



# HOLDING LIGHT

## INSIGHT NOTES

**For Recovery Groups,  
Schools, Students and anyone  
interested in knowing more  
about the production.**

# Introduction

Welcome to the Holding Light Insight Notes. This resource is your gateway to a journey beyond ordinary theatre outings.

Immerse yourself in the world of movement, dance and the narratives of recovery through our production, whether you're a performing arts enthusiast or interested in recovery.

This pack goes behind the scenes with the artistic team to explore the creative ideas and processes for Holding Light. It explores the performers' experiences and suggests advance and follow-up activities designed to stimulate discussion and creativity.

## Contents

|                                              |    |
|----------------------------------------------|----|
| <u>About Holding Light</u>                   | 3  |
| <u>About Fallen Angels Dance Theatre</u>     | 4  |
| <u>About Each Section: Become</u>            | 5  |
| <u>About Each Section: Beside</u>            | 6  |
| <u>About Each Section: Belong</u>            | 7  |
| <u>Behind The Scenes: Day 1</u>              | 8  |
| <u>Behind The Scenes: The Costumes</u>       | 11 |
| <u>Engage Further: Conversation Starters</u> | 14 |
| <u>Engage Further: Candle Meditation</u>     | 15 |
| <u>Engage Further: Reflections</u>           | 16 |
| <u>Learn More</u>                            | 17 |

# About Holding Light

Fallen Angels Dance Theatre present their latest ground-breaking work, *Holding Light* at the Royal Opera House and Ballet, Storyhouse and the Liverpool Everyman



At the heart of Fallen Angels is a powerful mission, creating extraordinary movement and dance theatre performed by artists with lived experience of addiction and mental health recovery. Their work brings raw, authentic lived experience to the stage, breaking down stigma and celebrating personal resilience through striking physical storytelling.

Crafted over six months of collaboration between the dancers and creative team, *Holding Light* explores light as both a partner on stage and a metaphor for recovery and hope. The evening weaves together three distinct creative perspectives. Acclaimed choreographer Russell Maliphant brings his signature mastery of light and movement, making illumination an active collaborator with the dancers. International dance artist Alice Godfrey offers a rich, emotive exploration of body, space, and personal transformation, while sound artist Feri Gyemant frames every movement with an immersive and emotionally charged soundscape.

Authentic, moving, and uplifting, *Holding Light* invites audiences to witness stories that are often unseen, offering a deeply memorable evening of dance, hope and healing.

Funded by Arts Council England, Linbury Trust, Ernest Hecht Charitable Foundation, Arts for Impact Big Give with support from **Storyhouse, Royal Opera House** and **Liverpool Everyman**

# About Fallen Angels Dance Theatre

Fallen Angels Dance Theatre, based in Chester, is a leading UK Addiction Recovery Arts organisation. Founded in 2011 by Paul Bayes Kitcher and Claire Morris, this unique company employs movement and dance theatre for personal development and well-being. With over a decade's commitment to the power of arts in recovery, Paul Bayes Kitcher, a former Soloist with Birmingham Royal Ballet, drives their mission, bringing lived experiences to life through outreach workshops, performances and digital initiatives in the North West and beyond.

At its core, Fallen Angels Dance Theatre embodies authentic stories of recovery, offering a safe space for self-expression and self-discovery. Even those without dance experience find transformation, boosting confidence, improving physical and mental health and rebuilding social networks.

This award-winning company adapts contemporary and classical dance techniques to create authentic movement accessible to both non-professional and professional dancers. Fallen Angels Dance Theatre places participants at the centre of its work, from sharing their stories in the research and development process to performing in the professional presentations.

Outreach programmes in Chester, Liverpool, and Manchester offer a structured pathway of participatory workshops, creative volunteering projects, artistic training, and performances, creating a ladder of growth and development for people in recovery.

Traces Through Time marks a powerful collaboration between Fallen Angels Dance Theatre and New Note Orchestra, the world's first recovery orchestra. This partnership provides a remarkable opportunity to celebrate the creativity of recovery arts and address the stigma associated with addiction and mental health issues.



