

A SADLER'S WELLS & UNIVERSAL MUSIC UK PRODUCTION

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

BASED ON THE SONGS OF

CHOREOGRAPHY

STING **KATE PRINCE**

A RESOURCE FOR DANCE EDUCATION

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ABOUT THE COMPANY



ZooNation was founded by Kate Prince in 2002 and is best known for its work in the theatre, creating full length narrative dance productions influenced in equal parts by musical theatre, Hip Hop culture and music. ZooNation's work is fortified with an extensive programme of engagement and talent development, working with different communities and young artists to expand their skills, knowledge and confidence in our style of dance theatre.

For further information please visit: <https://zoonation.co.uk/explore/company-biography/>

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ABOUT KATE PRINCE

+ A MESSAGE FROM KATE

Kate Prince (Choreographer, Director & Writer) is Artistic Director of ZooNation: The Kate Prince Company, which she founded in 2002. Kate is an Associate Artist at the Old Vic and at Sadler's Wells, where ZooNation is also a Resident Company.

Productions with ZooNation include: Into The Hoods, Some Like It Hip Hop, The Mad Hatter's Tea Party, Groove On Down The Road, ZooNation: Unplugged, Message In A Bottle, and SYLVIA. The company has also created special performances for Nelson Mandela's 90th Birthday Tribute held in Hyde Park in 2008, the 2011 Laurence Olivier Awards and the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Handover ceremonies in 2008.

Kate's TV credits include Strictly Come Dancing, So You Think You Can Dance, Top of the Pops and Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. She recently choreographed the feature film Everybody's Talking About Jamie, for which she was also the Choreographer of the stage show. Kate received an Olivier Award nomination for Best Theatre Choreographer for the production. In total, her extraordinary work has been nominated for three Olivier Awards, a South Bank Sky Arts Award, a What's On Stage Award, and two Critics' Circle National Dance Awards.

Kate has an MA from Edinburgh University and an honorary PHD from Winchester University. In 2019, she received an MBE for services to Dance in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.



Message In A Bottle is my response to both the global refugee crisis and the music of Sting. I hope that this study pack provokes thought and debate and that it raises questions for you to discuss and explore. I also hope it helps you with your own process of creating work.

Kate x

MESSAGE
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SYNOPSIS

by Lolita Chakrabarti

We live in a world where one person is forcibly displaced every two seconds as a result of conflict or persecution. In 2019, statistics show that over seventy million people around the globe have been forced from their homes. Twenty-five million of them are refugees, half of those refugees are under eighteen years old.

We are confronted by stories of displacement every day - in newspapers, on television and on our streets. We regularly hear about migrants fleeing oppressive regimes, but the focus is often on the catastrophic political in-fighting and violence and we lose sight of the people affected. *Message In A Bottle* is an imagined story about one family.

In a village in a country far away, the community live well and support each other. But when civil war breaks out, this idyll of existence is devastated as the community is broken and homes destroyed.

We follow the fortunes of a father, mother and their three teenage children - Leto, Mati and Tana - who face this brutal reality together.

They are confronted with impossible choices. In order to survive, they must leave their homeland and undertake a perilous journey to safer shores. Along the way, they will be separated from each other and have to persevere alone.

Inspired by the passionate, evocative and iconic music of Sting - *Message In A Bottle* is a universal story of loss, fear, survival, hope and love.



MESSAGE
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CAST, CREATIVES + CREW

COMPANY AND ALTERNATES

TANA	Tasha Gooden / Hannah Sandilands / Emma Houston	LETO	Lukas McFarlane / Onyemachi Ejimofor / Ajani Johnson-Goffe
GAIA	Anna Holmstrom / Daniella May / Robia Milliner	MATI	Tommy Franzen / Delano Spenrath / Jaih Betote
ROXANNE	Nafisah Baba / Kino McHugh / Hannah Sandilands	QUEST	Gavin Vincent / Nestor Garcia / Aaron Nuttall
NILA	Kino McHugh / Hannah Sandilands / Annakanako	BASHA	Nestor Garcia / Daniel Phung / Jaih Betote
ANVI	Lizzie Gough / Daniella May / Annakanako	NASIR	Daniel Phung / Lindon Barr / Aaron Nuttall
ISA	Annie Edwards / Emma Houston / Robia Milliner	KAI	Aaron Nuttall / Lindon Barr
TOOTS	Emma Houston / Daniella May / Anna Holmstrom	BODHI	Sam Baxter / Onyemachi Ejimofor / Michael Naylor
		MICAH	Ajani Johnson-Goffe / Michael Naylor / Onyemachi Ejimofor
		SELIM	Delano Spenrath / Michael Naylor / Lindon Barr

TECHNICAL TEAM

Company Stage Manager	Marius Arnold-Clarke
Deputy Stage Manager	Cassie Gallagher
Production Stage Manager	Adam Smith
Touring Production Electrician/Relighter	Hector Murray
Head of Sound	Paddy Dell
Head of Video	Matthew Ferguson
Head of Wardrobe	Katy Spall

CAST, CREATIVES + CREW

MUSICIANS (NEW ARRANGEMENTS)

Vocals	Sting
Drums	Kristoffer Sonne
Electric Guitars	Staffan Astner
Bass, Guitars & Keys	Martin Terefe
Piano, Keys & Guitar	Alex Lacamoire
Guitar, Keys, Backing Vocals & Programming	Oskar Winberg

Guest Vocalists

Lead Vocals (<i>Fields Of Gold, Invisible Sun & If You Love Somebody Set Them Free</i>)	Beverley Knight
Lead Vocals (<i>The Bed's Too Big Without You</i>)	Lynval Golding
Lead Vocals (<i>Don't Stand So Close To Me</i>)	Claudia Georgette
Vocals (<i>Inshallah & They Dance Alone</i>)	Shaneeeka Simon
Vocals (<i>Inshallah & Invisible Sun</i>)	Christella Litras

