kept this name in Chichester.



Where were you for most of lockdown?
I went back to Taiwan before UK lockdown, and I did my quarantine in my home for 14 Days. Fortunately, my country didn't do lockdown, so I didn't experience it.

Where are you today, 18 August 2020?
Having a nice day in Hsinchu City with my mom.

Where would you like to be in a year's time and what would you like to be doing?
This year was difficult and challenged me a lot, I just wish I could get a full-time dancer contract after I finish touring in September. I hope I can perform on the stage forever, because I love dance so much!

Natasha Margerison - known as Tash

What is your nationality?
I am Zimbabwean and British

Where were you born?
Mutare, Zimbabwe

Where did you grow up?
Triangle, Zimbabwe and East London

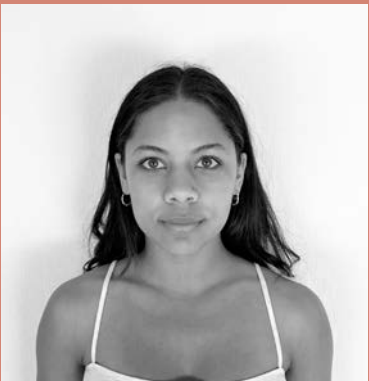
Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
University of Chichester BA (Hons) Dance

Where is your home?
London/Denmark

Where were you for most of lockdown?
Partly in London and partly in Denmark

Where are you today, 18 August 2020?
In Chichester, working with GradLab[★]

Where would you like to be in a year's time; what would you like to be doing?
Graduating with my Master's degree



Bethany Mitchell - known as Beth

What is your nationality?
British

Where were you born?
Hastings

Where did you grow up?
Ore Village in Hastings

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
University of Chichester, BA (Hons) Dance

Where is your home?
Hastings



Where were you for most of lockdown?
In Hastings (with my parents, two brothers and one sister) and Chichester

Where are you today, 18 August 2020?
Chichester

Where would you like to be in a year's time; what would you like to be doing?
I would like to be in a company or auditioning for companies while also networking with professionals and teaching in some capacity. I would also love to travel and so could be in any country this time next year.



Gabrielle MacAllister

What is your nationality?
British

Where were you born?
Bath

Where did you grow up?
Calne, Wiltshire

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
Institute of the Arts Barcelona - BA (Hons) Dance Performance

[★] GradLab, which is run by The Point, Eastleigh, provides selected dance graduates with their first opportunity to dance in, or make a work, professionally. The Grads are mentored and given studio space to work in. They attend workshops to help with the demands of running a dance company, and are encouraged to build relationships with venues that take touring companies. Gabrielle was also a member of GradLab 2020.

Hannah Scott

What is your nationality? British

Where were you born? Rosie Hospital, Cambridge

Where did you grow up? Royston, Cambridgeshire

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
The School of Ballet Theatre UK - Ballet Performance BA Hons validated by the University of West London

Where is your home?
A little village called Croydon, near Royston

Where were you for most of lockdown?
At home, on walks, in the garden

Where are you today, 18 August 2020? Chichester

Where would you like to be in a year's time and what would you like to be doing?
I would love to be in a dance company or teaching dance in a dance school.



Zhiyi Xie - known as Sherry[★]

What is your nationality? I am Chinese

Where were you born? Mianyang, Scichuan Province, China

Where did you grow up? Mianyang

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
I did my BA at Jiangnan University (BA Choreography) in China and completed my final BA year at the University of Surrey as an exchange student

Where is your home? Mianyang

Where were you for most of lockdown?
During the lockdown, I stayed in Chichester all the time and did my dissertation research

Where are you today, 18 August 2020? Chichester



Where would you like to be in a year's time and what would you like to be doing?

I would like to be a dancer as my first step into work, and I am planning to attend auditions for Beijing and Guangzhou contemporary dance companies, and Jinxing Dance Company based in Shanghai.

[★] 'I am called Sherry because the first part of the word sounds quite close to the way my name, Zhiyi, is pronounced.'

Kate Welch

What is your nationality?
British

Where were you born?
Farnborough, Kent

Where did you grow up?
I grew up in a small village called Biggin Hill in Westerham, Kent

Where did you do your first degree - and what was the degree?
I did my BA (Hons) here at Chichester in Dance

Where is your home? My home is still in the same tiny village and the same house I grew up in.

Where were you for most of lockdown?
As soon as we went into lockdown I packed up all the stuff from my house in Chichester and moved back home. I have been living with my mum, dad and brother since March.

Where are you today, 18 August 2020?
At home in Biggin Hill

Where would you like to be in a year's time and what would you like to be doing?
In a year's time I would love to have started my career as a freelance artist. I would love to be teaching and dancing as much as possible.



Xi Zhou (1st name pronounced She)

What is your nationality?
Chinese

Where were you born?
Hengyang, Hunan Province, South China

Where did you grow up?
Hengyang

Where did you do your first degree -and what was the degree?
Sichuan Conservatory of Music, China. Chinese classical dance performance and education

Where is your home?
Hunan Province, which is in the south of China

Where were you for most of lockdown? At home

Where are you today, 18 August 2020? In Guangzhou, China

Where would you like to be in year's time and what would you like to be doing?

My dream is to continue working as a professional dancer and tour around the world. But I don't know if it will come true. I think being a teacher in a university would be a good job as well, since I am interested in working with others and I have experience in teaching. [For Xi's other dream, see page 24.]



From East Asia

Four postgraduate students from East Asia were members of *mapdance* 2020 and all of them proved 'stand out' dancers. When we met for an interview on Zoom, Orange was in Taipei; Xi was in south China while Wenyu and Sherry had remained in Chichester. Firm friends by then, the four had not known each other beforehand.

They chose to audition for Chichester's MA Performance: Dance for various reasons. Wenyu had completed the full three years of her BA Dance (Hons) at the University of Chichester and wanted to continue by joining *map*. Sherry was a graduate from Jiangnan University and had spent her final undergraduate year as an exchange student at the University of Surrey. She had heard that *mapdance*'s programme was good, and one of her reasons for selecting Chichester was because of the tour.

'When I finished the course, I had built new confidence about dancing'

Xi, a graduate of Sichuan Conservatory of Music, selected Chichester because she thought it would give her a passport to a career as a dancer. 'Actually,' she says, 'before I came to *map*, I thought I wouldn't be a contemporary dancer because in China there are a lot of limitations and not many opportunities. But when I finished the course, I had built new confidence about dancing.'

Orange graduated from the University of Taipei and selected *mapdance* over other UK student dance companies for various reasons.

Studying in English was a challenge for all of them, especially as the MA demands theoretical as well as practical work. Wenyu and Sherry were obviously accustomed to British life, but Orange and Xi came to the UK before the official start of their *map* year to attend a Pre-Sessional Language and Study Skills programme for international students on the university's Bognor Regis campus.

'Every time my body felt really free and relaxed'

Ask how different they found technique classes in Britain from what they had been used to, and their initial response was that it in the main they weren't so very different— except that of course the practical work pushed them much further. Sherry found that 'all the contemporary dance classes gave me different things – more style and more technique. They all [the different tutors] helped me understand so much more about my body.'

She continues, 'In every class, the technique was hard, and we needed to have strong core strengths. I learnt lots of new ideas and different styles. Yael taught us some improvisation skills and that was really interesting. We had some Feldenkrais sessions with Detta and that's a technique that can heal our body and teach us how to release our muscles and bones. Every time my body felt really free and relaxed. As dancers we need to

know how to improve our technique and find more power, but we also need to know how to release and recover.'