## Discover More

- Explore Artistic Director Paul's journey which takes centre stage in BBC3's Amazing Humans documentary 'Addiction Nearly Ruined My Life' [🔗](#)
- Participants share their personal journeys and how Movement for Change' dance has had a positive impact on their lives [🔗](#)
- Why Recovery and Dance? Check out Fallen Angels Dance Theatre's blog about the why dance and recovery from addiction is a good match. [🔗](#)

# About Each Section

## Become

Become, evolved through improvisation, creative exploration, and collaborative dialogue with the dancers. Guided by Alice Godfrey's ongoing interest in movement, the mystical, and the spiritual connections that unite us as humans, the creative process centred on reconnecting with authentic ways of being through the body. Through collective investigation; dancers explored repetition, rhythm, shared intention, and the relationship between individual and group experience. Drawing on imagery, physical tasks, and intuitive response, movement material emerged organically, shaping a playful and otherworldly landscape.

## Alice Godfrey

Born in Windhoek, Namibia in 1994. She grew up in Cape Town, South Africa, where she received her dance training, and after high school she attended the National Ballet School of Canada's post-secondary program. She studied under the direction of artistic director Mavis Staines.

She took her first professional position with NDT2, the second company of Nederland Dance Theater, in 2014 and moved to NDT1, the first company, in 2017.

Since 2019, she has been working with choreographer Sharon Eyal's dance company L-E-V. She also works as a freelance artist on various projects.



# About Each Section

## Beside

Beside, evolved through physical investigation, deep listening, curiosity, and dialogue. Guided by Russell Maliphant's distinctive approach to the body using experiential anatomy and embodied movement, dancers explored relationships between parts of their body, listening with awareness to themselves and others, in movement and through space. During this process, a structure for performance emerged organically, allowing individual expression and collective connection to coexist. Lighting was an important creative collaborator in the development of this piece, with Russell working in collaboration with KJ Lighting Design.

## Russell Maliphant

Russell Maliphant trained at The Royal Ballet School and graduated into Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet where he worked for 7 years before leaving to pursue a career in independent dance.

He performed with DV8 Physical Theatre, Michael Clark Company, Rosemary Butcher and Laurie Booth. Maliphant also studied anatomy, physiology and biomechanics, and qualified as a practitioner of the Rolf Method of Structural Integration (or Rolfing). These studies have informed both his teaching and choreographic work.

Since 1994 he collaborated closely with lighting designer Michael Hulls, evolving a language where movement and light are intimately connected and the meeting point becomes a language in itself.

He formed Russell Maliphant Company in 1996



# About Each Section

## Belong

Belong, emerges from Artistic Director Paul Bayes Kitcher's lived experience that addiction begins in the silent spaces where love and connection are absent, and survival becomes the body's first choreography and follows a journey from fragmentation to integration, revealing that healing is not found by escaping the darkness, but by turning towards it with awareness, compassion, and love. This piece is an invitation to witness the possibility that even our deepest wounds can become a source of strength, and through connection, we can breathe, begin again, and discover the wholeness that has always been waiting within us

## Paul Bayes Kitcher

Paul trained at the Royal Ballet School and Rambert. He danced for Scottish Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet where he danced various soloist and principal roles.

In 2009 through his own journey into recovery Paul began teaching within drug & alcohol rehabilitation settings, whilst developing his artistic practice, which led to him co-founding Fallen Angels Dance Theatre in 2011. BBC3 devoted an "Amazing Humans" short film about his journey to supporting people in recovery and his return to Birmingham Royal Ballet after 21 years.

Paul has participated widely in public speaking about Fallen Angels including House of Commons and TEDx talks where he raises awareness of FADT's unique practice, as well as meeting Her Majesty the Queen.



# Behind The Scenes

## Day 1 of the Residency with Alice Godfrey

There was a quiet shift in the room on Day 1. Not loud, not dramatic—but unmistakable. Something softened. Something opened.

Sitting together at the end of the day—Arianna, Jo, Laura, and Claire from the creative team—we found ourselves reflecting on what had just unfolded. And what emerged was a shared recognition: this process feels different.

### Starting from the human

At the heart of Alice Godfrey's approach is something deeply simple, but profoundly impactful—a person-centred beginning. Rather than rushing toward outcomes or performance, the day unfolded through gentle awareness.

Layers were introduced slowly. Thoughtfully. Without pressure.

There was structure, yes—but it was loose, spacious, and guided by themes rather than rigid direction. Each Angel was invited to interpret those themes in their own way, unlocking something we don't always get to access in more time-pressured environments: autonomy.

And with that autonomy came discovery.

New ways of moving.  
New ways of expressing.  
New ways of co-existing in the space.

The energy felt different—not better, not worse, just... shifted. Expanded.

### Freedom to enjoy

One of the most striking observations was the sense of enjoyment across the group. There was a visible lightness—an ease in how the Angels entered each task.