Additional Musicians

Bass	John Garrison
Piano & Keys	Nikolaj Torp
Percussion	Daniel Freedman
Programming	D.J. Walde
Drum Programming	Noah Terefe

Choir

Glen Scott (choir leader), Christella Litras, Shaneeka Simon, Jermaine (Jaz) Ellington, Chérie Johnson, Dylan Turner, Ellena Vincent, Cleveland Watkiss, Coretta Scott, Jack Vasiliou, Shean Williams, Denise Pearson, Laura Vasiliou

String Quartet

Violin	Patrick Savage
Violin	Shelley Britton
Viola	Emma Owens
Cello	Chris Fish

Horns

Saxophone	Carlos Sosa
Trombone	Raul Vallejo
Trumpet	Fernando Castillo

CREATIVE TEAM

Director & Choreographer	Kate Prince
Music & Lyrics	Sting
Music Supervisor & New Arrangements	Alex Lacamoire
Music Producer & Arranger	Martin Terefe
Music Co-Producer & Mixer	Oskar Winberg
Set Designer	Ben Stones
Video Designer	Andrzej Goulding
Costume Designer	Anna Fleischle
Lighting Designer	Natasha Chivers
Sound Designer	David McEwan
Dramaturg	Lolita Chakrabarti
Associate Choreographer	Lukas McFarlane
Music Associate & Additional Arrangements	DJ Walde
Assistant Choreographer	Tommy Franzen
Assistant Choreographer & Resident Director	Lizzie Gough

PRODUCERS

For Sadler's Wells Productions

Executive Producer	Suzanne Walker
Head of Producing & Touring	Bia Oliveira
Producer	Florent Trioux
Production Manager	Adam Carrée
Marketing Manager - Sadler's Wells Productions	Jane Macpherson
Head of Press	Caroline Ansdell
Content Manager	Rosanna Chianta

For Universal Music UK

Executive Producer	Eliza Lumley
Associate Producer	Desara Bosnja
Creative Consultant	Joel Fram

THE IDEA

This piece was the first time I had ever thought about creating an entire show around one artist's work. Sting was a musical idol of mine from a young age. I think the first concert I went to, somewhere in the late 80s, was watching Sting at Wembley. His music and lyrics, particularly his albums with The Police, have in many ways been the soundtrack to my life, including *'Walking On The Moon'* being a song at my wedding!

After an initial pitch of the bare bones of an idea to Alistair Spalding, the CEO of Sadler's Wells, I found myself in a meeting with Eliza Lumley (the Head of Theatre at Universal UK) and Sting himself, talking through my ideas. It was a somewhat surreal moment in my life, and I was really very nervous to be in a room with someone I was a massive fan of. Sting was really lovely and listened to my idea. He was very open and from that meeting, we got his permission to do a workshop to further explore the concept.



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

THE CREATIVE PROCESS – FROM PAGE TO STAGE

Everything I create starts on the page, but normally it's words I have written myself. It was a different experience working with someone else's poetry, but in many ways easier. The material existed and was so inspiring. I was spoilt for choice. I had already bought a book about Sting's lyrics and studied each song on the page, dissecting the poetry and trying to understand these songs that were so familiar to me, on a deeper level.

I then spent two weeks in a studio with fourteen dancers, working with a few of his songs and beginning to build the framework of a narrative connecting his songs together.

Sting came to see the workshop at the end of the two weeks. He said he was "moved" by the work and later said in an interview:

"The response for me was very emotional not just because I was honoured that they were using my music to express something, but there was something happening at a deeper level beyond understanding. It was moving me in ways that I couldn't quite interpret. I have had very little experience of dance so being moved was what led me to say yes, carry on. I was just intrigued by it."

After we had the green light from Sting and his team, I started to move forward in the process.

Over the course of the next two years, I listened to Sting's huge catalogue of music and gradually my ideas for narrative started moving in an unexpected direction. I had been deeply impacted by an image in the media, which subsequently went viral, of a small child named Alan Kurdi, who at the time was roughly the same age as my own daughter. His little body was washed up on the shore in Greece. He had drowned whilst trying to make the journey in a dinghy from Syria. The image haunted me and I couldn't shake it off. It felt too personal, too important for me to just scroll to the next news item and forget about him. It sparked a deep desire in me to learn more about the situation, more about Syria and more about refugees and their stories.



You can see the image of Alan Kurdi on page four of the Visual Treatment document. Some people may find this image upsetting.

I then researched a lot of documentaries including Human Flow, Refugee and The White Helmets, (all on Netflix), For Sama (Channel 4) and We Walk Together (The Guardian). The most notable and inspirational for me was Escape from Syria: Rania's Odyssey (The Guardian) which tells Rania's perilous journey from her home in Kobane, Syria to Austria. Rania's personal story touched me very deeply and I was so honoured that she was able to come and see the opening of this production. All of this research formed the background to the fictional narrative I created for Message in a Bottle.

Now I had the story arc and themes more clearly in my mind, I needed to go through a new process to knit that story together with the music. This was quite different to my previous productions, where the story comes first, and I have either written the music around it or used multiple artists and songs to tell that story. This time, because the songs already existed, I had the challenge of trying to marry music and narrative, without it feeling forced. What I found was that it wasn't as simple as 'listen to Sting's music and lyrics and make a show out of them' and it wasn't as straightforward as 'write a story about a family of refugees'.

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

Sometimes in the process, the music would inform the story and sometimes the demands of the story meant I was searching Sting's catalogue looking for a song that would serve the drama. Sting's music has a lot of emotional intention already and I wanted to really maintain that and keep the arrangements as pure and original as we could.