Xi continues, saying, 'I feel the same as Sherry because I like the freedom of combining traditional dance with contemporary dance, which is what I am trying to do now that I am back in China.'

Wenyu says 'Abi was the teacher who most inspired me. Her dance style is technical and I really love it. I enjoy feeling the release in my body.'

Before Chichester, Orange had more experience in ballet than contemporary dance but of course the balance changed. She singles out Greig's class, saying, 'it was exciting to learn some Merce Cunningham skills, which I hadn't done before.' She learnt about the importance of thinking not just about the dance's external shape but also how to move with inner awareness. 'Initially Yael's class felt quite simple,' she remembers, 'but then I began to understand how difficult it was to reach some of the movement. My body was too stuck before, but this way of moving helped me change.'

Xi, Orange, Sherry and Wenyu belong to the generation that will contribute to the next wave of creative dance in East Asia. The work of the four choreographers tested them, but challenge was their reason for doing the degree. They were hungry for new ideas and other ways of thinking. Orange and Xi found something in particular that 'spoke' to them in Ceyda's choreography. 'I was surprised at how readily I could connect with the choreography because some of the Turkish material is quite similar to Chinese folk dance,' says

Orange. Xi also valued Ceyda's movement language 'because she combined traditional dance with contemporary dance. That is what I want to do in the future.'

'I was surprised at how readily I could connect with the choreography'

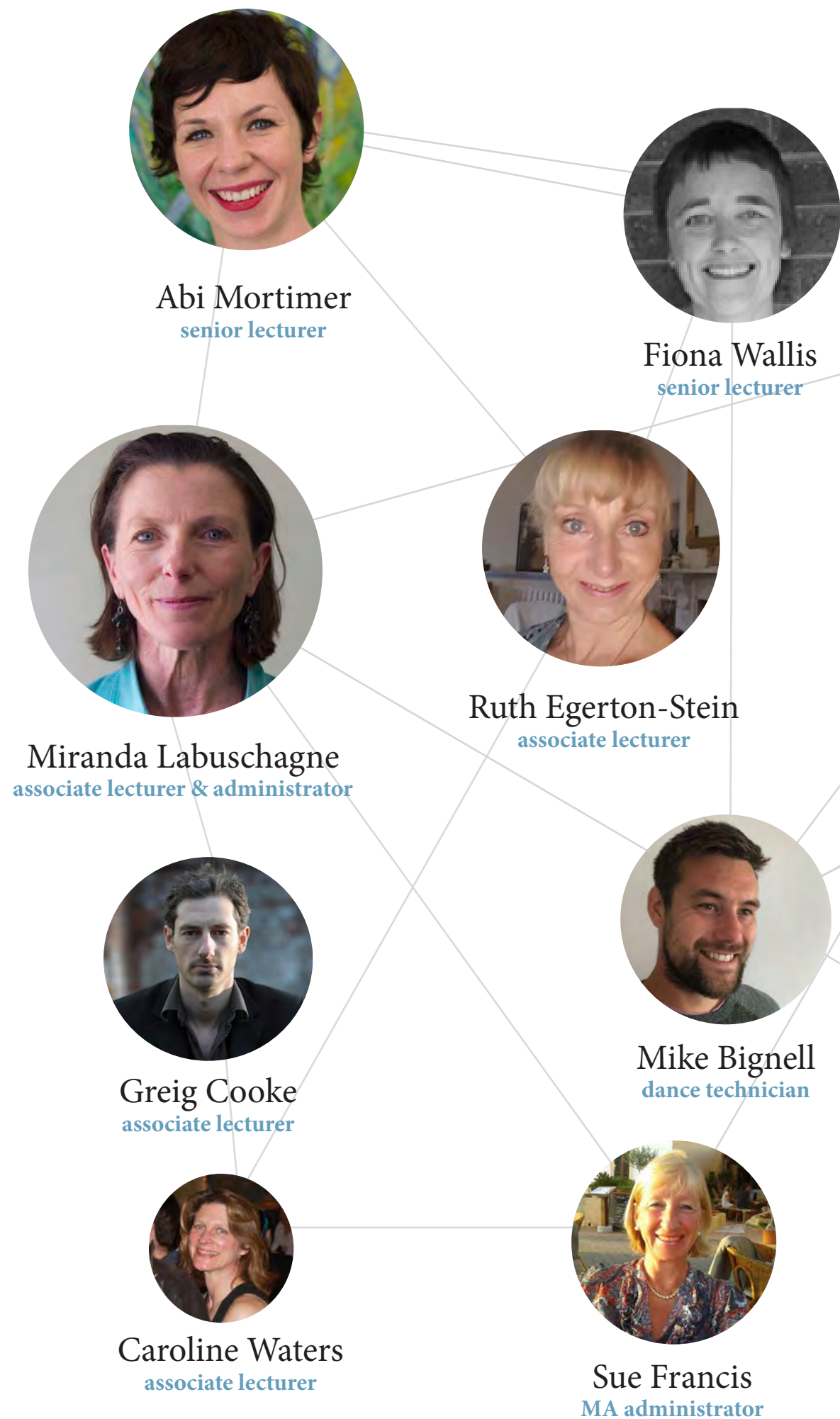
Dealing with complex theory, particularly in some of the optional modules, tested them to other kinds of limits. Xi points out, 'it was difficult to understand because I seldom touched on theory during my BA. I needed to build a new system of thinking.'

'Because I studied in the UK last year,' says Sherry, 'it was a bit easier this year. I understand more.' Orange adds, 'but it's very difficult because the structure is so different from Chinese writing. However, the dissertation classes bring a lot of benefits about learning how to write and structure and how to make a bibliography. I need to know these things.'

For Wenyu, 'theory helps me to figure out how to set a task and clarify my ideas. I really like Laban's analysis of effort, time and space. Now I have a different way of thinking about choreography.'

In September 2020, Wenyu and Orange presented choreography on film as part of a special evening for dissertation presentations. They had worked all summer making their films, and both proved notable, not just in movement but also concept and filming. Sherry and Xi planned to show their own films in January 2021. In that month, like all the other *mapdance* 2020 members, they were also due to deliver the other part of their dissertation; several thousand words of academic writing that would signal completion of their MA. □







Music: Alex McCall/LX MAC Productions (original score)
Costumes: Rosie Whiting
Lighting: Natalie Rowland

‘AYIN’*

Ceyda Tanc

In the studio

Sherry: ‘Ceyda’s work is like a religious ceremony because of the light and the costumes. I think she is brilliant to make a hybrid of Turkish and contemporary dance styles. I love the atmosphere of the secret.’

Tash: ‘Ceyda’s piece was exciting because I had worked with her for the last 3 years [as an undergraduate] when she taught us technique. So it was a step up to move into rep with her choreography. She included our ideas in the process, working a lot with direction so the piece feels like ours.’

Beth: ‘I think Ceyda’s work suited us because it is female and interesting.’

Gwen: ‘I struggled with Ceyda’s process the most, partly because it was the beginning of our map journey but also because her style was alien to my body. Yet it gives me a sense of achievement. It wasn’t as alien as I thought, and it helped me – a fast mover – move more slowly. The more I have done it, the more it makes me realise that that is why I love dance’

Gabrielle: ‘I feel my body loves Ceyda’s piece the most. Her influence is from her Turkish dance, which is tribal. I really connect with things like this – especially when they are quite earthy and seem to connect to a deep place in a culture.’ As she speaks, Gabrielle’s eyes and hands dance so that she seems to be in touch with something of that cultural awareness, deep in her being.

