**Information Pack for Sign Language Interpreters and Audio Describers**

**FROCK | Stopgap Dance Company**

At Stopgap, we seek to make our work accessible to as wide an audience as possible, thank you for assisting us with this by interpreting our work.

We’ve put together this information pack to give an insight into our outdoor work Frock, as we know that often time-constraints and current restrictions on travel and in-person meetings means there isn’t always time to meet with us and get all of the information you need. Should you need any further information, want to clarify anything, or want to request an online meeting, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Please contact lily@stopgapdance.com and they will be happy to help.

**About Frock**

Frock is an outdoor contemporary dance work set to an exclusive soundtrack by Hannah Miller. There is no spoken word in the work, but there are lyrics in the songs – these lyrics inform the tone of the work but they aren’t crucial to audiences’ comprehension of the work.

There will be a relaxed introduction and discussion prior to the work, where the dancers and team will be speaking. The work is performed in the round, so we are unsure where would be best for an interpreter to be positioned.

**Video Content**

Please find a full version of the work here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jI5ekOFe2QRi_0VOMcHg3nUOyzkEwF5O/view?usp=sharing>

This is from a rehearsal run-through, so the dancers aren’t fully costumed. This is the most recent version of the work. This has Amy Butler and Hannah Sampson as Suits.

Please find another full version of the work here on vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/352242786/ba5b45928a>

This was a full run of the work performed at Winchester Hat Fair in 2019. Please note: In this run, Millie Clark is understudying (tallest of the three suits), Millie no longer performs this work. Though this was performed in 2019, the structure of the work and choreography has remained similar.

**Audio Content**

There are four tracks to the work, each with a distinct mood and tone. They were composed for Frock by Hannah Miller, of the art-rock band Moulettes ([www.moulettes.co.uk/](http://www.moulettes.co.uk/))

Track One <https://soundcloud.com/stopgapdance/frock-scene-1-kitchen-sink/s-XrVQjt9A8X4>

Track Two <https://soundcloud.com/stopgapdance/frock-track-2-adaptation/s-rTOKwdnLyzn>

Track Three <https://soundcloud.com/stopgapdance/frock-track-3-elastic-band/s-xmiFuV50AWZ>

Track Four: <https://soundcloud.com/stopgapdance/frock-track-4-little-collisions/s-JLjQ13CjNlX>

**Lyrics & Reflections on the music**

Two tracks in the piece have lyrics – these are Track 2 ‘Adaptation’ and Track 3 ‘Elastic Band’

The composer Hannah Miller has transcribed their lyrics and also given information about the music of each track.

Lyrics are in **bold and underlined**

**Track 1: The View from the Kitchen Sink**

* Starts with ambience of birdsong, maybe a spring day but still chill in the air.
* A harp line, domestic sounds of crockery & cutlery, and a hum that joins the melody, the washer-upper is humming to themselves

… an outlet of breath…

that takes us in to a different space

Drum pattern kicks in, brisk shuffle on snare, some irregularities make it sound like a 5/8 sometimes, but it’s actually mostly 6/8.

The harp melody with choral vocals and strings & counter melody lifts it

The crockery and cutlery sounds become percussive hits, drenched in reverb

The harp line changes

Breaths and percussive shhh sounds

We land back in the domestic space as if back to earth –

Finger clicks and shhh sounds layer over birdsong and sink sounds.

There is the distant sound of a road, and the last tidying of objects.

**Track 2: Adaptation**

An angular, quick tempo piece of music with a few different sections.

Starts with a fast drum kit beat that loops through the song & a shaker

A melodic Electric guitar enters, bending notes with a high repeated 2 note pattern over the top. Distorted cello, guitar and bass drops enter, accompanied by high female vocal, with over drive

Female vocals, with a pitched down vocal underneath it

**The system is a limit**

**It’s limiting me**

**This is my time, my opportunity**

**Attaching a value**

**Arbitrarily**

**In my mind’s eye**

**I was made to be**

**How far can we ta-aaaaaake it**

**Let’s see how far we can ta-aaaaaake it**

Tremolo strings

**The system is a limit**

**It’s limiting me**

**This is my time, my opportunity**

**Attaching a value**

**Arbitrarily**

**In my mind’s eye**

**I was made to be**

**How far can we ta-aaaaaake it**

**Let’s see how far we can ta-aaaaaake it**

Siren sounds of a cello note sliding up and down, overdriven

Harmonies on the melodic vocal line and ascending strings line over the guitar

**Track 3: Elastic Band**

A collection of strange sounds in a dreamy haze open the song, almost animal like bird trills and slightly alien purrs, a distant vocal as if through water: I wanted it to sound like we’re in a canopy of trees, there’s space and light but abundant growth around

These sounds were mostly made by singing through an effects pedal chain with delay, a pitch shifter, tremolo and reverb.

