

TOWARDS THE SUN

Discovery Pack



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



www.tangleinternational.com



HOW TO USE THIS PACK

This Discovery Pack explores **TOWARDS THE SUN**, a performance by Tangle Company of four newly commissioned poems and four songs based on aspirational themes – dreams, change, hope and love.

Each section includes suggestions for activities suitable to do individually, in school, or with friends. There are also suggested curriculum links, designed to enable teachers to use the production's content within future lesson planning.

Suggested curriculum links extend into English, drama, music, PE, dance and geography. There are also links to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC) and citizenship.

TOWARDS THE SUN aims to inspire everyone to think about what they can do to affect positive change in today's world.

We can all make a difference.

What do you believe in?

What can you change?

LET US KNOW:



Twitter @TanglePlays



YouTube at Tangle International



Facebook at TangleTheatre



Instagram TangleTheatre



Join our mailing list by signing up at www.tangleinternational.com

Administrator@tangleinternational.com

www.tangleinternational.com

CONTENTS

2 How To Use This Pack

CONTEXT

5 About Tangle

6 Curriculum Links

7 About Tangle Company

8 Curriculum Links

9 Tangle's Influences

10 Curriculum Links

MAKING TOWARDS THE SUN

12 Themes

13 Curriculum Links

14 I HAVE A DREAM by Patricia Cumper MBE

15 I HAVE A DREAM: In Performance

16 Curriculum Links

17 Interview: Directing Tangle Company

19 Interview: Writing for Tangle Company

21 Interview: Music in Tangle Company

22 Composition

23 Curriculum Links

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

25 About Arts Award

26 TOWARDS THE SUN and links to Arts Award

27 Non-verbal communication and group work

28 Rhythm and Movement

29 Writing activities



CONTEXT



ABOUT TANGLE

Tangle is South West England's African Caribbean Theatre Company. We're based in Somerset. Our work inspires people of all ages and abilities to appreciate the excellence, breadth and diversity of theatre.

At Tangle we encourage people of all kinds to celebrate the positivity of the UK as a multi-racial nation. In every community we visit, alongside the work we present, Tangle's artists try to find straightforward steps to help people to overcome social barriers in a friendly, non-judgemental way.

Our company values reflect the need for generous, unembarrassed, positive two-way conversations between the Tangle artists that deliver, and the people that enjoy our work. Our values are:

Generosity – reaching out to all people, regardless of ability, background and knowledge, and having a listening ear for all, so that, regardless of attitude, people of all kinds can grow understanding of, and appreciation for multi-racial theatre.

Connectivity – ensuring that we communicate rigorously, so that our networks in South West England are in effective dialogue at all times, and in a strong position to measure the effect and impact of our work. This will help us better present our case for social and cultural change in future.

Excellence – ensuring that all our activities are of the highest quality, inspiring audiences of all ages and stages.

Respect – for each other, for our communities and our stakeholders; for everybody who is involved in a Tangle project regardless of their experience, knowledge, 'learnt views' or ideas.

Ubuntu – a Xhosa word literally meaning 'I am, because we are'. The principle of 'ubuntu' is 'how can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?' Ubuntu implies that we are interdependent, that we are stronger together, that we are all equal, and that we work as a strong team to generate success.

When we visit, Tangle's team of practitioners share different elements of their own culture with people who would not normally come into contact with them. This goes some way to building bridges, forging relationships and encouraging genuine collaboration between people and artists of many racial identities.

With our partners we welcome artists of all ethnicities into the region, delivering fresh creative projects that open up new conversations and possibilities.

USEFUL INFORMATION 1

A continent describes a very large area of land. An island is also a word to describe an area of land.

Continents are much larger than islands.

Islands always have water around them.

There are seven continents in the world. Some are connected to each other, and some are surrounded by water.

There are over 100,000 islands in the world.

Africa is the second largest continent in the world.

The Caribbean is part of the North American continent and contains 25 countries.

USEFUL INFORMATION 2

John Donne was an English poet born in 1573. He wrote this poem in 1624, as part of a longer work, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*. It was originally written as 'No Man Is an Iland'.

No man is an island, entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.

If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.

As well as if a promontory were.

As well as if a manor of thy friend's

Or of thine own were:

Any man's death diminishes me,

Because I am involved in mankind,

And therefore never send to know for whom
the bell tolls;

It tolls for thee.



CURRICULUM LINKS

1. SMSC AT KS3 & KS4

Have a discussion about Tangle's core values. What do they mean to you as individuals?

As a group, what would be your core values? Can you relate these to a specific context at your school or your group that everyone understands?

2. GEOGRAPHY AT KS2 & KS3

Look at a map of the world.

What is a continent? What is an island?

Where is Africa? How many countries does it have?

Where is the Caribbean? How many countries does it have?

3. SMSC AT ALL LEVELS

What can you find out about 'ubuntu'?