From the front

AYUN announces in sound, with the interweaving of a drone, plucked strings and a man’s voice singing a wordless chant. This establishes the Turkish connection, with suggestions of something mysterious. It continues as the dancers enter, dressed in flowing dresses and trousers in colours of cinnamon, clove and paprika. They sink to their knees in an obeisance and reach out with their arms before flexing a delicately poised hand upwards, then lowering it as if to bestow peace on the assembled community.

Then the dancers travel across the space, walking and lunging with a gentle momentum, as if a soft breeze is guiding them onwards. They coalesce into moments of unity that underline their sense of belonging together. They gather into circles as if they are connected to the earth and their movement is organic. The dance grows stronger pushing them into shapes and patterns that are increasingly dynamic. There is a power in this that speaks not just of outer shape but also of inner awareness. The dancers appear to be perpetuating an ancient ritual so that it seems as if we, the audience, gaze on something pre-ordained and secret. To recognise this is to understand something of what is implied by the title, for AYIN is the Hebrew word for eye, and the reference is to something deeper than the simple act of looking. This is a dance to be looked at through many layers.

Turkish-born **Ceyda** (pronounced Jeyda) **Tanc** is an independent choreographer, and director of the all-female company Ceyda Tanc Dance. Her choreographic commissions include work for: Brighton Festival, MOTUS, Hull Dance, Dance Woking and The Point. She owns a multi-arts studio in Brighton and runs an education programme for youth companies. She is also an associate lecturer at the University of Chichester.

mapdance 2020

‘Suddenly We Were Alone’

Noa Shadur

Music: Acid Arab Feat. Cem Yildiz; Pulse Incomplete Shifted
Costume: Rosalind Noctor
Lighting: Mike Bignell

In the studio

Tash: ‘It was really interesting working with Noa, who has an extremely intelligent brain, and knew exactly what she wanted in all the sections. She had this chronological structure that made sense when it was all pieced together. Being in it, you didn’t realise how effective it was until you saw it from the outside and recognised its beautiful construction.’

Hannah: ‘Noa gave certain movements names such as ‘Fred Astaire’ and ‘tango’. Big quick arm movements were known as ‘Frank Sinatra’ and jumps were ‘bambis’. There was also the butterfly’. As she mentions ‘butterfly’. Hannah shapes her hands and body instinctively into the image of a butterfly.

Beth: ‘Noa’s rehearsals were pretty relentless and very specific. And she always noticed if we were doing it wrong. It was a struggle to get through 30 minutes non-stop. But she gave us confidence and it became one of my favourite pieces.’

Sherry: ‘Noa’s piece felt really new and different. I couldn’t fully understand her ideas or what it was that she wanted to give to the audience, but people who saw it thought her piece was very deep.’

Beth: ‘In the dress rehearsal, when Sophie and I had repeated the hip-hop section at the end, we were standing in the wings and thought we would add in some extra poses. But Noa saw us and shouted across the studio, “Sophie, Beth, what was that? No poses.” We were trying to get creative, but we didn’t think she was watching ... we still joke about that moment.’

Noa writes: ‘Suddenly We Were All Alone attempts to uncover the origins of steps, to rebuild the physical score of a society coming into being, carrying its past to update its present, using folklore vocabulary to examine a community’s movement in space and time.’

From the front

With a stage bathed in soft red light, and dancers clad in white outfits that draw attention to their athletic bodies, *Suddenly We Were Alone* celebrates the precision of rhythm, shape and vitality. This is dance that functions with the efficiency of a well-oiled organism making it seem as if the dancers have become parts of a driving mechanism. Yet they are also a highly organised social group, marking one step to a beat with a tight, formalised energy.

Often they break into a more relaxed vernacular style, reordering themselves into small groups. There are hints of popular culture as two dancers execute a lively tap dance, interspersing bare feet shuffles with sudden high kicks. Other dancers, also bare footed, cross the stage with the itsy-bitsy look of walking in high heeled shoes.

“Pretty relentless, very specific.”

The lighting changes to glowing green and, as the dancers call out variously words such as ‘go’ and ‘now’, the energy grows more urgent. The organism has arrived at maximum efficiency and the stage is again filled with movement. Exposed in the light’s gleaming brightness, and a shade of green that catches the whiteness of the playsuits, the dancers must dance full out. There is nothing to hide behind.

Noa Shadur is an independent choreographer & video artist based in Tel Aviv and recipient of the Emerging Choreographer Award by the Israeli Ministry of Culture for 2009, 2014 and 2017. Her choreographic commissions include work for: Inbal Dance Theater Company, Tel Aviv and Field Survey (film) produced by POLIN Museum in Warsaw, Poland. Recent projects include, Shusterman Visiting Artist Program at the University of Indiana, choreography for the Theatre Play, Ghetto by Joshua Sobol, produced in Beijing.



mapdance 2020



'Inside the Animal' Jose Agudo

Music: Gustavo Santaolalla; Joji Hirota and London Taiko Drummers;
Philipp Sageder and Bernhard Schimpelsberger
Costumes: Rosalind Noctor
Lighting: Natalie Rowland

In the studio

From *mapdance 2019*, Estelle Banthorpe, Jodie Mai Evans, Corrie Mckenzie and Claudia Tonietto returned to teach Jose Agudo's *Inside the Animal*. We asked Claudia about the experience.

Q: What were the challenges?

Claudia: 'It was difficult to explain Jose's style because the dancers hadn't met him. Working with him is a whole new experience, and the experience of understanding his way of moving feeds into the piece. Our first week with Jose [in 2018] was mostly spent learning about his way of moving. This year's *mappers* were learning the material without the knowledge of where it was coming from, so that was difficult.'

Q: What is significant about Jose's style?

Claudia: [after a long pause for thought] 'accent, detail, inner awareness and a lot of articulation. Different movements have different ways of using the breath that gives the dynamic. I remember Jose being very detailed when he was describing how we would use our muscles and what muscles were engaged. He spoke a lot about the navel, the pelvis and the movement coming from the centre of the body. Even if the movements were small, it might look like one body part moving but actually the whole body was involved.'

Q: What did you feel when you were dancing it last year?

Claudia: 'I went through a whole journey with that piece. It was very intense and difficult and at the beginning I think I had Jose's presence with me. As I got a bit more comfortable and made it a bit more my piece, I realised that you have to give it all you have but it gives you back a lot of energy as well. With that kind of energy, you can carry on and keep going, even if you are exhausted.'

When Jose came to fine-tune his piece, the students remember:

Madison: 'Jose challenged me as an artist: I had never moved that fast.'

Wenyu: 'In Jose's work you have to use your muscles differently and think more about the core. You really need to breathe, not just to pretend to breathe. The beginning is a bit like kung fu.'

Olivia: 'Jose knew exactly what he wanted to achieve. We just had to crack on and do it. Then he would say, "here are corrections, do it again".'

'He is so physical; his work trains your body.'

Hannah: 'I struggled with Jose's piece. I couldn't breathe properly because I was breathing from my ribs, then Tash taught me how to breathe from my tummy and I got it.'

Orange: 'He is so physical; his work trains your body.'

