

The piece you are about to see next is Taylor's, it is for camera. She directed, choreographed and edited it herself. Taylor says: "have you ever felt the desire to escape?" Yes, I have at Uni, when doing a degree ahaha huhu!

project video plays

So my project is called the Escapee, it is a filmed dance piece that I choreographed, performed and edited myself. I edited together the music for the piece and the video footage. The themes I present in this piece are fear and frustration and I focus on Ballet and Contemporary dance styles. The piece in general centres around a character during her escape from being held hostage, she becomes cornered and is unsure of which way to go and she fears that she will be caught again.

I picked the title "The Escapee" because I wanted to keep it quite simple and generic, so that when people watch it they can build their own perception of the character and perspective of the story themselves, as I wanted to keep this very open and not be too strict with erm, the outcome of that.

I decided to do this project for camera rather than stage so that it is more accessible and can be watched at any time, this has then allowed me to upload it to a Youtube channel that I've made, where I can create a platform of my choreography work for anyone to view.

So in terms of what I wanted to explore with this project, I really enjoy acting for camera and dance, so I wanted to produce something that I really enjoy and am passionate about and I found that combining these two subjects really represented that. I also wanted to explore with camera shots, I wanted to see how the camera could really bring to life the scenery, the aesthetic and the dance itself. I didn't get to fully explore this to the extent that I wanted to, erm because I had planned that somebody else would film me, erm obviously due to Coronavirus I couldn't do this and I had to film it myself. This made it quite hard to balance, seeing as I was also performing in it too, but erm I did refer back to my original and detailed shot list and tried to implement as many shots that I could, erm to make the piece the best that it could be. Erm, I also wanted to er, kind of explore improv because I'm quite scared of improv and I always feel like I have to plan ahead, so through doing this, I feel like I'm a lot more open-minded and I can just perform erm based off instinct and emotion. There is about 10 seconds in the piece where I just purely improv and I feel like doing this has proved a lot to me. I also wanted to see how much I could do on my own erm, when you create your own work, it's not always guaranteed that people are going to be available for you to make you a costume, or be there to help you and you might not even have the money to employ people to help you, so doing this has really proved to me what I need to work on and what I can do on my own. Erm, it was quite evident to me that the costume area is something that I need to work on, erm but other than that I felt like I dealt with the process quite well.

So in terms of the process for this project the very first thing that I did was edit together the music. The piece has 3 different pieces of music edited together, the way I decided on these pieces of music was through flicking through a playlist that I have created, which has a lot of piano and violin style music. I picked these because I felt they flowed after each other very well and they also erm exaggerated the mood and gave it variety, as I didn't want the piece to be the same throughout, I wanted a little bit of variety in it. Erm I decided to do this as the very first stage of the project erm as it is a basis for me to work from when it comes to choreographing. It's very rare that I will choreograph first and then pick the music, I always pick the music first as I feel it really inspires my movement. Erm, I would say I really enjoy kind of playing around with music, so I'm always kind of picking different bits of songs and like putting them together and seeing how that can work and then that really inspires the choreography in the end.

The next stage of the process was creating the choreography, as this was the main focus and also the most time consuming, so I had to start this pretty much straight away after I had figured out the music. Erm, I decided to choreograph chronologically according to the music, I found that if I sort of worked on the middle section and then worked on the first section and kind of dipped around at different points of the music, it was very difficult to then pick it back up again and find the right point in the music to carry on from, so I just found that working in the order of the music was the easiest for me. In terms of actually creating the movement and deciding you know, where to go and what to actually do, I would usually start by just playing the music and improving and

just seeing how the music makes me feel, erm, what kind of body parts does it make me want to exaggerate and the kind of levels that I want to use. Erm, so yeah I would really assess like how the music makes me feel to help with character and then if I can remember off the improv that I did (sometimes it is very difficult to remember what you're doing when you don't plan it) erm I would put it together and rehearse and rehearse and rehearse, so that it's in my head and then I would see, right, where can I go from this? How can I structure it even further?

Then when I was around half way through creating the choreography, I was able to create a shot list. I found at this point I was able to see how the rest of the piece was going to go and what I had already choreographed I could see how that was going to be filmed. A lot of the shots on the list consisted of panning shots, zoom ins er medium close-ups and long shots. I felt all of these shots really would emphasise the dance and the scenery, erm particularly the zoom ins as you would be able to see in detail the character and you know, the dirt on her, maybe some marks that she has, erm to kind of implement what she's been going through. Erm, but I couldn't do a lot of this during the dance so I implemented it into the intro, which is just the scenery basically. Erm, I didn't want to overcomplicate the shot list too much, as I know this would be very difficult and could look very erm jolty when put together for the editing process, so my main aim with the shot list was to make it really effective but simple.