Look up the famous quotations from Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu about 'ubuntu'. What do you think of them? What do they mean?

Read the poem by John Donne. How does this relate to 'ubuntu' and to your own community values?



ABOUT TANGLE COMPANY

Tangle Company is Tangle's virtuoso performance ensemble. We commission, rehearse and tour a new, short work every year. Each work is presented in a flexible, accessible format suitable for informal spaces as well as traditional theatres and performing arts venues.

Tangle Company consists of eight professional African Caribbean actor-singers, recruited annually from a highly skilled pool. Artists tour in teams of four. The artists present poetry and spoken word pieces, accompanied by A-cappella song.

Each work is presented in 'township theatre' style: a staging concept originating in South Africa, where work is created for performance in non-traditional venues, with few technical resources. We use this style of working so that we can quickly and easily present to audiences of all ages and abilities with minimal set up, and so that we can connect fully with them and they are close enough to touch.

The artists in Tangle Company work as an ensemble. This means that lines are distributed evenly between each member, and they also sing in harmony.

The spoken word element of each work is presented in a rhetorical format (also known as 'persuasive speech'). This means that there are no characters and no dramatic structure or story. Each piece usually makes a single point or explores one aspect of a theme or subject.

Choreography is used to delineate movement when the company perform, which means that the artists can perform in almost any space, without using the traditional principles of 'upstage' and 'downstage' or working within a pre-designed stage set.

A-cappella song is developed to accompany each work. Sometimes the artists sing and speak at the same time. This technique is known as 'sing-speak' and originates from Zimbabwe.

Each year, Tangle Company rehearses a new piece on a theme. In 2016 with TOWARDS THE SUN our theme focuses around positive aspirations. Each of the four poems picks up on an aspect of this theme.

USEFUL INFORMATION 1

'Ensemble' is defined as a group of things or people acting or taken together as a whole, especially a group of performers who regularly play together.

'Choreography' is defined as the skill of combining movements into dances to be performed.

'A-cappella' is defined as a melody or song performed by a group of people without any accompaniment or any musical instruments.

USEFUL INFORMATION 2

Nelson Rohlhlahla Mandela was a Xhosa South African, anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician, and philanthropist.

The title TOWARDS THE SUN is a quotation from one of his many speeches.

Mandela was born in 1918 and died in 2013.

He served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999 and President of the African National Congress (ANC) party from 1991 to 1997.

He was the country's first black head of state and the first elected in a fully representative democratic election.

Mandela's government focused on dismantling the legacy of apartheid by tackling institutionalised racism and fostering racial reconciliation.

Ideologically he was an African nationalist and democratic socialist.



CURRICULUM LINKS

1. MUSIC AT KS3 & KS4

After the performance of TOWARDS THE SUN, ask the group to discuss the use of music in the performance.

Work in pairs or small groups to research what A-cappella is.

Where did the style originate, and what does it involve?

2. ENGLISH & DRAMA AT KS3 & KS4

After the performance of TOWARDS THE SUN get the group to discuss what the word 'ensemble' means.

What is unique about working in an ensemble?

3. PE/DANCE KS3 & 4

After the performance of TOWARDS THE SUN get the group to discuss what Choreography is.

4. SMSC AT ALL LEVELS

TOWARDS THE SUN is titled after a quotation from Nelson Mandela: 'I keep my face pointed towards the sun, my feet moving forward'. Who was Nelson Mandela and what did he do?

What is Xhosa?

What can you find out about apartheid?

TANGLE'S INFLUENCES

The work of Tangle Company is drawn from two inspirations – the township theatre of South Africa and the collective theatre making techniques of Zimbabwe.

In South Africa during the 1950's it was difficult for black people to establish a public voice, so theatre became a powerful and often dangerous way for people of all racial heritages to protest against legalised racial segregation – which we call 'apartheid'.

During this decade, some great theatre makers and writers, such as Ian Bernhardts and Athol Fugard began to make work. Few of these plays were performed, though, in the areas where black people actually lived. Most lived in 'townships' – suburbs made up of shanties and cinder-block homes, often situated near large cities like Johannesburg. There were schools and churches, but very little in the way of organized entertainment. In Zimbabwe, most theatres and playhouses were built during the colonial era on Western and European styles. This made them inaccessible to the majority of indigenous theatre groups and indigenous African and local audiences.

In the 1960's a vibrant movement called 'township theatre' began to evolve when plays were specifically developed and performed for, and with, the residents of South African townships. Gibson Kente is often seen as the 'father' of township theatre. In Port Elizabeth, Athol Fugard and his wife Sheila began a small theatre group called the Circle Players. Later on, Fugard worked with John Kani and Winston Ntshona. With them he created *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* and *The Island*, which would go on to win international acclaim.