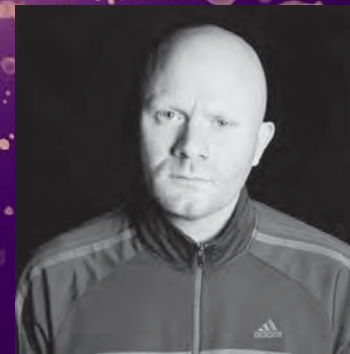
Gabrielle: 'The work is tribal, and animalistic and I love the power that it has when we are all together travelling back, and it feels like a fight.'

From the front

Across a darkened stage, a hauntingly, meditative middle eastern sound is produced on wood and string instruments. Creatures steal into what feels like a forest, crossing the space on hands and feet, like cats intent on a secret mission. More creatures enter, movement oozing sinuously through their bodies. The music changes and beating drums together with syncopated clapping set up pulsating rhythms. These drive the dancer-creatures into furious spinning and weaving. The lighting picks out hands, faces and swinging lengths of hair to add to a drama that makes it seem as if ego has yielded to collective drive.

Then the organisation changes, and smaller groups, some chucking their arms forward, is counterpointed by others moving with slow deliberateness. A line across the front of the stage is formed, and the dancer-creatures throw their arms forwards as they edge backwards, one step at a time. Setting fear against survival they seem to re-establish their territory at the same time as they rid themselves of something. Is this what the title *Inside the Animal* signifies? Impact comes from the merging of the physical with the (idea of the) metaphorical. When the dancers reach the back of their space they sink to the ground, as if their force is spent. But only momentarily. Then they rush together again and their togetherness turns them into a choir, for they draw the audience's eye and ear to rapid limb movement in harmony with pulsating breathing.

Jose Agudo is a London-based, independent choreographer whose career began as a flamenco dancer in Andalusia. His interests widened to take in contemporary and kathak dance, studying with Akram Khan he discovered intriguing links between flamenco and kathak. He has worked with celebrated European companies, including Charleroi/Danses, Ballet de Marseille, T.R.A.S.H., Shobana Jeyasingh Dance and Akram Khan Company. His commissions include work for: Phoenix Dance Theatre, English National Ballet School, National Company of Malta, ACE Dance & Music, Cape Dance Company, London Contemporary Dance School, Area Jeune Ballet, Bodhi Project (SEAD) and NORRDANS.



'On Your Marks' Gary Clarke

Music: Various
Costumes: Rosie Whiting
Lighting: Mike Bignell

In the studio

Hannah: Gary's piece is really energetic, and you know the audience are enjoying it. I like the story telling and being in character – it makes you express more.

Gabrielle: I love theatrical work and throwing myself into things. We did a lot of throwing ourselves in different ways and letting go. It was exhausting and at the end you just felt like jelly. Gary tells a story from a quite political place. He created something dark and deep – you knew that it was something that caused pain – but also made it quite funny.

Sophie: With Gary, every day was completely different and challenging. He was very interesting to work with and taught me a lot about myself.

Orange: I think Gary's piece was my favourite because he gave us a lot of theatrical material.

Kate: Gary's work challenged me in so many different ways. It was the hardest process. We all cried because we wanted to get it right. I wanted to do it so bloody good and to remember the counting [everyone nods at mention of counting] because I couldn't get it right. Once I did, oh thank God, it was the best feeling.

Wenyu: Specially in Gary's rehearsal I felt very nervous. Sometimes I can remember movement really quickly but sometimes not, and with Gary's piece I couldn't remember his details – and he wanted everything to be perfect. Sometimes I didn't feel good enough. But when he said it was ok, I felt better.

From the front

On Your Marks was inspired by the tradition of Dance Marathons that became part of American culture during the Great Depression. The piece opens with the sound of a wailing siren and with Tash crawling towards a microphone to announce, in a deadened voice, 'This is the dance of destiny'. What she means is that the dance we are about to witness demands that the dancers must keep dancing, and keep summoning up every bit of energy, till they drop. We are to imagine that they have already pushed themselves beyond human limits.

Now the dancers engage in half an hour of wildly throbbing dance (the competition) interspersed with hints of survival and (the necessities of) everyday life. They are in couples, dressed in gender-denoting trousers or skirts and sporting anonymising numbers on their backs. Around and around they go preening, jiggling and kicking – or collapsing. The situation is emphasised in placards held aloft by authority figures who walk across the stage instructing, 'please don't touch contestants' and informing, 'they have gone 3257 hours'. The dancers change tactic and behave like vaudevilian performers, seeking merit with popular dance. They drive through underlying ironies including the music's statement that 'life is just a bowl of cherries', but the effort of having to summon up fresh energies cannot be concealed. Offenbach's Cancan, the most boisterous music of all, might have signalled the

allure of showy high kicks. Instead, the dancers form a crocodile and, as if they are automatons, quick march round the stage. At the end a winner's bouquet is thrust into the hands of the woman who, with her partner, is still standing. But the question remains, is the prize worth the endurance?

Gary Clarke is an independent dance artist and choreographer based in Barnsley. Winner of many prestigious awards for his choreography, they include: a Critics Circle National Dance Award; a UK Theatre Award, the Herald Angel Award, and a fellowship from Northern School of Contemporary Dance. Choreographers he has worked with include: Matthew Bourne, Lloyd Newson and Lea Anderson. His choreographic commissions include work for: Opera North, Sky Arts, Akademi, StopGap Dance Company and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

D U N D E E . . . a l e a p into the unknown

Ask what left the strongest impression of their *map* days, and Madison is the first to reply, saying, 'the triumph of that first performance in Dundee.' Most of her fellow *mappers* single out the Dundee experience. It lasted three days, involved workshops and a performance and felt like a leap into the unknown.

When Madison talks about the triumph of working on the campus of the Dundee and Angus College, implicit in her body language are the words, 'over adversity.' Not that there was anything actually adverse, but the students lacked confidence. They would need to discover a maturity beyond their years, for not only was this their first show, it was also their first complete run through.

Madison remembers that on the day of the performance, 'everything was rushed, but it was probably the best thing that could have happened because we didn't have time to think, and if we had too much time the nerves might have settled in. It was exhilarating, and after the performance we weren't even tired.'

In a year when nothing was normal, a complex round of different schedules meant that, they had only just finished learning Gary's piece and had not been able to test it alongside the other three works. Would they have the stamina to get through all four works?

Before finding out whether they were indefatigable, they had had to endure a long day of travel to Dundee, sitting in a tightly packed minibus for eleven hours with few pit stops. The dancers entertained themselves in various

ways, chatting, playing games and dozing. To everyone's amazement, Wenyu slept for the entire journey. When they arrived, she woke up and complained, according to her friends, 'I am so tired!'

Yael and the company's genial technician, Mike Bignell, shared the driving. 'It was OK,' says Mike, in the manner of someone who saw it as just one of those things that comes with the job. 'Yael and I played throwaway discussion points and Desert Island Discs, listening to our eight favourite pieces of music.' Mike continues, 'throughout the journey, Yael promised everyone the world, which is what she does on these long journeys.' By this he means that she sets everyone up to expect home comforts and a good supper on arrival. 'Yael is an optimist, but we always get there too late for proper food!'

Food - or the lack of it - was a problem. By the time they reached Dundee, and the Travel Lodge where they were staying, there was only one thing on their mind: supper. When you are a dancer in a touring company, food becomes disproportionately important. It is the fuel that provides the energy for the activity, and it must be nutritional rather than fast and greasy. It needs to be available at the right time, essentially in the late evening when the day's work is done. Dancers eat frugally during the day because they cannot dance with a full stomach. In the late evening, after class, rehearsal and performances - or a long day spent travelling - they are likely to be hungry.