**Skin & Sinew**

Cellos and the chime of a small prayer chime

**Straight Through**

The first scene was a recurrent dream I had where I would always return to the same building, and always via the stage door – the entrance and basement were like a derelict theatre that used to be opulent in its day. There were Escher-like passages and stairwells, & rooms I feared to go into, but also cosy homely rooms. In the last dream I had of this sequence I got to the top where there was a roof garden and a party was going on…

**In my life there’s a theme**

**A recurrent dream**

**Ancient House Countless Floors**

**Endless staircases & long corridors**

**Shine A light**

A repeated high marimba line is joined by a counter part on xylophone, these sounds run through the whole piece

**Straight Through – a field of vision usually hidden from view**

**A bubble blown in glass**

**A micro prism refracting a universe**

**I’m an elastic band wound around your hand**

**And when your hands are tied I try to pull it back down**

**Seeing a different form in relative spaces**

**How you do –**

A kick drum comes in on the beat, giving it pace

**Carved in air and all that intention written across the floors**

**How to hear the space between us as It disappears**

**I’m an elastic band wound around your hand.** (sung in a low pitched voice to sound part-machine )

**I’m the electric dream of a strange machine**

**I’m an elastic band wound around your hand**

**I’m the electric dream of a strange machine**

**Snap snap click, electrical fire**

**Sets off an intention towards desire**

**Desire lines in the dirt written for the earth**

**A hybrid animal on the edge of the curve**

**Made in sound**

**to close the distance**

**To take the long way around**

**Made to transform**

**To hold all of these contradictions in a single lexicon**

**Seeing a different form in in relative spaces**

**I’m an elastic band**

**I’m the electric dream of a strange machine**

The marimba continues on a looped hum, a bendy vocal and a breathing pattern

**A strange machine**

**My hand**

**I’m the electric dream of a strange machine**

**I stretched time**

**Seeing a different form**

**I held it out**

**To pull you in**

**To pull you in**

**To pull you in**

**To pull you in**

The sound of a resonated wine glass and a synth underneath, slightly clashing against the vocal

**Track 4: Little Collisions**

The sound of a moog synthesiser & sirens

Mischievous guitars, a swung 6/8 drum beat

Occasional chinks of crockery

Synth bass line underneath discordant guitars

A wonky glockenspiel and synth line come in like bells

The sound of crockery being smashed,

Saucers being stacked in rhythm and patterns,

Like a really chaotic catering kitchen scene

Bottles being tapped and glassy sounds

The bell like tinkle line over the top

Synth bass comes back in

Claps and the slamming of drawers

The beat comes back in with the crockery being smashed across it

Occasional hey is shouted in the distance

The sirens begin again.

And all the musical motifs are back in, interlocking with each other

Ends with a big smash of crockery

**Further Info about the work**

Below, we’ve gathered more information about Frock to give you an insight into the themes and tone of the piece, there is also a scene-by-scene description.

**Stopgap Dance Company presents Frock, an outdoor contemporary dance production**

*Six striking dancers collide in an uplifting dance riot set to an exclusive art rock soundtrack by Hannah Miller. In this outdoor dance work, experience playful observations of the past that explode into a punkish celebration of individuality and difference.*

**Introduction**

Premiering in 2019, Frock is a touring outdoor dance work devised by artistic director and choreographer Lucy Bennett, with support from the dancers.

Frock features a cast of six disabled and non-disabled dancers, who are united in two groups - the SUITS and SKIRTS. The cast includes SKIRTS: Christian Brinklow, Jannick Moth, Nadenh Poan, and SUITS Annie-Rose Grantham, Hannah Sampson, Alice Shepperson, KJ Mortimer, Amy Butler and Abbie Thompson. Hannah and Abbie, and KJ, Annie-Rose and Amy alternate their roles for different performances.

The soundtrack and music was composed for Frock by Hannah Miller, of the art-rock band *Moulettes*, with additional material from Oliver Austin. The SUITS and the SKIRTS wear distinctive costumes designed by Martina Trottmann.

**The Performance**

The performance usually lasts for around 25 minutes. The start is unannounced, dancers blend in with the audience and emerge to begin dancing.

FROCK is generally performed in cities and towns, on highstreets and in outdoor environments familiar to local audiences. The setup is simple, audiences stand and sit around all sides of the square performance space. There is no front to the work – we experience it from all directions.

FROCK has no set, it exists in the urban landscape, the dancers often weave in and out of the square performance space and into the audience.  There are minimal props within Frock, in sections of the work, the dancers use delicate china teacups and saucers. Several silver teaspoons also feature with a crash...

**The Dancers**

Within Frock, the dancers are split into two groups - the Suits and Skirts. They embody different characters within a spectrum of masculine and feminine, inspired by the habits and behaviours of generations past. They explore gesture within the choreography and convey multifaceted personalities through character and movement. Each dancer’s character is dimensional and substantial, the depth of their personality and the web of relationships is shown through duets and interactions between each other.

**The Suits -** An assertive and confident trio, each dressed in structured classic suits. Embodying more masculine gestures, the group’s movement is more tight and angular - they are at times cocky and assertive to the SKIRTS, often shifting and stirring up the space.