Some songs gave me direct inspiration for story, *'Don't Stand So Close to Me'* for example. If you listen to the original version, the intro is quite haunting and sinister and made me feel something bad was about to happen, like an evil force entering a space. This inspired the idea of militia arriving into the peaceful village, bringing with them a darkness the villagers had not known before.



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Another challenge I faced was that some of Sting's songs are so famous that they already have stories associated with them, *'Roxanne'* being the obvious one. I decided early on there was no way to avoid the connection between Roxanne and prostitution, so we built her character around that song and that story.

Sting's most famous song, in fact the most played song ever by any artist on American radio, is *'Every Breath You Take'*. We decided to do a new arrangement of this song to try and move away from the stories associated with it. Some see it as a love song, some see it as a song about a stalker and some associate it with the Puff Daddy song about the death of Biggie Smalls. Either way, the song came with 'story baggage.' Alex Lacamoire wrote a stunning new arrangement and Sting recorded new vocals to go with it. We used it to show the bond and love between the three siblings after they have been separated inside a refugee camp. They are saying to each other 'Wherever you are in the world, I've still got you, I'm still there for you, I'll be watching you': a slightly different intention to the original song and Alex's arrangement portrayed this new meaning beautifully.

On the whole, I found the process of marrying the music and story very easy and natural. It felt almost like Sting's lyrical poetry and music were already the story I was writing, though of course I know it wasn't. He wrote each song in isolation with no connection between them. It was a real privilege trying to make those connections.

Similar to the other productions I have created, choreography is the third layer to the work. Once I have structure, storytelling, music and lyrics all working well together, then I can move on to create the choreography. I don't like empty steps, so this process ensures each step and movement that the performer makes has intention and purpose.



CREATIVE INTENTIONS + THEMES

The main purpose of this show was to celebrate the incredible catalogue of Sting's music. Sting said he had always 'listened' to his music but now he got to 'see' his music, and this was very much what I wanted the audience to experience too.

When creating this work, my intention was never to make a moral judgement on a political issue or a political judgement on a moral issue. I try to avoid shoving a message down people's throats and telling them what they should think about a topic. I think my role as an art maker is simply to entertain, offer escapism and provoke thought, perhaps from a new point of view. My focus for this piece was to humanise the stories about refugees that have become so familiar on our news feeds. I wanted to make the story personal and relatable and to create characters the audience could care about. This is why I built the story around a family. Whether it is the one we are born into or the one we have made along the way, we all have some sort of family relationship that we can relate to.

So, in our story, we have a family who are living a simple and peaceful life. They are celebrating love, a wedding and the union of their eldest son and a young woman from the village. It is a familiar and relatable setting. I wanted to create a sense of peace and harmony before breaking the family apart and to show how their situation could so easily be our situation.

In addition to this, I wanted to look at what war and escaping from war, becoming a refugee, being torn from family, loved ones and home, can do to a person. To explore the effects of trauma, but also to show incredible strength and resilience. To show what human beings are able to survive and overcome. I wanted to show how it is innate for us as humans to rebuild and reconnect and find ways to cope, even in the darkest of times. We see this primarily through the four main characters - Leto, Mati, Tana and Roxanne. We follow their journeys until they are able to find peace, love and a sense of belonging.



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BRINGING THE STORY TO LIFE

Although I didn't create a 'script' in the usual sense with dialogue and stage directions for this show, I did write a full story and broke it down into musical numbers with descriptions of both character and story development. The process of doing this helped me form the story and to exchange ideas with the dramaturg Lolita Chakrabarti. It also helped me to share my ideas with the Producers and Creative team.

[Download The Story document](#)

I also created a Visual Treatment or storyboard that accompanied the 'script' and covered the narrative from scene to scene with images and direction. This is particularly important when developing set, costume and video design. Below is an extract page from that document for you to see how I communicated initially with the other Production Departments and Producers.

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

Once we have these ideas in place, I work with each Head of Department (HoD) more closely to talk through the designs in more detail. HoDs are set a budget by the Producers and together we have to try and bring our vision to life within the constraints of the budget. It can be a difficult balance to get right as sometimes there is something creatively I feel is crucial to the production which might be too expensive. I have to work closely with the Producers to see where money can move within the overall budget to make certain things work.

Set, Lighting, Costume, Video and Sound Design were so crucial in bringing the story to life. For example, in the scene *Inshallah*, where the family are in the boat travelling across the sea, that moment epitomises all Departments working together in harmony. All the contributing factors enable the audience to be fully transported and believe we are actually watching people travelling and not a group of dancers on a stage.

[Download an extract of the Visual Treatment document](#)



THE GENRE OF WORK

For me, dance is always led by music. I listen to the music and interpret the movement in a way that I can see and feel. For example, with *'Message in a Bottle'* I could see breaking and with *'Fields of Gold'* I could see contemporary dance. This is what the music inspired in me, but these choices weren't necessarily right or wrong. I strongly believe that art is an expression of freedom and therefore can have no rules, no rights and no wrongs.

I was also really excited to work with dancers that had come from different types of training backgrounds and could bring their influences to the table. We were so fortunate to have an incredible cast of talent and working with them every day was one of the highlights of the production for me. It was a wonderful environment where we all learnt from each other.



WHO WAS THE WORK FOR?

Normally my work with ZooNation has a very clear intention to reach young people and the next generation of theatre goers and theatre makers. This show was different. I had to consider an already established audience of Sting fans, who were generally slightly older. This played a slight factor in my decision to make the story and content more adult.

I was also keen to have dance audiences from different genres under one roof and to enable people who were more familiar with hip hop theatre to watch contemporary dance and vice versa.

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COLLABORATING WITH OTHER CHOREOGRAPHERS

My work is always collaborative and I'm very fortunate to work with incredibly talented people. For *Message in a Bottle*, I was particularly excited as I was getting to work with some new people that I had wanted to collaborate with for a while. Lukas McFarlane, for example, is someone I have always been a huge fan of so I was very keen to have this chance to create together.