However, that evening in Dundee it was late and there were only two options, either eating in a Japanese restaurant or getting a takeaway pizza. Those who did not like sushi had to fall back on pizzas only to discover that there was no central space to sit and eat, and so they had to pile together into one of their shared bedrooms. 'It was not', as Gwen says, 'the best place for eating greasy food.'

Superman driver Mike, somewhat ironically - given that he was the only one not dancing - booked himself into a late-opening gym, did a workout and managed to find a late-opening Tesco for his supper. But he is a seasoned 'tourer' prepared for all eventualities. 'I find a gym, and take some essentials, especially a plastic box for eating out of. I also pack an extension lead with four points - the plugs will be at the wrong end of the room - and a cable to watch films from my laptop on the hotel TV. Then everything is fine.'

*'the triumph of that
first performance in
Dundee'*



The Space

continued...

Next morning, the working day started at 8, and while Mike went to the performing venue - named The Space - to set up the rig, the thirteen dancers divided into groups to deliver workshop sessions to the dance students at Dundee and Angus College. The workshops were popular and everyone enjoyed them. Some of the studios looked out over snow-capped mountains, and Beth remembers Orange's excitement at seeing snow for the first time.

The real pressures began after the workshops, for there was no time for the *mappers* to do class, instead they had to go straight into a 'tech' rehearsal. Yael led the rehearsal, carefully running through the spacing for each work so as to make it look as if the choreography had been made for that particular venue. Mike went through technical specifications, checking all the light and sound cues, helped by Paul Gammie, Production Manager for The Space.

The Space is a dramatically styled performance building, and home to the Scottish School of Contemporary Dance. It is also beautifully equipped with a lighting rig that measures up to professional standards, and because the different works by Ceyda, Gary, Jose and Noa involved a more complex staging than usual for *map*, the tech-ing took time. Then there were vital tasks for the dancers, including a costume check; putting

on make-up and getting hold of a light snack. Without time to do a proper warm-up class. They went straight into their very first dress rehearsal and half an hour after the rehearsal ended, the show began.

Years of rigorous dance training build discipline and a sense of responsibility, and the dancers got through the show without mishap. The house was good, and the audience clapped showing they were happy. A professional dancer, who had been in the audience, commended the company for a 'fantastic' performance by a notably 'strong group of dancers'. (If further endorsement were needed, a week or so later applications came from students at the Scottish School of Contemporary Dance with requests to audition for a place in the following year's *mapdance*.)

After the performance they found a 24-hour Morrisons 'and it was the best thing ever,' according to Gabrielle, who remembers, 'we all ran and spent about twenty minutes looking for food. Then we got back on the bus and realised we had lost Wenyu ... she was still going round the shop.' Wenyu, as it happened, was engaged in an act of kindness for her fellow Asian students. They had suddenly realised there were gourmet sushi delicacies to be had, and she was busily making purchases for them.

Next day, came another round of workshops. Gabrielle, Orange and Beth went to the Beacon

continued...

Arts Centre in Glasgow to give a contemporary dance class to teenage girls from local schools and everyone else enjoyed the luxury of breakfast. Then the work was done, and it was time to head home. Eleven more hours of travel followed, and the team reached Chichester at midnight. Some of the students were dropped off on the outskirts of the city and those who remained helped Mike unload lighting, props and costumes and then went back to their homes, feeling confident that the test of that debut performance had been passed.

'I felt really proud of them'

Looking back, Yael observed: 'I felt really proud of them. Of course, there were bits to work on, but I thought, "my God, they are good, they

don't look like beginners at all". They came across really professionally.'

Later Paul Gammie, who has known *mapdance* for several years, said: 'It is always a pleasure to welcome *mapdance* to Dundee and have them in the building with us. They are very friendly and approachable, and the learners enjoy the workshops and the dance pieces - which are creative and innovative. They create a relaxed atmosphere; they are obviously working to a schedule but there isn't the same time pressure I have seen with other external companies. Because of the positive way they work together, you can feel and sense that they are enjoying what they are doing and dancing their fullest.' □

Inside the Animal, The Venue MK



Two further performances

There were to be two further performances in March, and both were on home turf at the University of Chichester. The first was already scheduled for 5 March in The ShowRoom and on 17 March a spur of the moment performance was organised in the Dance Studio Theatre.

By the time they reached The ShowRoom the dancers felt prepared. They had, after all, coped with Dundee and knew they had the stamina to perform all four works in quick succession. During the performance, the audience was enthusiastic, and the dancers were pleased – surprised, even – by the warmth of their reception. Besides, there were two months of touring ahead and they knew they could go on getting better. Tash remembers thinking, 'We were going to go to Norway and Laban [London] and I would have had family coming. I wondered what it would be like on the last night of the tour. What kind of amazing show we would be putting on at the end?'



But on the morning of Tuesday 17 March, when the British media were making everyday life seem threatened, it felt as if something big was about to happen. It did: lockdown. All of a sudden everyone realised that they were about to deliver their third and final performance.

Of course, before that the dancers had to warm up, and Beth remembers, 'we had Abi's class and at that point we were not sure if it would be our last class'. 'It was, says Kate, 'one of the best classes we ever had, reminding us that we take it for granted that we dance.'



“No one watching would have known ... unless, perhaps, they had caught sight of Gwen and Hannah sitting among the audience, in tears”

Afterwards everything happened in a whirl. Only Ceyda and Noa's works would be shown, and Gwen and Hannah had to relinquish their places because four students studying on the MA Choreographic Practices needed to be seen and assessed in performance for their module Repertory 2. The four (Anna Des Clays, Anastasia Margouta, Yuhan Sun and Ying Zhang) had been

rehearsing their parts for several months, and in the event fitted into the team like full-time members.

News of the performance had spread on campus, and people around were cajoled into becoming an audience. No one watching would have known that there was a difference in the *map*

cast unless, perhaps, they had caught sight of Gwen and Hannah sitting among the audience, in tears. It was not that they begrudged the opportunity given to the choreography students, but they, of course, wanted to go on dancing.

They weren't the only ones crying. For Kate, that performance 'was all of a blur, I was so emotional I was crying the whole day and afterwards just holding hands with all of my *mappers*. I was absolutely heartbroken'.

'Because of the Rep 2 people,' says Beth, 'I remember we were trying to do the best that we could. While I was dancing, my body was doing the movement, but I was not fully engaged because I was thinking about multiple other things. We had no proper make up or hair. The performance was thrown together.'

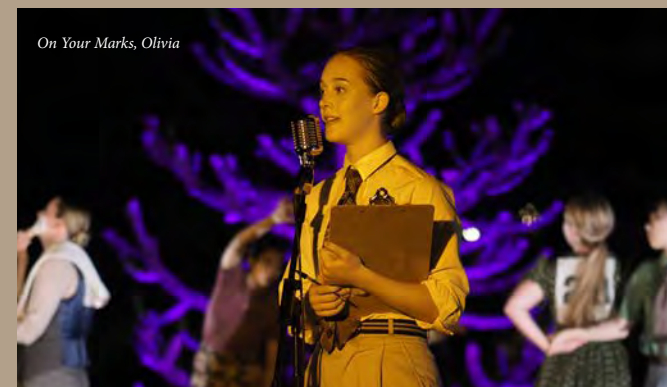
Remembering the pain of those last moments, Kate says, 'After Noa's piece I stepped off stage for the last time and grabbed Madison's hand and cried.'

