



Shoreline



A dance and choral event on the edge of the
sea

Simon Birch

Research Programme:

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Project Details

- Shoreline was premiered in 2016 as part of the SALT Landscape Dance Festival
- Shoreline was created in partnership with [Dance Republic 2](#), [Falmouth University](#) and the [National Trust](#) and was supported by [FEAST Cornwall](#) and [Arts Council England](#)
- Role: Director & Choreographer
- Collaborators:
 - Jon Hughes, Composer & Librettist
 - Claire Ingleheart, Musical Director
 - Ruth Pethybridge, Dramaturge
 - Antony Waller, Producer
 - Sarah Waller, Dance Educationalist

300-Word Supporting Statement

This choreographic and choral work explored notions of community and compared the significance of place in light of the Refugee Crisis in Greece. It not only took community as a theme but also enabled me to experiment with a choreographic structure that meant that viewers of the work became more than passive onlookers but were part of the choreographic form. Shoreline was presented on beaches in the South West of England, staging the work in this way provided multiple viewpoints from the surrounding landscape, people closest to the performance became an integrated part of the choreography for those viewing the work from a distance, hence the boundaries between performer and audience were blurred. The work, being performed by a company of six dancers and between 40 and 70 singers, gave me the chance to explore ideas of choreography in landscape and work with a large cast on a panoramic scale.

To make this work, I conducted engagement activities in various towns across Cornwall, inviting the public to contribute to the project by sharing information about their favourite coastal

locations. The material gathered was used to inspire the choreography and the music, and formed part of the libretto, generated out of comments about the personal significances of coastal locations, as well as accounts of refugees landing in Greece and the people who were there supporting them. In the making of this work, I collaborated with composer Jon Hughes, who composed acapella choral pieces in the choral tradition of Cornwall.

Shoreline was created in partnership with Dance Republic 2, Falmouth University and the National Trust and was supported by FEAST Cornwall and Arts Council England and was publicly performed as part of three major landscape dance festivals in the UK in 2016 and 2017 – Dance Republic 2's Landscape Dance Festivals - SALT 2016, SALT 2017 and Pavilion Dance South West's Discover, Play, Dream: Dance! Festival 2017

Research Output

Promo video of Shoreline

Running time: 05.32 mins

Click on image to play



Dissemination

Shoreline was publicly performed as part of three major landscape dance festivals in the UK in 2016 and 2017

Dance Republic 2's Landscape Dance Festivals:

- SALT 2016 – Premier Watergate Bay 9th July 2016
- SALT 2017 - Watergate Bay, Praa Sands & St Ives 5th – 13th July

Pavilion Dance South West's Discover, Play, Dream: Dance! Festival 2017

- Bournemouth Beach 8th July

Contextual Evidence

Excerpts from Shoreline book, prepared by Simon Birch as a record of the project

A visit to Kynance Cove helped focus Simon's ideas for Shoreline. He was intrigued by how the landscape provided multiple viewpoints and also how it framed people standing against the backdrop of the sea.

Walking around Kynance, Simon was struck by how the rocks, caves and cliffs appeared like different stage sets, and he began to imagine a performance that would take audiences on a journey around the beach and down to the sea.

The open spaces of Watergate Bay and Sennen Cove presented different

opportunities with regard to staging the work. The vastness of these two beaches meant that Simon could explore the use of distance and perspective. The biggest challenge here was for Jon, Claire and the choir to ensure that their voices could be heard.

Shoreline necessitated the difficult task of dancing and moving on sand, as well as in the sea, calling for courage, generosity and stamina from the performers. These qualities infused the company, melding singers, dancers, and the rest of the team into a meaningful, caring whole.



My favourite moment was looking out to sea, watching the dancers waist-deep in water whilst the power of the choir struck me from behind... goosebumps! Thank you.

A U D I E N C E M E M B E R

Haunting, poetic, intricate, and at times incredibly moving, with references to the current crisis of refugees crossing treacherous waters to reach the safety of foreign shores.

A U D I E N C E M E M B E R



Contextual Evidence

“Sure lines? Reflections on dramaturgy in participatory dance and performance”

An article in *Animated* (a journal produced by People Dancing) by Ruth Pethybridge, who was Dramaturge for the project, focuses on the role of the Dramaturge in dance, taking Shoreline as an example.

Click on image for link to article