As repression grew and the voices of political activists like Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo were increasingly silenced, theatre became an even more important medium of voicing the struggle to challenge the 'apartheid state'.

Theatre was a way for people of all kinds to express frustration and anguish. New and innovative venues began to emerge and productions of controversial local work found their homes in various places across South Africa. Similarly, use of powerful political and social messaging expressed with minimal sets and through ensemble working is a feature of all Tangle's work today.

As well as landmark theatres emerging such as The People's Space (1972), The Market Theatre (1974) and The Baxter Theatre Centre (1977) there was an explosion of other venues and community arts groups in townships such as Soweto. These helped to shape the political agenda of many South Africans.

After South Africa's new freedom in 1994, there was a shift change around theatre making. But twenty years on, new talent is growing fast and plays written today encompass a broad range of global themes.

Tangle has picked up on this theme of inaccessibility and used it to make our touring work more relevant to audiences today, and particularly to people living in parts of South West England who might not have a theatre on their doorstep.

We're following the pattern of most of Zimbabwe's indigenous theatre companies, like Amakohosi Theatre in Bulawayo, by creating theatre that can be performed not only in conventional theatre spaces but in community centres, schools, halls and even outdoors.

This means that our work is adaptive to different environments. When we tour with Tangle Company, we don't use costume, although our full productions use detailed and elaborate costume. There is no lighting and there are no sets. This gives the words, music and actions that the actors present greater weight and meaning; it makes the audience integral to the action and very close to all that happens on 'stage'.

USEFUL INFORMATION 1

In South Africa, a township is defined as a suburb or city of predominately black occupation, in the apartheid years designated for black occupation under government legislation. The word 'township' is still used around the world today to describe different forms of habitat within shifting political contexts.

Township theatre is a creative form established in South Africa during the 1950's to create accessible theatre works suitable for performance in informal settings, such as township community and church halls.

Zimbabwean Collective Theatre brings together music, song, poetry, dramatic dialogue and physical theatre in one dramatic exposition.

The term 'virtuoso' can be defined as a person or people highly skilled in a particular artistic form or way of working.



CURRICULUM LINKS

1. ENGLISH & DRAMA AT KS3 & KS4

Compare Tangle's performance of TOWARDS THE SUN to another theatre performance you have seen. Where was it performed? Describe the experience. How was this different to the work of Tangle Company?

Read the previous section to find out more about Tangle Company. Compare Tangle Company's style of theatre presentation to other British theatre companies that you have seen.

Create a piece of 'township style' theatre in your own school or community. What skills and equipment would you need?

2. SMSC AT KS3 & KS4

What is a township? Draw your own picture and write your own explanation.

A close-up photograph of a woman with a joyful expression, her eyes closed and mouth open in a wide smile. She is wearing a dark top with a pattern of vertical yellow and light blue stripes. The background is a warm, golden-orange color with a sunburst effect of radiating yellow and light blue lines. The overall mood is bright and positive.

MAKING TOWARDS THE SUN



THEMES

TOWARDS THE SUN consists of four poems based around four themes, each accompanied by A-cappella song. Each writer was commissioned by Tangle to create their own poem exploring one of these themes. Our Musical Director then worked with our Director to develop the songs that complement each work.

Tangle Company perform using poetic rhetoric; that is performance without characters or a story. For TOWARDS THE SUN, we became interested in creating a piece that had an aspirational feel, and that in a difficult and changing world, would give people hope that they can still make a difference.

Drawing on initial inspiration from Pat Cumper's poem on DREAMS that we originally commissioned in 2013, we took as the starting point three other themes. These were drawn from a quote from 1 Corinthians in the Bible's New Testament: '...but three things remain, faith, hope and love'.

The three other commissioned writers, Paula B Stanic, Louisa Adjoa Parker and Chino Odimba then chose their theme and developed their piece from it. Paula decided 'change' was a better theme than 'faith', and this encouraged everyone to start thinking about all the themes and what they meant more widely.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Themes

Dreams – why is it important to dream?

Love – what are the different forms of love and what do they do for us?

Hope – what are our hopes and how can we make them come true?

Change – how can we make positive change in the world?



CURRICULUM LINKS

1. ENGLISH & DRAMA AT KS3 & KS4

Themes are universal to all people and cultures, just like emotions and feelings are a part of all human beings around the world.

Writers from all over the world have explored messages of aspiration through poetry, theatre and other creative forms, and often use similar starting points to those in the box above.

Can you write your own poem based on one of these themes?

1. Choose a theme. Think about the theme, and about any words that come to mind.
2. Choose any four words and write them down.
3. Now choose four more words and write them down.
4. You now have eight words.
5. Turn these words into a poem.
6. You may use each word any number of times and you don't have to use all eight words. You can also include conjunctive words such as 'if', 'but' or 'and' as long as they contain no more than three letters.
7. Try reading your poem out loud.