'It felt like something had died,' said Tash. 'All that time we were supposed to be together just went in an afternoon. There was no real time for goodbyes. I remember being on stage in Noa's work as Xi finished walking backwards. And I realised I had nothing else to do....'



Lockdown

Lockdown for the *mappers* started after the impromptu performance in the Dance Studio Theatre. Soon afterwards some dancers went home while others stayed in Chichester. By then the thirteen dancers had developed the habit of nurturing each other and were accustomed to on-line group chats. These helped their morale during this strange time. But in countless other ways the question was, how will we cope? Dancers do not take extended holidays. How are we going to keep up our levels of physical and mental fitness?



The university moved into coronavirus planning; dance tutors got to grips with Skype and Zoom and the students adapted to new ways of learning on-line. Lila Dance Company offered classes, as did Yael, Detta, Ceyda, Ruth and Miranda, and there were rounds of lectures, seminars and tutorials from other tutors. Plenty of mini disasters ensued - from computer crashes to loss of internet signals - but gradually ways of dealing with the difficulties were found.

Even so, on-line contemporary dance classes and ballet took time to adjust to. Madison observed, 'you take for granted the 3D aspect of class and of being able to see people around you, but on Zoom it's flat. In my living room there are all these things to discover -like carpet burn.' 'It was tough,' Kate acknowledges, 'and I struggled to connect with my dance self. I got really down at one point; the thought of dancing just made me so sad. I was doing exercises rather than dancing because that was easier, and I could kick my family out of the room. But that became too difficult and I had to find alternatives. I do have massive outside spaces so I could go for walks and get on with my dissertation.'

Gwen found 'uni classes were really helpful. We've been able to see each other and it's nice to have that contact. I was in quite a small space, dancing on a carpet and trying not to hit the sofa. It took a while to adapt to this kind of class.'

From her home in Taipei, Orange encountered pros and cons, commenting, 'my room is too small for class, and I needed to be careful not to crash into my bed or something. But I like the privacy. I just did my own thing and nobody could see me!'

For Beth, 'at first, I was doing hip-hop workouts and super long walks because

I live by lots of fields and outdoor spaces. I put on some music and did a few improvisations, but there were problems with jumping and travelling in space and I had lost so much fitness. However, Yael's yoga, Miranda's Pilates and Ceyda's classes got my body working again. When there was talk of *map* coming back, I felt I was actually working toward something and this made me realise how much I wanted to dance and do this as career. When I got back into the studio, it didn't feel like I had had four months off. I was surprised by how naturally it all came back.'

For Tash, 'Lockdown was difficult, and I struggled with mental health. But keeping busy and having a routine that didn't deviate too much was my way of coping. Mainly I was just eating and sleeping because we weren't allowed to leave the house and it wasn't every day that I could go to Sainsbury's. I had to take a serious chunk of time where I didn't do anything like class or dissertation. I just focused on

getting better. I still have good weeks and bad weeks, but this was a time of self-discovery and now I know what's going on and how to manage [the illness]. It's very hard when you are not connecting to dance at all – and my family were in Denmark.

'I never expected to have so much support but knowing it was always there - just an email or a Zoom call away - got a lot us through. I'm glad it's over, and I was accepted for Grad Lab and could then start working towards my dissertation.'

The dancers were also expected to get on with independent work on their dissertations (with occasional tutorials). Dissertations may include practice – choreography, for example, or lecture-demonstrations - and always involve substantial written work. Madison's dissertation combined practical and theoretical research, and she had planned to choreograph her piece in small spaces. She had not planned to do it as a solo for herself in her wardrobe. But this is what she was forced to do when all the spaces she had intended to work in were shut and the dancers who had agreed to work with her were no longer available. Instead, she had to film her solo with a tripod supporting her iPhone and the experiment became 'both a nightmare and a revelation'. The revelation was that she was able to find ways to cope with life's exigencies. That, of course, is the story of most people's lockdowns.



The *map* experience

Tash: '*map* had to be life altering for everyone. I discovered a lot about me as a dancer; learned to take myself less seriously and found out what things I am good at. It opened my eyes to the dance industry.'

'It opened my eyes to the dance industry'

Olivia: 'I have learnt so much in the past year and never thought I would be able to achieve all that I did. I never pictured myself dancing four half an hour high energy pieces one after the other without batting an eye lid. I never pictured myself doing an MA and being part of a performance company. I assumed [my education in dance would finish] and I would go off and do something else with my life. *map* has been the best thing I could ever wish for.'

'I love learning about theory. I'm doing my teaching journal right now, and I'm very interested in dance science and rehabilitation and developing what I think is important for dancers to know. Theory is paramount to all training. Yes the physical side is what people see, but we need to look after ourselves and understand how the body works.'

Kate: 'Through *map*, I found my own voice.'

Sophie: 'This has been the best experience, a dream come true – a serious pinch-me moment. I turned up every day and knew how lucky I was ... doing class working with Yael and Detta and the choreographers. Every day was special.'

'I am more interested in the physical part than the theory side but have still enjoyed the theory. I've just done the Artist as Producer module, with different people coming and speaking to us about career development - Gary's talk was specially inspiring. Getting to create my own website has given me tools I need to get going as an artist.'

Hannah: 'It was all a bit overwhelming at first, going from contemporary dance classes straight into contact [release] and then into rehearsal. But then I found there was so much more to discover about contemporary dance.'

'Theory is paramount to all training.'

Gwen: 'I wasn't just hammering out movement, but learnt to explore different ways of approaching choreographic material, and a very different range of dynamics.'

Gabrielle: 'Everything in life is a dance and everything in dance is life.'

'map has broadened my mind and shaped me into the person I have become. I'm much more versatile now.'

Madison: – '*map* has broadened my mind and shaped me into the person I have become. I'm much more versatile now.' (Madison was already working professionally as a dancer, teacher and dance maker.)

Beth: '*map* was the best experience to round off my time [including three years as an undergraduate] studying at Chichester. It has been an incredible year of training which helped me unlock who I am as an artist. It pushed me to achieve more than I thought I could through the different technique classes and working with four incredible choreographers. It has given me the confidence to start my career. Meeting twelve new people from across the world, who worked hard and had the same mindset, was incredible. We all got on so well that we wanted to spend time together outside the studio. Even though we only travelled to Scotland, the journey and staying in the Travel Lodge as a company was fun and it gave us insight into what touring in a professional company might be like.'

Detta and Yael: the *mappers* share some thoughts

Ask the thirteen *mappers* 'what has it been like working with Detta and Yael', and Madison answers with a question of her own. 'Where do I start?'

'They are the most amazing women. Yael is small, fiery and crackery and you walk into her class and don't want to leave. Detta is this beautiful woman, so delicate – and she totally understands when you need to take a moment and when it needs to be less intense. They work very well together. You can go to them for anything. They are angels.'

Metaphors arise as the students think back over what the co-artistic directors have given them. 'Detta and Yael's personalities are so different, but they were like mum and dad to us,' observes Orange.

For Tash, 'they were real mother hens and looking after all our needs. They were invested in us as individuals and as a group and in our rehearsals there was so much positivity. Even if the choreographer was intense, and had a different kind of expectation



or a different method of working, when we got into rehearsals with Yael or Detta it was a very safe space. We had the security to grow. They would remind me in one-to-ones [tutorials] that this is the time to enjoy what I am doing and to work at something that I am gaining because I love to dance.'

Gwen remarks, 'They shape the company and bring so much individually to it. We need both of them.'