The day began gently, almost like a recalibration. A chance to reconnect with body, breath, and self before anything was asked of them.

From there, the work built organically. As Jo described, it wasn't about "creating" something immediately—it was about layering experience.

Improvisation became the heartbeat of the day.

It's the moment they wait for. The moment where everything drops away: expectation, structure, self-consciousness. In improvisation, they find freedom—freedom to release, to connect, to simply be.

And crucially, this process honoured that need instead of containing it.



# Behind The Scenes

## A shift away from emotional weight

Historically at Fallen Angels, we often work closely with personal narrative—stories that are powerful, but sometimes emotionally demanding.

This residency introduces something lighter. More playful.

It's not that depth is lost—it's that it's being approached through a different language. One of exploration rather than excavation.

And that shift matters.

The Angels spoke about feeling tired (as you would after a full creative day), but not overwhelmed. Not apprehensive about what was coming next. Instead, there was anticipation. Excitement.

They're looking forward to tomorrow.

That in itself, is a quiet success.

## Breaking the autopilot

In conversations between sessions, another insight surfaced: the idea of “autopilot.”

Like many dancers, the Angels have familiar movements they return to—safe, known, reliable. Particularly in short workshop settings, where time is limited, those “go-to” movements become a default.

But here, time is being stretched.

Instead of five minutes to explore, they are being given days. Space to sit inside the unknown. Space to move past instinct.



And in doing so, they're beginning to disrupt those patterns—discovering alternative pathways, new physical vocabularies, and unexpected possibilities within their own bodies.

## Seeing differently

One particularly powerful moment was observed with Shelley, who is partially sighted.

There was a noticeable shift in how she approached movement. Rather than focusing on external choreography or “what the steps should be,” she began exploring internally—through sensation, energy, and what might be described as a “mind’s eye.”

It was less about navigating what to do, and more about *feeling* what is possible.

It's early days, but moments like this hint at the deeper potential of the residency—not just as a creative process, but as a reimagining of how each Angel experiences movement itself.

# Behind The Scenes

## Taking risks

Growth has also been visible in quieter, more personal ways.

Josh reflected on allowing himself to take risks—moving beyond the familiar sequences he usually relies on to ground himself.

Through Alice's guidance—her language, her invitations, her framing of movement as play—he felt able to step into something less certain.

And that matters.

Because Josh has already evolved so significantly as a performer. To see him *continue* to push those boundaries, to lean into uncertainty again, speaks volumes about the environment that's being held.

## Holding light

If Day 1 tells us anything, it's this: when space is held gently, when time is honoured, and when people are trusted, something powerful begins to emerge.

Not forced. Not rushed.

But real.

This residency is not just about making work. It's about making space—space for play, for risk, for rediscovery.

And as we move into the next phase, one question lingers with quiet excitement: What else might unfold, now that the door has been opened?



# Behind The Scenes

## Alena Kudera - Costume Designer

Alena Kudera, graduated with a 1st class Honours Degree in fashion design from John Moores University, Liverpool, UK, in 2011.

Collections have been exhibited at London Fashion Week; Paris's Who's Next Trade Show; China Fashion Week (Top 10 Designer Award); Tunisia Fashion Week; Britain and Ireland - Next Top Model Show, and Liverpool Design Week.

Her formative years in a small Czech village provided many contradictions: communism and fairytales, function and nature, control and rebellion through irony.

She began by reworking old clothes and the limited fabrics available to create unique outfits, teaching herself how to sew, to understand fabric and how to cut.

This background has given her lifelong inspiration, utilizing her curiosity and resourcefulness to create her collections.

That was the birth of KUDERA.

Her other creative endeavors include styling, renovation of old furniture, sculpture and painting.



# Behind The Scenes

## Costume Creation - The Process

When tasked with designing performance costumes for the Fallen Angels Dance Theatre Company, the goal was clear: create something light, easy to wear, and visually cohesive for 10 dancers—all while staying deeply rooted in sustainable design principles.

The piece, titled "Holding Light," immediately evoked feelings of positivity, optimism, hope, courage, the future, and community. I wanted every stage of the design process to reflect those exact values, starting with the very fabric of the garments themselves.

### Sourcing with Purpose

To align with my personal commitment to sustainability, I partnered with Roberts Recycling Ltd to source organic cotton T-shirts and hoodies made from soft, breathable organic cotton jersey. Upcycling garments was a concept used in a previous performance, and the dancers were thrilled to embrace an eco-friendly ethos once again.