Our process for creating choreography always started with the storytelling. I always map out the beats of the story first, create some structure on the floor with the dancers, look at the flow of the piece - where it starts, where it moves to in the middle and where it has to end, make some nice formations within that to help tell the story and then I start colouring it in with steps.

Who actually creates those steps depends on the style of the dance. Some sections I would create, some Lukas would create and some, the assistant choreographers, Tommy and Lizzie, would create with me. I am limited in my ability as a dancer and really need to collaborate when it comes to partner work, floor work and technically difficult movement. My imagination can see it, my brain can explain it... but I can't actually do it!

When Lukas created the duet in Act Two to *'Fields of Gold'*, I wasn't even in the room. He knew the moment, he understood the characters - I just let him know there was a singular shaft of light that was going to go diagonally from upstage right to downstage left, that Leto would be sat with his head in his hands and that Roxanne would initially dance down that shaft of light until she got to him. I let Lukas know where it needed to end to connect to the next moment of the show and a couple of motifs we needed to repeat and then he went and made the piece. We both knew exactly what the story beats were that needed to be included. What Lukas created is beautiful.



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WORKING WITH DANCERS FROM DIFFERENT TRAINING BACKGROUNDS

My intention was never to 'fuse' dance styles - I was led by the music and from there the idea to create work that included contemporary and hip hop styles came about.

We then underwent a massive casting process, across the UK, Europe and beyond. As with all ZooNation productions, I knew the company must be diverse. I wanted to find exceptional talent who were at the top of their game, in whatever style of dance that might be. I wasn't looking for 'contemporary' dancers, or 'Hip Hop' dancers - I just wanted an incredible group of individuals. They had to be really comfortable at freestyling, very adaptable and willing to learn new styles, and above all - to be storytellers. I was in awe of some of the talent we were lucky enough to find.

The dancers who joined the company were very open minded, patient, supportive and interested in learning new skills. They would often stay late after rehearsal had finished to train more in other styles - they were incredible. It was a skills exchange environment that everyone wanted to be a part of.

A good example of this would be how Anna Holmstrom, who played the Mother, and Gavin Vincent, who played the Father, worked together. Anna is classed as a contemporary dancer and Gavin is a B-Boy. They trained together a lot - creating duets and movement that would compliment each other's shapes, learning how to mirror each other's movements but in a different style and they quickly found a beautiful flow together.

I think it would be fair to say that there were moments in the rehearsal room that every dancer felt a bit out of their comfort zone and had to work a bit harder as they learnt something new, but that is what made them such a special group of people to work with. Each and every one of them persevered, with the help and support of each other.

We also supported this environment for learning new styles by focusing a lot on warm-up and training sessions, which would include Hip Hop styles and a weekly ballet class which everyone took part in.



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METHOD

I experimented with a new process when working with the dancers. Normally, I would start rehearsals with a read through of the script so that everyone is familiar with the story we are about to tell. With this story, I didn't let any of them have a script or tell them anything.

Each dancer was given a diary and a character name. We worked through the story in chronological order and each day I would tell them something new about their character and what they were about to experience. In response, the dancers wrote in their diaries 'in character', imagining how they would feel. I wanted the dancers to be thinking about story before steps, story before music, story before anything else.

For at least the first week of rehearsal, whilst we covered the opening scenes in the village and the wedding, all the dancers were having a lovely time. Their diary entries were positive. Life was good. When civil war came, it brought with it death. I then told Gavin who played Quest, the father, that he was about to die. As the story developed, each day I would give them more information and ask them to write about it in their diaries.

"Roxanne, you are going to be kidnapped by militia"

"Gaia, you fall out of the boat and without a life jacket, you drown"

"Tana, you are about to be separated from your brothers"

The happy village was destroyed and the dancers kept taking hit after hit to their characters. It was a really interesting and different process and I think it really helped the dancers to be invested in the story.

Towards the end of the eight week rehearsal process, we did a diary sharing and they read extracts to each other, reminding them how they had felt. We have kept the diaries and will share them with future cast members, with the intention of trying to stay connected to the story and respecting the refugee story we are telling which is based on truth.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

STING - THE MUSIC

Music, for me, is the first step to anything I create and the biggest inspiration for all that I make. This production was no different. I have listened to and loved Sting's music from when he was first with The Police right through to all of his work as a solo artist. I have always been drawn to all facets of his music from the melody and musicality to the poetry and lyrical story-telling, but what I felt was really interesting and what first inspired me to create a full length piece to his music was the range and diversity of his work. This inspired me to create a story, and in particular, a story through dance.

Song selection and all musical choices were made and led by story, story structure or dramatic need. Some songs we used the original recording, some we recreated in a studio emulating the sound of The Police and some songs were completely rearranged.

A good example would be '*So Lonely*'. In our story, Leto has returned to his homeland to find Roxanne, but she rejects him, consumed with shame and now living a life of addiction and prostitution. Leto desperately wants to see his brother and sister again but they are worlds apart. The energy and arrangement of the original song didn't quite fit the emotion and drama of the story, but the lyrics were perfect. Alex Lacamoire completely rearranged the song to match the drama of the story.

Some songs we felt needed a female vocal and a different sound. I had worked with Beverly Knight on *SYLVIA* at The Old Vic previously, so I talked to her about being involved. She and Sting kindly agreed so she came on board to lay new vocals and arrangements on three tracks - '*If you Love Somebody Set Them Free*', '*Invisible Sun*' and '*Fields of Gold*'.