Sophie singles out Detta and Yael's ability to lift energies when the students were feeling wiped out: 'They inspired us and made us want to work hard, guiding us through the whole process with love, respect and care. Yael, when I first met her at the audition and I had my interview with her, was not scary, but I felt 'wow' I am in the presence of someone really quite important. Detta used to come into rehearsal with sweets and chocolates, and this sparked our energy and gave us lots of thoughtful ideas. We could never had got where we did without them.'

Olivia says, 'I have so much respect for Detta and Yael. I don't know how they have made the journey from the first ever *mapdance* to our team thirteen years later. While they are not always there, you know they are always present in the room influencing us. They are the driving force that we need. When we have exhausted ourselves, they have a quick chat with us and then off we go again. I can't imagine *map* without them. They are *map*'s heart and soul.'

Clearly the paeans of praise could continue ...



Miscellany



Xi

Midway through March at the start of lockdown, Xi had flown back to south China and the small town near Guangzhou where she lives with her parents. There she found the job that a year earlier had seemed so elusive. 'I have joined Zen Experimental Theatre, a small company run by choreographer Zhiren Xiao with eight dancers. 'map gave me the experience for this job,' she says.

It meant, however, that she, alone among the *mappers*, was unable to return for *map*'s revised tour in September. Speaking from her parents' home in front of rows of Chinese books [next door apparently there is also a book room for study], she says, as if remembering a dream: 'I really want to rejoin *map* and to take classes and rehearse and perform again. I liked it so much, I want to start the course again!'

Ceyda writes:

'Working with *mapdance* was a total joy from start to finish. These fierce young performers were so open and willing throughout the creative process. They continually worked hard to make my vision for the work come to life, and the final piece was executed to a standard beyond what I had imagined. I am so grateful to every single one of the dancers for their dedication to the work and my process. Although their tour was cut short, these women have shown nothing but resilience, reworking the piece and coming back even stronger!'



cakes ...



A Message from Jose in September

'It is wonderful to hear that *mapdance* were able to perform *Inside the Animal* again. It was such a pleasure to work with you all on this piece and it takes tenacity to work through projects in the current climate. Congratulations and I wish you much success for the future.'

"Jose does not have an accent on his name but thank you for checking."

The pizza debacle

When the *mappers* were in the kitchen preparing supper on the evening they returned after lockdown, Beth was carrying a pizza on a plate when she tripped and fell over three students who happened to be sitting on the ground. Trying to save Beth, Gwen grabbed a leg, Sophie caught her body and Gabrielle her head, and somehow the warm pizza got pushed straight into Beth's face. If they laughed at that, they laughed even more when Beth calmly consumed the pizza newly imprinted with her face.



Orange on a Zoom call in the busy streets of Taipei

Postscript

From the ten hours of Zoom interviews carried out for this booklet, undoubtedly the most memorable moment came during discussion with the East Asian students. For suddenly, as she was talking, Orange was fastening a helmet on her head and moving, as if propelled by something other than her legs. The invisible power turned out to be her scooter, and she was sailing through the streets of Taipei in search of her sister. How she kept chatting, Zooming and riding was a bit of a mystery, but it was, I confess, strangely exhilarating to be looking in on Taiwan's capital city in the early evening, and enjoying the unedited reality of street life, buzzing with bright lights and people activity. AN



'Kate is the nurturing one. She is sort of the glue that holds us together. But she also needs her own space because she has a lot of vulnerable moments and we all just pick her up and she is ok.'



'The group wouldn't be the same without Gwen. She is a very special person. She was a mum to me, and she nurtured a hulluva lot of people. She is very good at reading people's auras, seeing what that person needs. She makes me cups of tea and we sit and chat.'



'Tash has a strong personality and is a decision maker. She is really nice, and kind. She is very patient with international students, especially sometimes when we don't understand what people are saying.'



'Xi is the standout girl, she has so much knowledge and culture and I was lucky in having to dance with her a lot. She is so delicate but she has a lot of power, and brilliant imagination.'



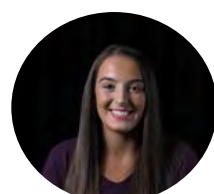
'Madison is the organiser. She is both a leader and a bigger sister. Also, she is really kind. She sees other people's emotions and knows how to make them feel better.'



'Hannah is the child, the youngest member (aged 19 at the start of the year). She is brave and determined. I've watched her grow - and have always been in awe of how much she takes in her stride.'



'Beth's energy is second to none and she is determined in herself to always be at her best. If you ever needed picking up when tired or if the workload in the studio was becoming heavy, Beth was the best person to go to.'



'Sophie has the best memory for movement material. If any of us have a question about counts, or what came after, Sophie is always the person who gives a really clear answer.'



'Sherry is a delight, always picking out the best things of the day, seeing the best of people and situations. She is so "on it". You can ask her questions about any piece and she will always know the exact timing. She is also funny, with a brilliant sense of humour.'



'Olivia is kind and has the clearest work ethic. She always gets the counts right. Maybe it's her background, she has worked with the military quite a bit and been in an environment where you can't not turn up to do it. She trains cadets at a school some weekends.'



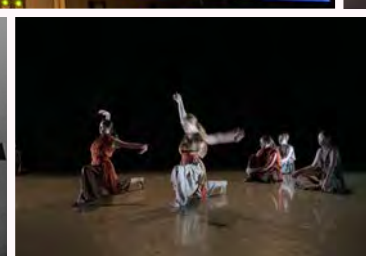
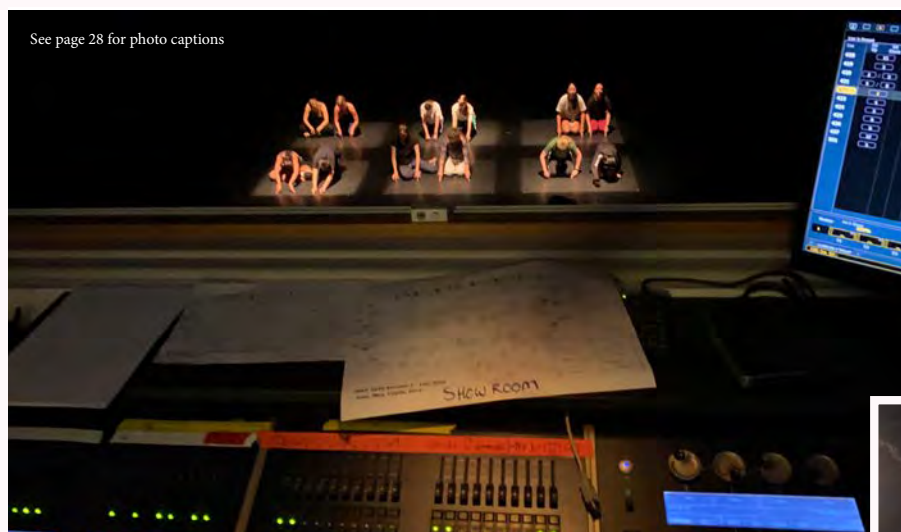
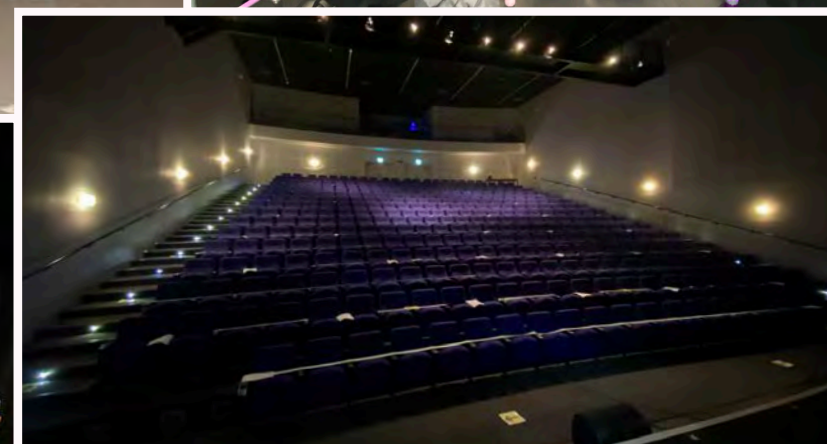
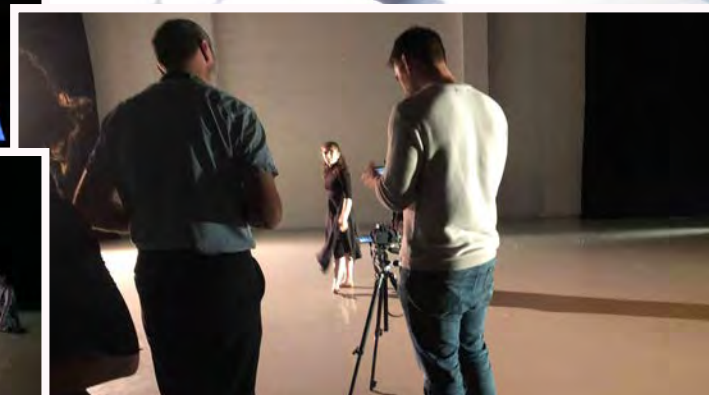
'Wenyu is an outstanding dancer, but also really humble. She is present but ask her a question and - though she will know the answer - she will be off on a different planet, having her own thought processes.'