Choosing the right material was the critical first step. Just like the first glimpse of light, the fabric needed to minimize environmental harm right from its origins:

- **Chemical-Free Origins:** Starting with organic cotton jersey ensured no harmful chemicals were used during production.
- **Ethical Roots:** The garments were originally made by Rapanui, an ethical brand, and previously used to highlight the work of several charities.
- **Empowering Community:** Before being upcycled, the pieces were used in screen-printing practices by individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds learning new skills.

To me, this rich history was the "Light" I wanted to hold and pass forward.



# Behind The Scenes

## Individual Light, Full Outfits & Movement

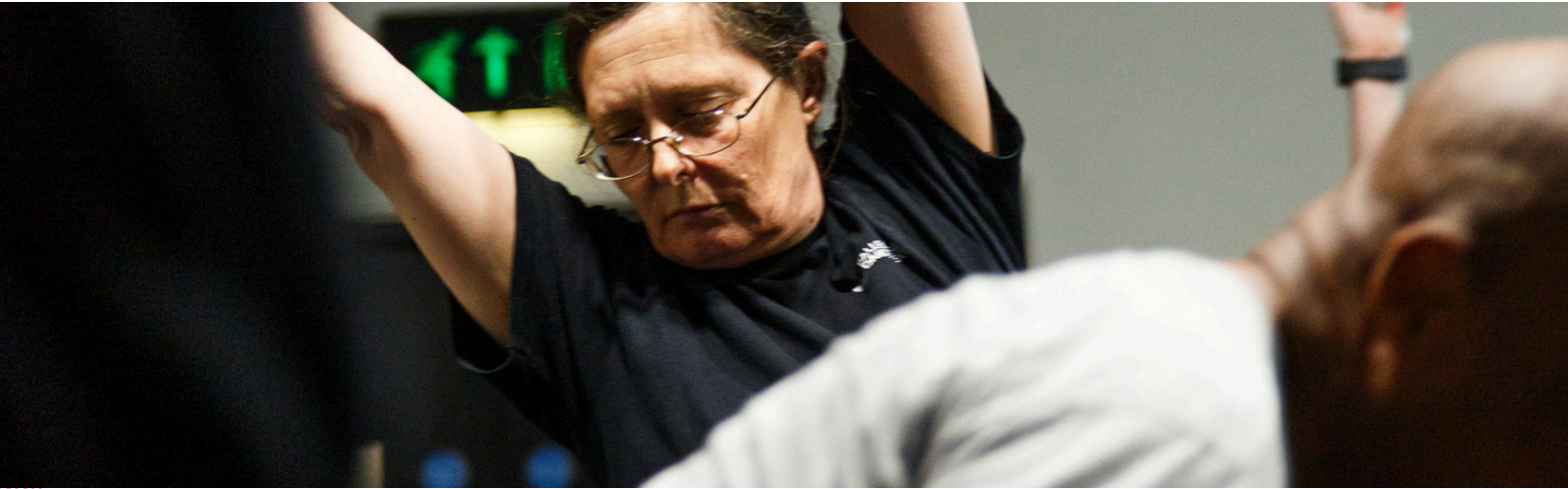
While cohesion across the 10 performers was essential, I also wanted each dancer to feel connected to their individual identity. I asked every performer to pick a colour that felt special to them—hearing choices like “sunshine” rather than just “yellow” brought a personal warmth to the design.

- **Tops:** I made intentional slashes into the white organic cotton jersey outer tops. The crisp white fabric distorts the original prints while revealing each dancer’s chosen colour underneath, creating a visual effect that resembles the flicker of a flame—each dancer’s inner light shining through the original garment.
- **Trousers & Shorts:** The tops are paired with trousers and shorts reworked directly from organic cotton jersey hoodies. I chose a rich petrol blue—reminiscent of the intense flame at the very centre of a candle or a petrol lamp—anchoring the lower half of the outfit with deep symbolic light.
- **Arm & Wrist Accessories:** To minimize waste, leftover organic cotton jersey scraps from the tailoring process were repurposed into custom arm and wrist accessories. These additions draw focus to the dancers’ extensions and gestures, visually enhancing every movement on stage.

Every garment is unique—just like each dancer—yet fully connected as part of the same collection and movement. Each dancer holds their own light, yet together, they form one.