▶ [Click here for interview with Beverly Knight \(Singer and Guest Vocalist\)](#)

▶ [Click here for interview with Alex Lacamoire \(Music Supervisor & New Arrangements\)](#)

▶ [Click here for interview with Martin Terefe \(Music Producer & Arranger\) and Oskar Winberg \(Music Co-Producer & Mixer\)](#)

▶ [Click here for interview with David McEwan \(Sound Designer\)](#)



DEEP DIVE INTO CREATIVE EFFECTS

The set and lighting had to be able to do many different things, to transport us from many different locations: from a wedding, to a boat on open water, to a refugee camp, to a towering border wall, to the red light district and to a home.

A really nice effect to look at is at the beginning of *'Don't Stand So Close To Me'*. Four doors open stage left and four hooded figures come on to the stage. We put lights and haze in the wings stage left, so as the doors open you saw four corridors of light on the stage and the hooded dancers were back lit. It made the drama of their entry really powerful and it's one of my favourite moments of lighting.

► [Watch the clip](#)

Another good example of effective lighting is in the song *'Fragile'*. We made the whole stage dark and used a series of pinned spotlights to turn on and off which guides the eye of the audience. It also tricks the eye a little bit so the dancers look like they are floating, dancing without a floor.

► [Watch the clip](#)

► [Click here to watch the full interview with Natasha Chivers \(Lighting Designer\)](#)



VIDEO DESIGN - ANDRZEJ GOULDING

► [Click here to watch the full interview](#)

I love working with Andrzej. His ability to take my ideas and portray them so vividly on screen is incredible. I really enjoyed exploring what is possible through video and my favourite video design moments in the production are;

INSHALLAH ► [Watch the clip](#)

As mentioned previously this moment shows the magic of video design when done well and its ability to transport an audience.

SO LONELY ► [Watch the clip](#)

Filming this section was really interesting. We had to film the shadow projections on green screen prior to opening and therefore had to make sure the choreography was set early on and then executed perfectly every show by the dancer so as to be synchronised with the shadow projection behind them.



COSTUME - ANNA FLEISCHLE

▶ [Click here to watch the full interview](#)

The premise of the costumes - the textures, colours, patterns, shapes - were all inspired by global fashion, to reinforce this being a global story. We started in bright technicolour to represent the joyful, prosperous world they started in and gradually faded the colour to monochrome, as the characters get torn apart and go through their individual journeys. They eventually end in three different worlds of red, green and blue representing new worlds for each of them.



MATI

LETO

TANA



ANVI

MICAH

QUEST

ROXANNE

NILA



MILITIA 1

MILITIA 2

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

DRAMATURG - LOLITA CHAKRABARTI

► [Click here to watch the full interview](#)

As there is no narration in this production, I felt it important to work with a Dramaturg to ensure the narrative and themes had some degree of clarity. I worked with Lolita Chakrabarti, the incredible playwright, both during the initial story writing process and in the rehearsal room. She helped me look at different ways the story could develop, the different ways people could respond and what real life events we were trying to represent. She also helped me to cut what wasn't necessary and challenged me in a positive way on my ideas.

As a dance production using songs that already existed, it was so important to me that the story still had the power to resonate. I wanted it to feel sincere and natural without being clunky. Having Lolita on board helped me so much to achieve that.

DANCERS

ANNIE EDWARDS

► [Link to Biog and interview](#)

LUKAS MCFARLANE

► [Link to Biog and interview](#)



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

**PRACTICAL
WORKSHOP
IDEAS**

WORKSHOP IDEA ONE: USING VIDEO DESIGN TO GENERATE CHOREOGRAPHY



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

WORKSHOP IDEA ONE: USING VIDEO DESIGN TO GENERATE CHOREOGRAPHY

Practical Workshops Ideas written by Rachel Howes

TEACHERS PREP:

Prior to the lesson, find a range of videos that students can use as a stimulus to generate a piece of choreography using special effect. Vary the types of video you find to differentiate according to ability. You may wish to get students to work as a whole class, in groups or individually. Additionally, each group will need a projector to work with during the lesson, so bare this in mind when selecting video footage and group sizes.

STARTER - UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF VIDEO DESIGN:

Ask students to watch the following scene, *'The Bed's Too Big Without You'*: [▶ Watch here](#)

As a class, analyse how the use of video and special effects helps to enhance the audience's understanding of the choreographic intent throughout the number. Also consider discussing how timing and stage placement play a vital role in this, in order for the video footage to be successful.

CREATE A CHOREOGRAPHIC INTENT BASED ON A VIDEO STIMULUS:

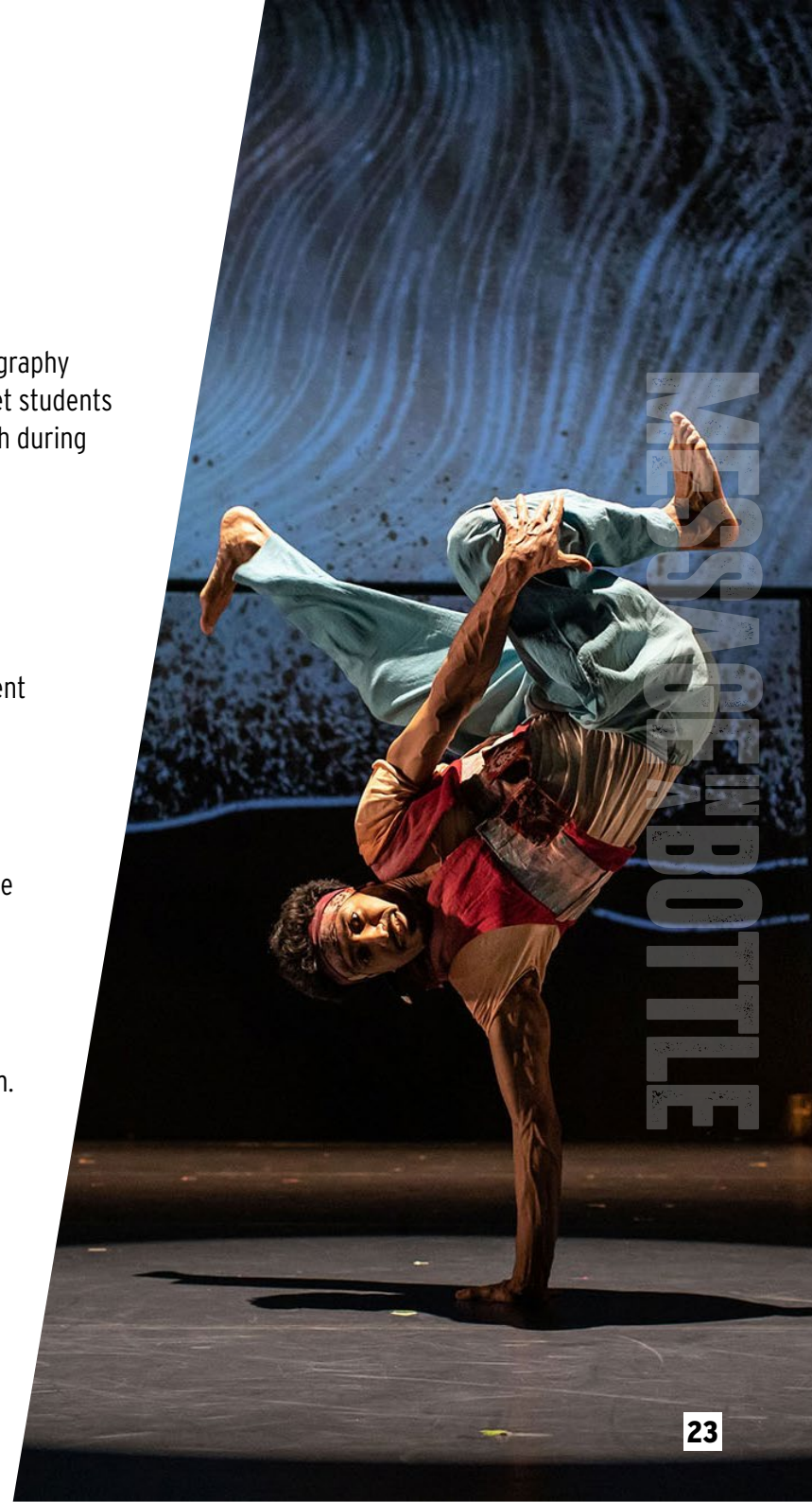
Give each student/group their video stimulus. Ask them each to come up with a choreographic intent for a piece of choreography they will create using the video as a background video design. They can base the choreographic intent on anything they wish as long as the video is used throughout to help make their intentions clear to the audience.

GENERATING CHOREOGRAPHY USING VIDEO DESIGN:

Now give students time to generate this choreography using the video projected into the space to help them. Encourage students to focus on their use of timing and space to ensure the use of the video is effective.

PEER ASSESSMENT:

To conclude the lesson, have your students assess the effectiveness of each other's choreography, clarity of choreographic intent, timing and space before reflecting on this in a journal log.



WORKSHOP IDEA TWO: USING PROFESSIONAL REPERTOIRE TO DEVELOP CHOREOGRAPHY



WORKSHOP IDEA TWO: USING PROFESSIONAL REPERTOIRE TO DEVELOP CHOREOGRAPHY

Practical Workshops Ideas written by Rachel Howes

STARTER - ANALYSING PROFESSIONAL REPERTOIRE:

Using the following video, show students the extract from Message In A Bottle featuring 'Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic'. Ask them to analyse how the choreographers have used a range of dance skills to enhance the success of the piece, for example: accumulation, action/reaction, counterpoint, formations, lead and follow, gesture, balance, fast/slow, strong/light, flowing/abrupt, air pattern, change of direction and levels.

LEARNING THE MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE REPERTOIRE:

Use the following video of ZooNation artist and Message In A Bottle Company Member Lizzie Gough, ask your students to learn the repertoire from Message In A Bottle.

► Watch 'Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic' Repertoire with Lizzie Gough

DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE REPERTOIRE:

Now have your students develop this piece of repertoire in small groups. Give each group a focus based on their ability. You could consider asking them to include a range of the following skills: accumulation, action/reaction, counterpoint, formations, lead and follow, gesture, balance, fast/slow, strong/light, flowing/abrupt, air pattern, change of direction and levels.



PRACTICAL
WORKSHOP
IDEAS

WORKSHOP IDEA THREE: USING CURRENT AFFAIRS AS A STIMULUS



MESSAGE
EMOTION
TITLE

WORKSHOP IDEA THREE: USING CURRENT AFFAIRS AS A STIMULUS

Practical Workshops Ideas written by Rachel Howes

TEACHERS PREP:

Prior to the lesson you will need to find a variety of newspaper and video resources for students to work with. These articles should come from a range of historical time frames and be focused on the subject of current affairs, refugees and war. When selecting these consider how you can differentiate them based on students' ability to generate material. Suggestions include affairs such as WW1, WW2, the Gulf Wars, The Syrian Regime, Current UK Cabinet Ministers, the Boer War, the Pol Pot's regime and the Khmer Rouge, The Korean War, dictators and Palestinian refugees.

STARTER - UNDERSTANDING A STIMULUS:

Distribute each of the articles and resources selected prior to the lessons to the students. Give them time to read through/watch their resource, make a note of five key points they take away from the story and place them in chronological order. They should then share these with one another in pairs.