'Orange is always ready and always on it. Her work ethic is something that we all admire. She is also very funny, and her sense of humour is just brilliant. She is calm and quiet. But sometimes she will say something really crazy that we weren't expecting.'



'Gabrielle is always out for laughter and really kind. She is nice to chat to or be silly with. She brings us back down to earth and is very level-headed. Sometimes as a group we get carried away with our ideas about what we would like to achieve. There was a plan to go to Norway and we had so many ideas about what we would like to do. But Gabrielle said, "hold on, we can't fit all of that into one day".'



And so to September 2020

Cloisters, preshow

The *mappers* were back together for the month of September, working in their own self-organised bubble on campus by day and sharing accommodation provided by Chichester College by night. The reunion after nearly six months apart was emotional and, for some, overwhelming. There was, of course, laughter and ribaldry.

In the studio in that first week, it was strange to see individuals slotting into teamwork and unlocking muscle memory while trying to remember choreography they had previously enjoyed an intimate relationship with. The mood was relaxed as they worked to get their bodies back in training. They struggled to find their way into the four different works and memories were sometimes a bit blurred.

Shaping themselves into a group triangle in Ceyda's work, someone broke out of the stillness a beat early and everyone dissolved into giggles. Minutes later Tash shouted 'help!'. Alone at centre stage she was trying to figure out Ceyda's choreography, but there was a bit of uncertainty happening in her arms and legs. 'How does it go?' she cried, appealing for enlightenment. 'It's your solo.' everyone chorused, laughing. 'We don't know!'

There was an additional challenge, for Yael, Detta and the dancers had the added task of reworking Xi's part in all four works. She had not been able to negotiate release from her job with Zen Experimental Theatre, and everyone was missing her.

After ten days, the *mappers* had regained their stamina sufficiently to be able to run through the complete show, and even the last work - Gary's high energy, non-stop marathon *On Your Marks* - could be danced at full throttle. Nonetheless, and with three more days to go before the first performance, Detta still had 90 minutes' worth of notes to share with the group.

Over the next two weeks six performances were presented. This included a one-off

performance in The Venue in Milton Keynes. Everyone loved being on a large stage in front of a socially distanced audience and returned full of enthusiasm.

'After such a difficult time, it gave us hope'

On home territory the dancers performed in four different spaces: The ShowRoom; the Dance Studio Theatre, and on a specially built stage in the (chilly) open air, first under a temporary marquee erected by the Student Union for freshers' week and second beneath the moonlit trees on Cloister's Lawn. The outside performances, with full dramatic lighting, revealed new qualities in the programme. For if, without the usual theatrical framing of wings, the intensity somehow lessened, so there was a new kind of freedom. As before, the character of the group evolved out of togetherness. Collective power was emphasised in moments of shared dynamic or counterpointed rhythms executed by groups of two or three. At moments the focus changed, and individuals suddenly came to the front and claimed attention with unexpected virtuoso sequences of dancing.

From the audiences came not just appreciation but also expressions of gratitude. After the weeks of coronavirus, when everyone had been forced to stay at home and live performances were banned, it was extraordinary to be able to watch a performance again. Additionally, the dancers were recorded on film to give them a record afterwards.

The very last performance was for family and friends and afterwards, Yael and Detta wrote, 'They were utterly amazing, what a fantastic show. As you can imagine there were a lot of tears, but they were also tears of joy. The students were incredibly thankful for the whole experience, and especially for the chance to perform for their loved ones.'

Sherry summed up the team's feelings, saying, 'I am really happy that we had the

opportunity to be a group again to 'finish' our tour. After such a difficult time, it gave us hope.'

Behind the scenes, the fitting together of plans for the September initiative had proved enormously complicated, not only for the dancers, some of whom had costly travel arrangements to make, but also for the team of tutors. It grew out of inspired thinking by many people, notably of course Detta, Yael and UC's Head of Dance Cathy Childs. There was also unstinting support from technicians Mike Bignell and Natalie Rowland and a generous donation from Natalie's company, Mobile Stage. Other help came from administrators Miranda Labuschagne and Sue Francis and, more generally, from the University of Chichester.

And so the wheel keeps turning. Just as the *mappers* of 2020 were packing their bags realising as they said goodbye to Chichester and each other that things could never be the same again, so, newly recruited students were arriving on campus to begin their own journey. The newcomers were again working towards the award of MA Performance: Dance. They would constitute *mapdance* 2021, and give the company another distinctive identity.

photos, page 26

- *mapdance performance in the ShowRoom*
- *Rehearsing AYIN on the Cloisters Lawn stage*
- *In Noa's costumes in the wings of Dance Studio Theatre*
- *AYIN in Dance Studio Theatre*
- *Mike & Andrew during the video/photoshoot*
- *Preshow, the Student Union marquee*
- *Cloisters lawn*
 - *A moment in rehearsal*
 - *Kneeling section, in rehearsal*
- *mapdance after their final performance, with Detta and Yael*
- *The Venue MK, Milton Keynes*
 - *A view from the wing*
 - *The stage*
 - *Before the audience enter*
- *Before the video shoot, a moment of rest*



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Techniques for Performance

not all optional modules will run in any one year

At the University of Chichester we encourage our students to be challenged, be fearless and to be themselves regardless of their interests, backgrounds or ambitions.
Be inspired and find out more about our courses.

Further information from Sue Francis | s.francis@chi.ac.uk

A group of people, likely dancers, are performing a traditional dance at night. They are illuminated by a warm, golden light, possibly from a stage or a fire. The background is dark, with silhouettes of trees and a crescent moon visible in the sky. The overall mood is serene and cultural.

‘No road is long with good company’

Turkish proverb