2. ENGLISH AT KS2

Ask the group to recall poems that they know.

Do they relate to any of the themes?

Ask the group to choose a poem, or an extract, from a selection.

Choose individuals to speak their poem out loud.

3. SMSC AT KS2, KS3 & KS4

Think about links to the importance of community.

Martin Luther King wrote a famous speech, 'I Have a Dream'.

Look it up and practise speaking it out loud.

Think about change.

What can you do to effect positive change in your community?

Ask everyone in the group to write down one positive change they can make.



I HAVE A DREAM

by Patricia Cumper MBE

Patricia Cumper MBE is a writer, director and theatre maker. She has created work across several continents for theatre and radio. She also works as a stage director, radio presenter and playwright. She is Co-Artistic Director of Strongback Productions where she explores the wonderful diversity of the world and the many unheard stories of the people in it, drawing on the vibrant cultural synergies of The Caribbean.

Here is an extract from Pat's poem on Dreams.

*A dream is a gossamer thing
floating in the air, soft and nebulous
as a warm breath on a cold day.*

*A dream is a driving force
that gets you out of bed
to face the morning
and work through the day
to its weary end.*

*A dream is a collective possession
holding together
souls, minds, bodies
as they forge their way
forward toward its realisation.*

I collect the words that define my own dream.



I HAVE A DREAM: In Performance

Tangle Company perform as an ensemble. The lines they speak are divided up between the actors. Those watching and listening hear different voices and tones, as the actors share sentences, phrases and even swap in and out with single words. The actors work together to collectively express an idea or make a point through shared delivery.

Here is how another section of Pat's poem looks with the lines divided between four actors – A B C and D.

A *Am I afraid to dream about justice
equality, respect and peace?*
B *Have I accepted my perception of the world
As a bitter place*
C *where such concepts remain*
D *words*
A *that float on the breath*
C *of hypocrites*
B *to bend minds*
A *and pockets*
C *towards complicity*
D *in cynical profiteering?*

A *Or is the fear
one of my own inadequacy?*
C *Do I have the courage
to face*
B *down*
C *what I know to be wrong?*
D *Am I too wearied*
A *too wary*
B *too worn*
C *to feel that what I do will make any
difference?*

A *Yet, I have dreams.*
B *Small ones.
Health, happiness, laughter.*
C *Bigger ones.
Success, legacy, influence.*
D *Global ones.
Peace, prosperity, compassion.*
A *They linger at the corners of my mind*
B *when I fail to confront them.*
C *They tap me on the shoulder*
D *when I shrug and walk away.*



CURRICULUM LINKS

1. ENGLISH AT KS2

Sit with friends in a circle.

Tell a 'one word story' by each adding a word to the story as you move round the circle.

Write your stories down.

2. ENGLISH AT KS2

Think about divisions and rhythms.

What happens if Pat's lines are divided up differently?

Choose a poem.

See if you can divide the lines and words between four people.

Try reading it out loud and listen to the different voices that come across.

3. ENGLISH AT KS3 & KS4

Think about divisions and rhythms.

What happens if Pat's lines are divided up differently?

Choose a poem.

See if you can divide the lines and words between four people.

Try reading it out loud and listen to the different voices that come across.

What effect does this have on the performance?

What happens if you adapt and change your original choices?



Interview

DIRECTING TANGLE COMPANY

Anna Coombs is Artistic Director of Tangle. She founded the company in 2009 when she was living in Cornwall. She has directed theatre productions across the UK and Ireland at venues such as London's Soho Theatre, National Theatre Studio, Rich Mix, Theatre 503, Gate Theatre and in partnership with Yinka Shonibare's Guest Projects.

Anna has directed all of Tangle's productions, and also commissions and directs a new work for Tangle Company each year. Her own writing includes *VANHU VESE* (2011) and *WATER, BREAD AND SALT* – a poetic adaptation of the works of Nelson Mandela that was toured by Tangle Company in 2014.

Tell us something about Tangle and why you started the company.

We all have a global heritage and sometimes, in some parts of the UK, it can be difficult to celebrate that. I wanted to find a way to enable some of the UK's best theatre artists to work and tour across the South West – the region that I call 'home'. I wanted to bring these fantastic people and their work to my 'home' as there is very little opportunity for African, Caribbean and even black British artists from the diaspora to work in the region. I started the company as an international theatre project and it's now a vehicle to do just that.

How do you rehearse and what do you expect from actors?

I am an easy-going director, but working with the company is intense and it is tough on actors. I expect actors to be alert, to manage their energy levels and to arrive early so they can warm up for the start of each day. Those that don't, often regret it! I like structure so each session often begins with a series of team based activities that might include one actor speaking a whole poem, or actors swapping lines at random. We also do a lot of work around movement and physical expression. We introduce lots of line runs very early on, so actors can get a feel for the whole thought, and not just the actual words they speak.