CREATING A MOTIF:

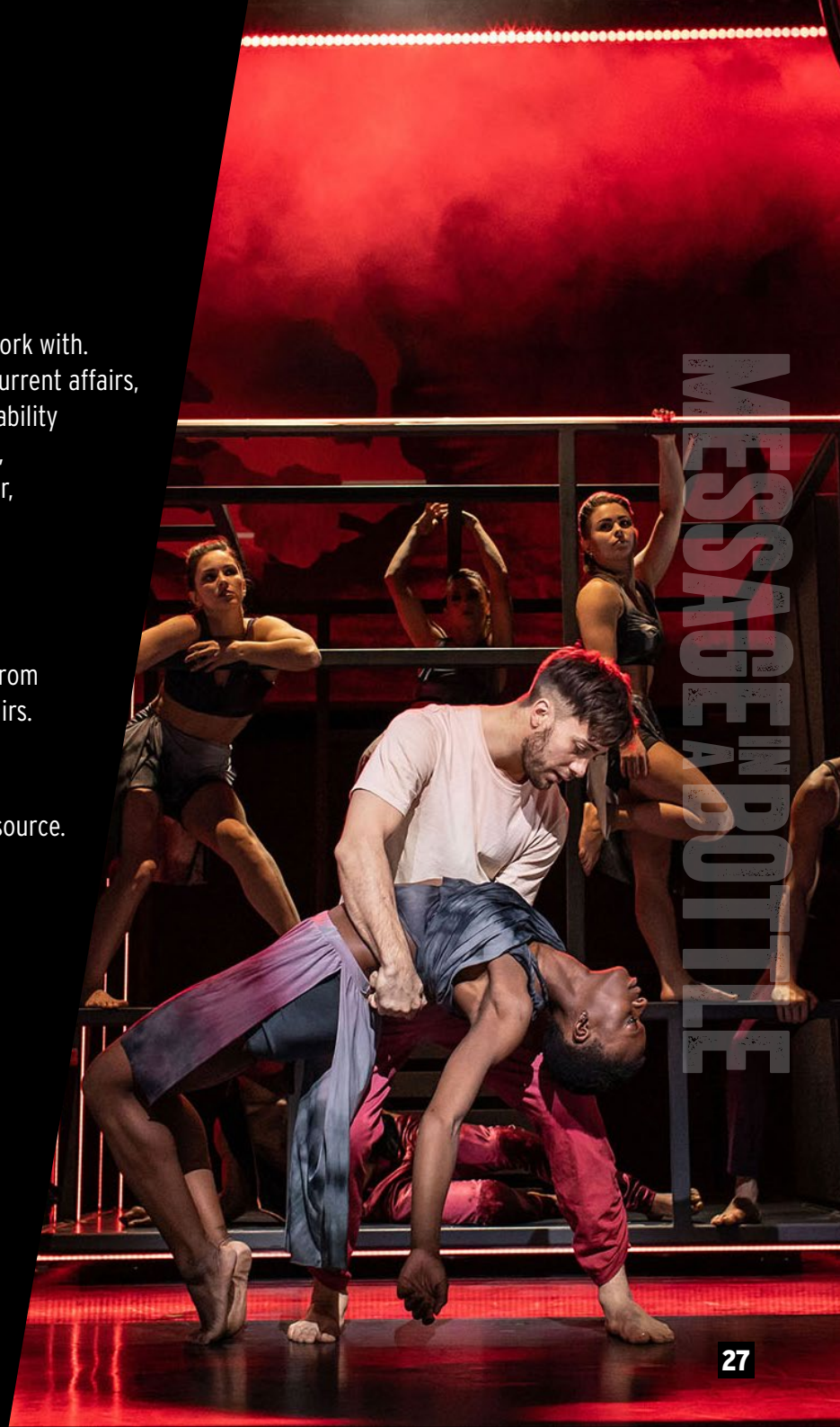
Ask students to create a movement or gesture for each of the five key points they took from their resource. They will then need to join these together to create a short movement motif.

MOTIF DEVELOPMENT:

Using their articles/resources as a stimulus, have students develop their short motifs further whilst focusing on including the use of relationship, action, dynamics and space skills to help communicate their given story.

CHALLENGE TASK:

Challenge students to collaborate as a class to share and adjoin their developed motifs together to create an extended piece of dance. They can adapt their motifs to use a variety of relationship and choreographic devices to do this.



**PRACTICAL
WORKSHOP
IDEAS**

WORKSHOP IDEA FOUR: USING DIFFERENT MUSIC GENRES



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

WORKSHOP IDEA FOUR: USING DIFFERENT MUSIC GENRES

Practical Workshops Ideas written by Rachel Howes

TEACHERS PREP:

Find a resource to give to students for them to work with as a stimulus. This could be anything from a poem to a piece of artwork or a word. Now find a range of songs from a variety of musical genres that may not necessarily be associated with the subject of the stimulus such as Reggae, Latin, Rap, Heavy Metal, Country, Rock, Classical, House, Techno or Jazz.

STARTER - UNDERSTANDING A STIMULUS:

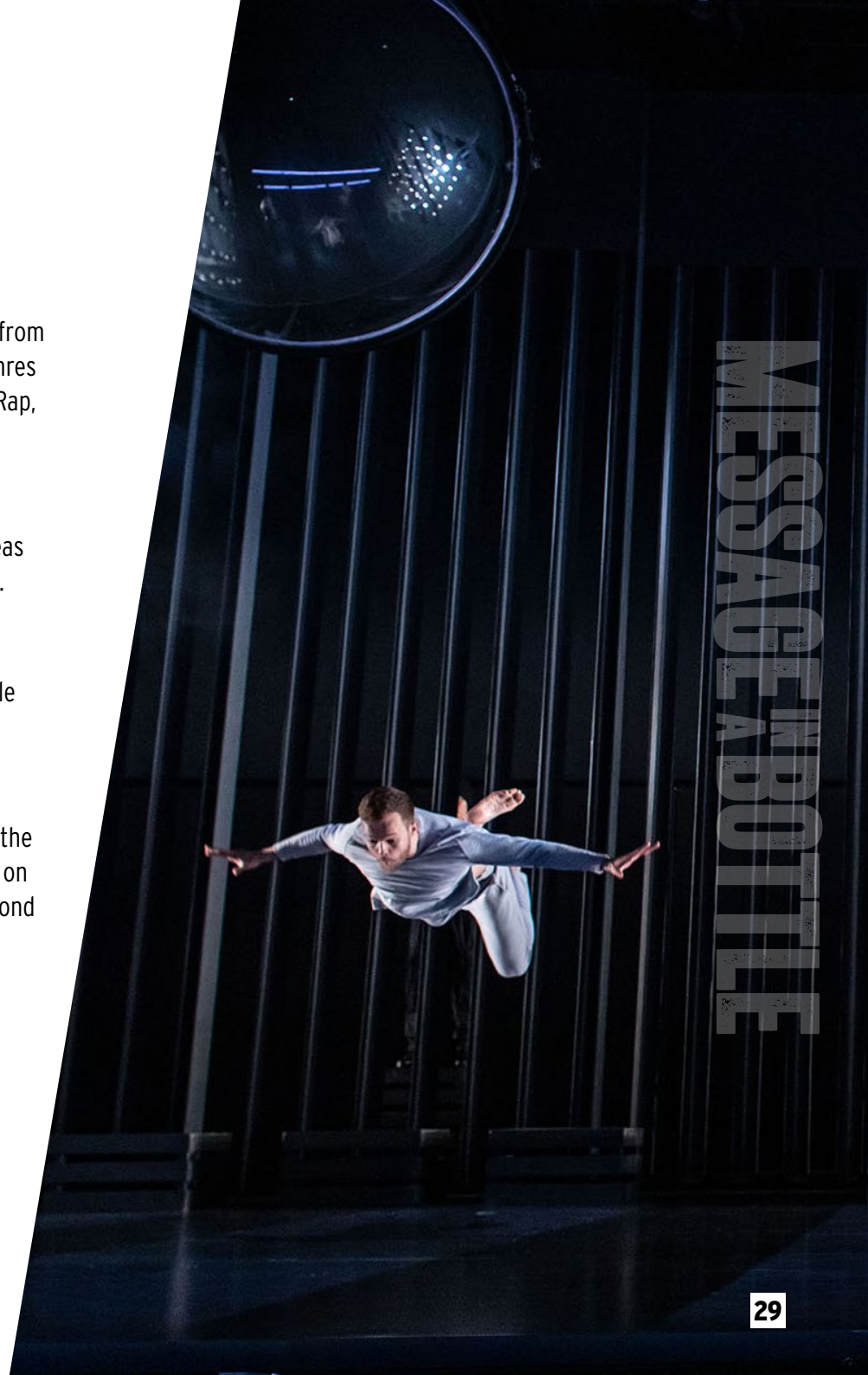
Share the stimulus with the class and get them to collaboratively brainstorm choreographic ideas for this stimulus. Give each student/group their piece of music from a range of different genres.

CREATING MOVEMENT TO DIFFERENT MUSICAL GENRES:

Give students time to choreograph a piece of movement to their given music based on the whole class stimulus. They can generate this in any way they wish.

PEER ASSESSMENT - UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT INFLUENTIAL FACTORS:

Have students watch each other's performances. When doing so, they should consider whether the different musical genres have influenced movement material and dance style for dances based on the same stimulus. Students should discuss this as a class and consider the idea of looking beyond the usual expected music genres for different movement styles such as Contemporary or Jazz. Following the sharing, your students should write a reflective log on their findings.



FURTHER WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES

Take part in a ZooNation led workshop, ideal for school, community and educational groups who would like to discover more about the creative process, choreography and characters behind Message In A Bottle.

Work with professional ZooNation artists and explore the signature styles of contemporary and breaking to the music of Sting.

- Individual workshops available both in person* and digital from £100**
- Workshop and Q&A packages available from £130**
- Duration: 1 hour - Full day (subject to requirements)
- Bespoke performance project packages also available

“We learnt some awesome moves and grooves this morning with the brilliant ZooNation on Zoom. Thanks for a fabulous workshop!”

Dacorum Community Dance

Book now by visiting zoonation.co.uk/learning or contact info@zoonation.co.uk to organise your participation project.

*Subject to government guidelines. **Travel costs and VAT not included.



USEFUL RESOURCES

The following resources may be helpful in expanding your research into ZooNation: The Kate Prince Company and the production of *Message In A Bottle*:

DOCUMENTARIES

Documentary: *Imagine... Kate Prince: Every Move She Makes* (2020)

▶ [Watch here](#)

Escape from Syria: Rania's odyssey (2017, Guardian)

▶ [Watch here](#)

ONLINE

ZooNation.co.uk/resources

<http://bit.ly/HistoryofHipHopDance>

<http://bit.ly/BecomingaDancer>

<https://cdmt.org.uk/accredited-professional-Training>

<https://www.curtisbrown.co.uk/client/kate-Prince>

<https://www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/2020/digital-stage-in-focus-sadlers-wells-x-zoonation-the-kate-prince-company/>

BOOKS

Being a Dancer: Advice for Dancers and Choreographers by *Lyndsey Winship*

High Kicks: The Essential Guide to Working as a Dancer by *Donna Ross*

The Theatre Careers Handbook by *Stage Jobs Pro*



RESOURCE PACK CREDITS

Designer - Scott MacMichael, Gallusness

Videographers - Michael Peers, Jo Cork

Sound editor - DJ Walde

Film Editor - Michael Peers

Photography - Johan Persson, Helen Maybanks

Costume Designs - Anna Fleischle®

Video content courtesy of Sadler's Wells & One Dance UK

TICKETS

For group tickets, booking enquiries and the latest *Message In A Bottle* tour dates please visit <https://www.sadlerswells.com>

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