When I had finished setting the choreography it was then just a case of polishing my movement and rehearsing so that I was confident with what I was doing ready for the filming. Then quite late into the process, very close to the actual filming day that I planned, I had to decide how I was going to film this in my garden instead of the location I had originally planned. Erm, I decided to just film it in one section of my garden as I felt this suited what I originally wanted and also my garden was in the process of being redecorated so the fence was half one colour and half another, so I felt that if I'd shot in different places of my garden this would have been very distracting and would have took the focus off of the piece itself.

The final stage of the project process was editing together the footage. I have edited before but I wanted to dedicate some more time into exploring this skill further and make the footage look the best that I can. Erm, the video has around a 20 second introduction, which basically just sets the scene and atmosphere and then the choreography begins straight after that until the end of the video. I edited together the intro first as it made sense to do this as it was the beginning of the video, and then I moved onto editing together the dance and movement. This is the first time I had properly edited a dance together and I did find it quite hard to put together and make it not look so jolty and for it to flow. I found that using a variety of footage from different takes completely distracted from the movement itself, so I narrowed it down to just two of the takes of the full dance and found that this looked most effective.

I am very glad that I allowed the extra time to edit the video as I did come across an audio issue which meant that I had to re-edit the music and put it on top of the footage I had already edited together, but in general, I did find the editing process really interesting, as I had the chance to experiment with what made the piece appear the most eye-catching. Erm, I discovered that the "fade to black" transition between some of the clips really enhanced the intensity of the emotions that the character was experiencing, and that is it for the process of my project!

The main inspiration for this piece was a dance called "Shame" it was performed by a girl called Sarah from the "Abby Lee Dance Company", you can watch it on Youtube if you are interested. Erm, when I first watched this I was instantly intrigued by it, I was fascinated by the level of dancing and how heavily character based it was and I thought if I could reflect something like this in my own project it would really, erm be true to what I wanted with this project: which was to combine acting for camera with dance. I was also inspired by "Ryan Heffington's" choreography, he choreographed in the music video for "Chandelier" which is sung by "Sia", he has also done erm other work for the choreography for "Sia's" music videos but "Chandelier" was the one that really inspired me. I like how his work is very movement based and is really quite vulnerable and this was something that I wanted to reflect in my own project so I used it as inspiration.

Now I'm going to show you a short video of how I prepared for the final filming. You will see how I made my costume look dirty. You may be wondering why I didn't use actual mud to make myself

look dirty, but this is because the mud would not stick to my clothing and didn't look effective at all, so I had to use makeup instead.

project preparation video plays

I am now going to talk about a few problems that I faced with this project and during the process. The main one was the location, so I had planned to film at a location that looked very derelict and run-down and really, really suited the piece, erm but due to lockdown I have been unable to do this and I had to adjust to filming in my own garden. This actually made it quite hard for me when it came to performing as I felt that if I had done this in a foreign location it would have added to the fear of my character, but seeing as I was performing in my own garden I actually felt quite safe so this was difficult to portray. Another problem is the quality of the footage, I really wanted this to turn out a lot clearer than it did, but I think this is just due to the camera I have. Also, it would have been great if I could have had a videographer film but due to the expense that comes with that and lockdown it wouldn't have been possible. Also, the natural lighting washes out a lot of the footage, you can't really tell how dirty my costume looked or how my face looked, erm my face is really washed out and I'm squinting quite a lot due to the brightness and I feel like this takes away the emotion and the expression that I was trying to portray in the piece, but, overall I still feel that it has turned out the way I had planned originally. It was also difficult to choreograph at home, as it would have been a lot easier to use a studio to choreograph with a lot more space and mirrors so that I could assess how I'm doing as I am working through the choreography, but instead, I had to rely on filming and basically the last filming day to see how the movement looked put together.

Moving forward with my creative practice I wish to continue choreographing my own work and collaborating with other choreographers, dancers, actors and directors. As much as I did like working on my own for this project, I do really enjoy working with other people and seeing what other people can bring to the table. A big dream of mine is to choreograph dance for music videos, I think this would be so much fun. I would also like to choreograph pieces for stage, it's just that I tend to create my work for camera as I feel it suits me a lot more.

So just to conclude, I am really happy with how my project turned out despite it not quite looking the way that I wanted, or it going quite the way I had originally planned. I was still able to pursue this project during lockdown so I am really grateful for that. If you have any questions for me about my project or my creative practice, please contact me, my email or twitter will be linked.

Thank you for watching and I really hope you enjoyed watching my project and learning about my process!