

B4
HISTORY
WE
DANCED



PERFORMANCE
PROJECT

photography: Julia Bauer



ABOUT

Before History We Danced (B4HWD) is a **body of creative processes** lead by artist Will Dickie for students, ensembles, artist collectives and community groups that work with theatre, dance or live art.

The processes include:

- Intercultural Psychophysical Training
- Improvisation
- Devising
- Ensemble work
- Solo creation/choreography
- Djing
- Spoken Word / Mcing
- Videography
- Stage Management and Assistant Directing



CONCEPT

We know that prehistoric humans danced together. For over 5000 years artists depicted their prehistoric communities using a motif of dancing figures.

Today our global communities are united by the neo-liberal values that divide us. We are individual consumers in an increasingly atomised society.

This project is inspired by the human capability that marks us off from all forms of life – that we are able to dance together. B4HWD asks how groups can understand and celebrate that togetherness through choreography, training and performance.

‘People much find, in their movement, the immediate joy of solidarity, if only because, in the face of overwhelming state and corporate power, solidarity is their sole source of strength.’

(p259, Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets*)

VIDEO

[Click this link](#) to see edited documentation of B4HWD final performances at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland 2017 and DeMontford University 2019.

password: togetherness

LOGISTICS

B4HWD has a flexible making structure that can accommodate different groups and time frames. Here are two examples:

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland:

2 1/2 month process. Meeting 2 days a week for 6 hours

10 undergraduate contemporary performance practice students

11 volunteers from the city of Glasgow, aged between 19 and 70.

De Montford University:

5 week process. Meeting 1 day a week for 8 hours.

20 Masters students of performance practice from the UK and overseas.

Both processes finished with 1 or 2 days of technical rehearsals before final performances. The performance is set in the round in a large playing space with lights, sound and audience seated at low levels.

The final performance score is inspired by the relationship of the ONE to the MANY. The groups supports each performer in a solo action during the performance. Depending on time variables the group may develop new structures alongside adapting previous material from the work's existing repertoire.

The foundations of the process are in regular training. The group will train together at every meeting. They will develop a heightened sense of the space, the group and their own sense of expressive potency. As such, this project can support individuals across a wide spectrum of backgrounds. From professional performers to enthusiastic volunteers of different ages, experience and ability.

Alongside performing, the process can open up to include other collaborative roles including sound design, videography, text writing & assistant direction. Each process will need at least one DJ or creator of live sound, a skill which can be learnt from Will during development.

ABOUT WILL DICKIE



Will Dickie has over 15 years performer training experience, specialising in Kalaripayattu (martial art), Suzuki Training and butoh dance. He has spent time in India, Australia and across Europe with key practitioners, including Phillip Zarrilli, Tadashi Endo and John and Jacqui Carrol of OzFrank Theatre.

He is a self-produced independent performance maker, whose works receive nationwide support; including Battersea Arts Centre, Heartnsoul & Arts Council England. He has toured to over 40 different UK venues including the Southbank Centre, In Between Time & Latitude Festival. Since developing *The Rave Space* (2016 - 2020) his research has focused on how intercultural training compliments the creative freedom of movement found on dance floors across electronic music scenes.

He devises his own workshops in performance for professional artists & companies. He is a regular visiting lecturer to Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, University of Exeter, Sheffield Hallam University and the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts. He has published writing on his training approaches, and also facilitates groups of learning disabled artists at HeartnSoul in south London.

His fee for leading a B4HWD process will be negotiable on a project by project basis, and is able to conduct student assessment as part of the process.

Please get in touch :

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FEEDBACK



FROM DEMONTFORD MA STUDENTS :

'The students found the artistic and inclusive process facilitated by guest artist Will Dickie really valuable and the end performance really exciting and rewarding to be part of.'

Students 'loved' and 'really enjoyed' the module.

"my favourite module so far.I believe future students will thoroughly enjoy this module"

"I found this module brought the whole group closer together"

"Will was great, continue to use current and exciting artists"



DR MARIE FITZPATRICK
PROGRAMME LEADER: MA PERFORMANCE PRACTICES
DE MONTFORD UNIVERSITY

Will was extremely skilled at working with an ensemble of MA students that consists of both home and international students who have a diverse range of identities, experiences and learning needs. Will brought his expertise of working with people to bring out the best in each individual as well as developing a sense of collective identity within the group that really manifested in the final performance work. The inclusive, creative process he guided the students through, embedded a sense of trust and nurtured each student's creative and performative potential. Will also instilled discipline and focus in the preparation of materials for performance. This really allowed the group to bond and grow together; a group who had only known each other for seven weeks prior to the start of the project.

Will was prepared, committed and possesses great leadership and communication skills. He was a pleasure to work with and I would not hesitate in inviting Will to lead on future performance projects at De Montfort University again.



“in 2017, my 60th year, I was fortunate to be part of a life- enhancing project. This project brought together - in the fullest sense - a very diverse group of individuals. The project group comprised undergraduate students studying Contemporary Performance Practice, and members of the public with little or no experience of dance or performance of any kind. Will was an inspirational teacher who used Suzuki training to help us to explore and extend our capacities to fully inhabit our bodies and minds and to communicate. It was my first encounter with this method, as it was for many others, and it was a revelation. The training made me feel stronger – physically and emotionally – and some of that feeling has persisted even now. Will constantly challenged and supported everyone through a mixture of extreme dedication and professionalism combined with his innate kindness: I have tried and failed since then to find another such teacher. I am sure that other participants in the project shared my feelings about the project and regarded it as one of the most interesting and energizing experiences of their lives, as I continue to do.”

LESLEY,
B4 HISTORY WE DANCED PERFORMER, GLASGOW.

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