There are no sets, costumes or lighting in the work of the Company. Why?

I have never been a fan of flashy sets; I feel they can devalue the work of the actors, which is the most important part of theatre. I like to create an environment which is immediate and where there is no fourth wall. The actors and the audience are one unit – they can see each other and reach out and touch each other as it were. It is immediate and powerful, especially for audiences new to live theatre.



Interview

DIRECTING TANGLE COMPANY


What was the biggest challenge for the actors?

Learning the lines, as there are no characters and no dramatic journey for them to grasp as a memory aid. Effectively there are very few 'hooks' for them to hang on to which is how actors often learn and retain lines. It can also be a challenge working in different spaces when we are touring, as there is no familiar visual context for the actors. They have to set up a new geography for each performance. This is why clearly choreographed moves help them to orientate as they arrive into a new space for each presentation. It is a very unusual way of working. It's actually much harder than being in a traditional Western theatre show.

What do you enjoy most about working with the Company?

The fact that actors are really stretched, and we get to work in an incredibly intensive way. Seeing people come out of each project stronger and better as performers is incredibly rewarding. I commission a lot of script writers to create something for us in poetic form, so watching them develop new methods and processes, and helping them shape the pieces dramaturgically, is also very rewarding. All Tangle's work fuses together some elements of Western theatre with indigenous Southern African performance styles, so I also enjoy the fact that we are, in essence, creating a new form of theatre expression that is rarely seen here in the UK.

FURTHER EXPLORATION



What is a 'commission'? How do you commission a piece of work? What does it involve?

Think about your experience of watching or making theatre in the past. How would you approach making a piece without sets or costume?

Imagine you are working with a team of actors. How would you plan your first day of rehearsals?

Find a quotation that inspires you. How would you plan a commission based on this?

Directing involves leadership. What skills and qualities does a good leader need?



Interview

WRITING FOR TANGLE COMPANY

Louisa Adjoa Parker is a writer of Ghanaian and English heritage who has lived in the West Country for over 30 years. Her first poetry collection, *SALT-SWEAT AND TEARS*, was published in 2007 and she has since appeared in many publications. She has written several books exploring the presence of black and minority ethnic people in Dorset, including 'Dorset's Hidden Histories; All Different, All Dorset'; '1944 We Were Here: African American GIs in Dorset'; and 'The World of East Dorset'. Louisa was one of four winners of the Cinnamon Press Poetry Pamphlet Competition 2015. She wrote *LOVE IS THE BRIGHTEST STAR* for Tangle.

What was your starting point for working on the theme of 'love'?

I read some poems on love and also thought about some key words I enjoy reading in other's poems and jotted these down. I thought about the different types of love we have for different people and things, and tried to write small sections covering this, then I thought about what love does.

What processes do you use when you initially start to write or create a new piece?

When writing a commissioned piece such as this, I panic and think "How am I going to do this? How will I create something on a blank page? Will it be a load of rubbish?" Then I calm down and start thinking about what I'd like to do, jotting ideas, phrases and words down. Then I start writing the piece and see what comes out. Then I edit, and edit some more (sometimes with feedback from others). When writing for myself, I have an idea or an image and maybe some lines in my head, which come from somewhere, and I sit with them for a few days. Then I start writing and see what comes out, then edit it.

What was the biggest challenge in making this piece?

I often perform my own work or write for publication, so writing something for someone else is always a huge challenge – you want them to like it! Also, my poem, *LOVE IS THE BRIGHTEST STAR*, is for a performance rather than for the page, and is part of a bigger piece. These factors also made it challenging.

What excites you about writing for Tangle?

I love working with other artists and really admire and respect the work Tangle does, it's really important, and high quality. Having worked with them before, I know that Anna is always willing to help talk things through and offer her support, so this makes it a really positive experience.

Interview

WRITING FOR TANGLE COMPANY

What was different or new about creating this piece?

It's one of the longest pieces I have written, and I've never written specifically on one theme – I have touched on love between two people, or the love a parent has for their child, but never written about love in a general way before. I think it's more 'performance driven' than my usual work.

What other kinds of work do you write?

I write fiction – short stories – and I am working on a couple of novels. I like writing fiction about dysfunctional families in the West Country, and I generally seem to write from the perspective of marginalised voices, often creating BAME characters. I also write black history about the presence and experience of BAME people in the region. I've been writing poetry for years. I've just finished writing a collaborative piece on 'Brexit' with poet Josephine Corcoran for the Enemies Project.

What advice would you give to people who would like to write their own poem?

Read lots of poetry, and some image-laden fiction too. Get an idea of what is being written and how contemporary poets write. Understand that it may not be a masterpiece the first time you write a poem, but it might be quite good. You can keep writing and develop your skills. Don't try to sound too 'poet-y'! Write from the heart about things that really matter to you and that will have an emotional impact on the reader. Some writers can use pretty words and arrange them nicely, but if there is no emotional depth to your piece then it will fall flat. Write, and keep writing. Read, and keep reading.