# Engage Further



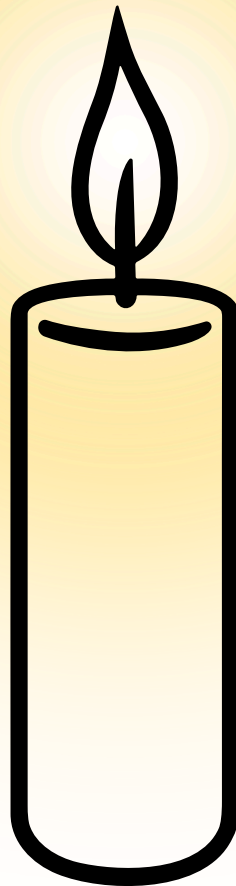
## 10 conversation starters about the show

Here are some prompts to stimulate thinking and conversations about Holding Light. You can think about Holding Light as a whole or think individually about each section, Become, Beside and Belong.

1. What emotions or themes are conveyed through the choreography and dance movements?
2. Do you notice any recurring movement patterns or gestures? What do you think they represent?
3. How does the music enhance the storytelling? How does live music contribute to the experience?
4. Which moments create a strong connection with the performers and their stories?
5. How does the lighting design enhance the atmosphere and storytelling within the piece?
6. What is the impact of the text or spoken word in the show?
7. What are the most impactful moments in the performance?
8. What aspects did you particularly enjoy about the performance?
9. What three words describe your experience at this show?
10. Think about the message of the performance regarding addiction and recovery. What does it teach or remind you about these topics?

# Engage Further

## Breathing Meditation



Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds.

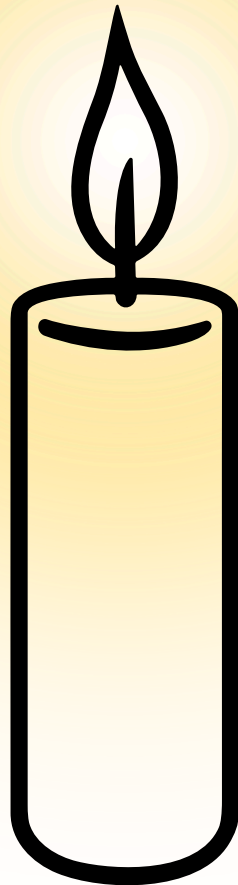
Hold for 4 seconds.

Breathe out through your mouth like you are blowing out a candle for 4 seconds.

# Engage Further

## Reflections

Gifts of recovery / gratitude for recovery



In the glow of the candle light write down your Gifts of recovery / gratitude for recovery.

For example - Friends/finding your tribe/your passion

# Learn More

**Learn more about Fallen Angels Dance Theatre through our workshops, resources and CPD training which focus on transformative impact of movement and dance in recovery and mental health management.**

- **Moving Recovery workshops:** taster classes, outreach workshops, regular sessions and projects explore the connection between recovery and dance.
- **Practitioner Training and Recovery Dance Toolkit:** Tailored for dance and performing arts professionals, this programme equips you with skills to make a positive impact. Access a comprehensive collection of resources and tools to incorporate recovery dance into your practice.
- **Engaging Schools:** practical workshops in schools led by our experienced educators, linked to our productions explore the creative ideas from our shows and introduce recovery.
- **Advocacy CPD Training, and Outreach Sessions:** Designed for recovery services, mental health professionals and social prescribing link workers, these sessions provide insights into our work.
- **Arts in Criminal Justice and Mental Health Secure Settings:** Gain a deeper understanding of the role of arts in these contexts.
- **Mentoring and Work Shadowing Opportunities:** Immerse yourself in hands-on learning and receive guidance from our experienced team.
- **Education for Aspiring Professionals:** Open your doors to students studying applied theatre, public health, addiction studies and community dance through our lectures and hosting visits.
- **Guest Speaking Engagements:** Enhance your conferences, festivals and events with our insights and mini-performances.

Talks, workshops and training is led by our leadership team with lived experience of recovery and mental health adversity and can involve our enthusiastic and committed Supporting Angels community who are keen to share the transforming abilities of recovery dance.

## Contact

Claire Morris Fallen Angels Dance Theatre [www.fallenangelsdt.org](http://www.fallenangelsdt.org)



Fallen Angels Dance Theatre



@FallenAngelsDT



@fallenangelsrising



# FALLEN ANGELS DANCE THEATRE



STORYHOUSE

LIVERPOOL **EVERYMAN &  
PLAYHOUSE**

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