**The Skirts -** A playful, intricate, flirtatious trio, dressed in floral skirts and dresses. Embodying more feminine gestures, the Skirts movement is softer and more expansive, exaggerated by their costuming. Each of them wears either a dress or knee-length skirt, alongside trainers.

**Scenes/Storyline**

Here is an overview of each of the four scenes throughout Frock.

The Opening: “Kitchen Sink”

The dancers begin in the audience holding their teacups as if at an event, when the music starts they arise and ask an audience member to look after their teacups.

As they enter the space they form two distinct groups or clubs, these are the SUITS and SKIRTS. They parade and promenade as if involved in a kind of court dance.

The suits and skirts pretend to be comfortable with one another but really keep to themselves, rarely making eye contact or getting too close. They are particular with their footwork, wheelwork and gestures. The scene finishes with a solo from one of the SUITS who enjoys being watched and commands the attention of onlookers.

Scene Two: “Adaptation”

This is an explosive scene reminiscent of a West Side Story dance off! The two groups jostle for space with large chunks of unison dance that shifts through the space with gestures and deportment appropriate to their characters of SUITs and SKIRTs.

 Halfway through the full cast smash to the ground on their backs. A lone Skirt begins a frenzied jig before they are joined by all the cast. The groups now begin to mix a little more, eventually finding their way into partner work using contact, lifts and throws. The scene becomes more chaotic with sprinting, spinning and diving trio work culminating in a striking image - one SUIT stands turning on Nadenh’s upturned wheel like a plate spinning, Nadenh a SKIRT uses his hand to spin this wheel of his chair whilst he lays in it upturned on the ground.

Scene Three: “Elastic Band”

A SKIRT soloist announces their arrival with a crash of numerous silver teaspoons. They imitate washing up before sinking into a lonely solo. The scene continues in the form of solo duet, solo duet and so forth. The SKIRTS and SUITS who aren’t currently dancing pace the space in time to the bass as relationships are formed, evolved, dismantled, and reformed. It finishes with a hypnotic duet that plays with strength, inversion, and trust.

Scene Four, Finale: “Little Collisions”

An alarm sounds. A beat kicks in. The full cast are taken away with the music and begin to play and have fun. A loose and jovial unison begins with dancers dropping in and out of the unison and into partner work.

There is a section of duet work where different bodies collide, squeeze and co-ordinate with one another. As the track escalates to a crash, a kiss up high between two dancers happens.

Halfway through there is lull, we are back at the event drinking tea, a little stifled, the teacups are returned to the audience.

The dancers smash and slash with their limbs at the space that contains them. They take back the teacups, creating a chorus line playing with the rhythm of the teacups in a neat unison that builds again to a frenzy!

The music and the dance crescendos with exuberant energy and finishes with all but one dancer crashing to the floor, the lone SKIRT from earlier smashes their teacup and takes a curtsey. Glad to be finally free of the tea, teacup, and all it represents.

**Background on production and choreography**

The ideas for FROCK brewed for several years before Stopgap had the capacity for research and development to begin production. Usually with Stopgap’s work there is a long, sometimes year-long development process, however FROCK emerged after around four months, which in comparison is rather swift.

With input from each of the dancers and other practitioners, Stopgap spent time exploring material, developing characters, and refining choreography.

A lot of the choreography came from filming and editing dance improvisations. These improvisations were initiated by observation of each other, families, and passers-by - people watching in town provided great material.

Stopgap wanted a high energy piece that was full of unison from disabled and non-disabled, diverse dancers. Also wanting to explore partner work and duets that were interchangeable between each performer, revealing the fluidity of relationships within society.

Choreographer Lucy Bennett reveals that the initial idea was to create a production from the memories of her grandparents. As a young girl, Lucy found it fascinating that her grandma wasn’t allowed to wear trousers. The conventions of clothes and etiquette, the rules, and guidelines for how we present ourselves, all dictated by generations before us was something Lucy was keen to explore and alter.

FROCK explores presentations of femininity and masculinity – bending the binaries of clothing, behaviour, and etiquette. Inspired by and altering conventions of previous eras. Within FROCK the two distinct groups, SKIRTS and SUITS simultaneously represent tradition and unconvention. They present juxtaposing images – masculine dancers with short hair and beards wear floral skirts and dresses, feminine long-haired dancers wear structured suits. It poses a question to the audience of who is allowed to wear what and questions how we’ve been conditioned to behave.

Gradually throughout the production the audience become accustomed to the alternative universe they are experiencing, realising that the costumes become less relevant, and the physicality and characters become more and more fluid.

Of the choreography Lucy says it’s quite disjointed and at times jarring, the characters clash and rattle with one another. The choreography is heightened by the sound score composed specifically for FROCK by Hannah Miller of the Moulettes with additional material from Oliver Austin. The music is at times a revelrous cacophony, at others a pensive reflection of internal dialogues of identity.

Within their choreography, Stopgap uses a process called translation, which enables Lucy to blend the different physical languages of dancers within the company. Translation supports unison between diverse bodies and disabled dancers. It also had its potential influences with supporting explorations of the physicalities of gender.