FURTHER EXPLORATION

Read the section on Louisa's writing process. What processes do you use when you are planning a new piece of writing? What works well?

Think about writing in general. What kind of work would you make and how?

Think about a poem you really like. What inspires you about it? Write down your thoughts.

Write your own poem using one of these words as a starting point.





Interview

MUSIC IN TANGLE COMPANY

Allyson Devenish is the Musical Director for TOWARDS THE SUN. She has worked in live and recorded performance settings across Europe, Canada, the USA and the Caribbean as well as in the UK. Here she talks about her background as a musician, and about working with Tangle.

Where did you train and what training did you do? What parts of your training and development helped you get to where you are today?

I studied piano and violin privately in Ottawa, Canada and at the Conservatoire de Musique in Hull, Québec, Canada. Undoubtedly the music theory classes at the Conservatoire helped a lot! Also, the fact that all kinds of music was being played in my house. Nothing was out of bounds. Except maybe country music!

Talk us through the starting points for making a new composition. How do you begin?

Since I am almost always writing for voices, I start with the words. Sometimes it's about immersing myself in the mood that the writer is putting across. Sometimes the text for a show becomes part of a lyric.

How do you work with the artists at Tangle? What processes do you use to teach and refine the work?

Most of the Tangle artists learn music by ear so, while I make sure everyone has a copy and recording of the song, we just start by going through the lines, learning by 'rote' and repeating lines and melodies all together. We look for the patterns, 'hooks', repetitions – things to hold on to. I find that learning by ear allows for making a sort of physical sense of the music. The artists seem to be 'singing a picture' as opposed to being stuck on notes on a page. It can be very liberating for them, but it is also terrifying as there is nowhere to hide and nobody to hide behind.

What are the challenges in creating original compositions like the ones you do for Tangle?

There are two challenges: writing something that can be learned by artists who are principally actors and not full time singers, and writing something that truly reflects the words and emotions of the text. The third challenge is of course in writing something that people like performing and that people like listening to.

What advice would you give to aspiring musicians and composers?

Just do it. Write, write, write. Listen to everything. Pick it apart. Put it back together. Enjoy what you're doing. You should be getting kick out of it!

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

Perform with conviction. If you believe in what you are doing, then it's right.

FURTHER EXPLORATION



Research different kinds of music training. What are the options?

Think about composing music.

What skills do you need?

Find out about music theory.

Why is it important for musicians?

What does it involve?

Have you ever played an instrument?

What did you learn? What you would like to play?

What is learning by rote? How is it useful? What is learning by ear?

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given? Write it down.

COMPOSITION

Here is an extract for a song Allyson wrote for Tangle Company in 2013, I COLLECT THE WORDS. The lyrics were inspired and selected from a poem by Pat Cumper, and the piece is arranged for four voices. Read through the music and the notes, and if you play an instrument, try it out loud.

I Collect The Words

Words by Pat Cumper Music by Allyson Devenish

1. I chose these words because they said exactly what I look for – a rhythm in words. I was also taken by how silence was described: first “silence”, then “profound silence”, then “a still silence”.

SOPRANO
ALTO
TENOR
BASS

To the rhy- thm. of the words. By the si- lence. —
By the si- lence. —
By the si- lence. —
By the si- lence. —

2. Notation is a system used to visually represent aurally perceived music that is played with instruments or sung by the human voice. Musical notation helps the actors understand and remember because it provides a blueprint for the singers to follow

3. Soprano, alto, tenor and bass delineate the range of voices. These work in four-part harmony and blend together. The different ranges provide different ‘colours’. The top (soprano) is what the ear always catches; the bottom (bass) gives us the stable ground. The alto and tenor are the very important ‘filling in the middle of the sandwich’.

4. This piece starts with a solo voice. I chose to introduce the piece with a solo voice because it helps the audience focus on the words. Plus – I like writing like that! It also helps the performers in a very practical way – it’s easier to come in after someone has started to sing and it gives the group a sense of key/pitch/pulse.

5. Whilst there are no dynamics indicated here, dynamics are used to colour a piece. They help to define a mood, or make more of certain words or phrases.

6. This was one of the first pieces I composed (I arrange a lot of existing work, from traditional folk songs to contemporary and classical pieces). I started by thinking about the words I liked from Pat’s poem, writing these down and then saying them over and over, with different stress, seeing if there was a natural rhythm to the phrases. I can often be found marching up and down in my kitchen!!

To the rhy- thm. of the words. A pro- found si- lence.
A pro- found si- lence.
A pro- found si- lence.
A pro- found si- lence.

copyright 2013



CURRICULUM LINKS

1. MUSIC AT KS2 & KS3

Select a poem that the students are learning and find one or two lines that they may like.

Ask them to think about inter-related dimensions such as rhythm, pitch and tempo.

Encourage them to try experimenting with their discoveries, using musical instruments or their voices.

2. MUSIC AT KS3

What other composers are the students familiar with? Make a list of composers and key works.

What similarities can you identify from Allyson's points above?



FURTHER ACTIVITIES



ARTS AWARD



Arts Award offers young people the chance to be part of an inspiring arts journey. Each path can take a different direction – from fashion to film making, from dance to design, from photography to poetry. Whichever route they choose to follow, young people are always in the driving seat.

Arts Award's unique qualifications support young people to develop, both as artists and as arts leaders. The programme is designed to develop their creativity, leadership and communication skills.

Open to anyone aged from 5 to 25, Arts Award embraces all interests and backgrounds. Working towards an Arts Award encourages young people to work independently, helping them to prepare for further education and employment.

Arts Award motivates young people and celebrates their artistic achievements. Young

people can achieve an award through any arts, media or cultural activity, developing knowledge and understanding of their chosen art forms.

Arts Award is managed by Trinity College London in association with Arts Council England and 10 regional 'Bridge' organisations. RIO leads the Arts Award regional development for South West England (where Tangle is based) as part of this Bridge network.

Tangle is an Arts Award Supporter and works with a wide range of organisations, schools, youth theatres and community groups to support Arts Award achievements. We work with teachers across the region to identify activities within our programme that count towards young people's Arts Awards.

For more information contact:
administrator@tangleinternational.com

The next page contains suggestions about how the TOWARDS THE SUN project can link to Arts Award delivery in your school or group.

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE AT

www.artsaward.org.uk

www.realideas.org

TOWARDS THE SUN AND LINKS TO ARTS AWARD

LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TITLE	AGE RANGE
Discover	Introductory Award	5 - 25
Explore	Entry Level in the Arts (Entry 3)	7 - 25
Bronze	Level 1 Award in the Arts	11 - 25
Silver	Level 2 Award in the Arts	14 - 25
Gold	Level 3 Certificate in the Arts	16 - 25

Here are some outline suggestions for activities that young people attending TOWARDS THE SUN can explore.

ARTS AWARD LEVEL	Links to TOWARDS THE SUN and Arts Award	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND EVIDENCE
Discover	Part B: Find out about the arts	Ask young people to write about the Tangle artists that they meet.
Explore	Part B: Explore the work of arts organisations	Ask young people to write about what Tangle is, and who Tangle Company are, as well as about the artists that they meet.
Bronze	Part B: Explore the arts as an audience member	As evidence, take photos of individual attendance at TOWARDS THE SUN. Ask individuals to record a personal reflection of the performance (either written or spoken) that highlights the creative impact of TOWARDS THE SUN. As a group, start a discussion about the performance, encouraging each individual to put forward their thoughts. Take pictures and film the discussion as evidence.
Silver	Unit 1 Part C: Review arts events	As evidence, take photos of individual attendance at TOWARDS THE SUN. As evidence, film an extract of the performance where a young person has highlighted specific artistic qualities that they felt came across well. Review the performance in either a written or spoken format that includes comments on the creative impact of the performance, as well as any artistic qualities or highlights. Take a film or audio recording of individual students sharing their review with others. Evidence the individual sharing of reviews as an online blog or on a website



Activities

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND GROUP WORK

Tangle Company is an ensemble, meaning the actors have to work as a tight team, be responsive to each other, work together and support each other. Here are some activities that help the artists to warm up and to work collectively. You can try them with your own group.

MOVING AS ONE

🔗 SMSC, DRAMA, ENGLISH

As a group, stand together against a wall, or sit together on the floor. The facilitator gives no verbal instructions, except at the beginning when he or she starts the game off. The purpose is to perform a sequence of movements – together – without any one individual ‘obviously’ leading. For example: move away from the wall, stand up, sit down, walk across the space, raise hands or raise arms. Establishing eye contact or touching a shoulder with another member of the group transfers leadership to someone else (not everybody will see leadership transfer). This is about establishing ‘shape’, and encouraging people to work together, communicate non-verbally and replicate what others are doing.

FLOCKING

🔗 PE, ENGLISH, DRAMA

As a group, move around in a swarm or a flock (like a swarm of bees or a flock of birds) with one person leading. The leader walks with a particular rhythm, a particular mood. Everyone has to follow, keeping together as a group – a bunch rather than a line. After a decent time, anyone can break away with a contrasting mood or rhythmic movement, and all must now follow the new leader. After a

while someone else can strike out again and everyone follows as before. The person making the change should aim for a contrast in mood or tone. Controls can be used, such as the facilitator selecting each new leader with a tag.

Another version is to work with different shapes or patterns. For example, have everyone stand in a diamond formation and look towards the person at one corner. That person is the leader and the rest of the participants must follow their movements. Participants must remain in the diamond position throughout the activity and start to move across the space.

Transfer of leadership is made through eye contact. If a leader turns to the left, he or she transfers leadership to the participant at the left corner, and a turn to the right gives the person at the right hand corner leadership. If the leader turns around, leadership transfers to the person at the opposite corner. Make sure that the transitions are smooth and that the exercise is ‘follow-the-leader’ and not ‘confuse-the-followers’.

HYPNOSIS

🔗 PE, ENGLISH, DRAMA

Divide into pairs. Establish a leader (A) and a follower (B). The leader holds a hand in front of the face of the follower so the tops of the fingers are on line with the hairline. Then the leader moves the hand around, and the other has to follow, keeping the head in the same alignment with the hand all the time. It’s then a question of leading the follower around the room, avoiding other participants.



Activities

RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT

Theatre makers use many ways to express themselves – writing things down, speaking them aloud, moving, dancing and singing. Try some of these activities to see if they build awareness of different ways of creating a performance work, and communicating with each other and with an audience.

DANCE CIRCLE

PE, DANCE, DRAMA, MUSIC

Form a circle. Have the leader establish a rhythm and start a repetitive dance step. Ask everyone to follow. Call somebody into the middle of the circle. They now start a new step, which everyone picks up and follows. Then somebody else, at a given signal, comes to the centre and changes places and takes the lead. On each changeover the group keeps up a simple rhythm or clapping pattern to maintain momentum.

THE WHEEL

DRAMA, ART

Form two concentric circles (the wheel). The outside ring are the ‘sculptors’ and the inner ring are the ‘models’. Have everybody in the outside ring pick a mood and hold it in their head. Without using words or verbal instruction, the sculptors shape the models. Then, the wheel is turned by each person moving one ‘spoke’ to the left. The sculptors are opposite a new model. It is now their

task to sculpt themselves in response to what they see. The inner wheel is then turned so everyone is in front of a new partner. Move inner and outer circles in turn to create different pairings. Introduce new themes or moods based on the visual stimulus.

CALL AND ANSWER

MUSIC

Have the group stand in a circle. A leader, on a rhythmic beat, establishes a call and answer pattern, either using claps or voice. So a ‘clap clap’ is echoed by the group. A ‘heya heya’ is echoed by the group. Once a pattern is established using simple rhythms, more complex rhythms can be explored. The leadership can be passed to different members of the group at which point the facilitators become part of the answering chorus.

CREATING A SOUNDSCAPE

MUSIC, DRAMA

The group stands in a circle. The facilitator begins by establishing a base line rhythm, which remains constant throughout the exercise. The other facilitator comes in with a rhythmic, repetitive sound that fits with the first and compliments it. Other participants join in one by one. The last person to come in sings or makes sounds above the rest, improvising with melody and words as they wish. The visual stimulus provided can act as a starting point to establish a theme or mood.



Activities

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Writing can help you capture ideas, moods and thoughts that you might later use to develop your own stories, plays, poems and articles. Here are some activities you can try on your own or as part of a group. Think about the things you have learnt by reading this pack, the images you have seen and the ideas you encountered. Try these exercises as a starting point to develop your own poems.

FREE WRITING

🔗 ENGLISH, DRAMA

This activity is all about writing without preparation. Take a clean sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Start with the words 'I am writing...' and keep writing – do not stop. Do not lift your pen from the page. If you find that, even only for a second, your mind feels blank, just write 'I am writing I am writing' until something else appears. Don't plan, don't censor yourself, just write. Try and write for two minutes.

When you have finished, circle or underline any words, phrases or sentences that you particularly liked. Use these words as a starting point for another piece of writing.

Write down:

- Five things you saw
- Five sounds you heard
- Three feelings you experienced
- Two smells you encountered
- One question that is prompted by what you saw, heard, felt or smelt.

IMAGINARY BOOK

🔗 ENGLISH, DRAMA

Place an imaginary book in front of you. It is a brand new story. No one has ever read or heard it before.

Open it at the first page. Write down the first three sentences of the story.

Now turn to page three, and run your finger down the page to the third paragraph. Write the first three sentences of that paragraph.

Now turn over to the next page, on which there is an illustration. Describe it in writing.

Now turn to the last page and find the very last three sentences of the book. Write them.

Close the book. Look at the title on the front. Write the title of the book.

VISUAL OBSERVATION

🔗 ENGLISH, DRAMA SMSC

Ask everybody to go for a walk around the room or the space that you are in. Encourage them to be conscious of what they are seeing and hearing:

- Be aware of your body moving in space, the way you are breathing, the ground beneath your feet, and the air around you.
- What are you seeing, hearing and feeling?
- Hear the words in your head. Allow phrases to form themselves. Allow the rhythm of the walking to infect the rhythm of the words in your head.

