

A person wearing a long, olive-green parka with a fur-lined hood and dark trousers is walking away from the camera on a dirt path. The path is surrounded by dry, yellowish-brown grass and brush. The background is a vast, open landscape under a pale, overcast sky. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

Still House present
Ours was the
Fen Country
Created by
Dan Canham

Produced by **MAYK**

Ours was the Fen Country



About the piece

For the past 2 years Dan Canham has been capturing conversations with people of the fens in East Anglia. Eel-catchers, horse breeders and young farmers have all been interviewed. In this ethereal piece of dance-theatre Dan and his team fuse movement and sound with the words and memories of their native collaborators to get to the heart of the Fens – a beautiful, bleak and mysterious expanse of flat land.

In a place where the soil is shrinking by the height of a person in the life of a person, Ours Was The Fen Country is a poetic look at a disappearing community and the inevitability of change.

stillhouse.co.uk

Documentation of research and development process:
<http://vimeo.com/45147781>

Technical Information

Ours Was The Fen Country is an indoor piece designed for small–mid-scale studio theatres (suggested 100-400 seats) and is performed in an end-on configuration.

Detailed technical information will be available following final production period in early Spring 2013 but the piece will remain relatively flexible in terms of scale and style of theatre.

OWTFC is a dance piece and so will ideally be performed on a sprung floor (or temporary dance floor). Suggested minimum playing area is 8m x 8m and we will require a full lighting rig.

The 'set' will be minimal and representative rather than naturalistic, and incorporate 4 fold-able chairs (supplied by Still House), 4 planks of timber, a desk and a projection screen or cyclorama (supplied by venue).

The company will tour with a technician who will operate the show and a full lx plan will be available in advance. We will require a projector and a decent PA.

Get in: we require a full day get in.
Get out: approx 2 hours
Dressing rooms: 2

Ours was the Fen Country



Creative team & partners

Devised and performed by Dan Canham,
Laura Dannequin, Ian Morgan and
Neil Paris

Directed by Dan Canham

Lighting Design by Malcolm Rippeth

Produced by MAYK

Commissioned by Bristol Old Vic
Ferment, New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich
and DanceXchange. Research and
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Council England, Pulse Festival at the
New Wolsey Theatre, BETA at Norfolk
and Norwich Festival, Bristol Old Vic
Ferment, Dartington Arts and Norfolk
Dance. East Anglia rural touring
produced in collaboration with New
Wolsey Theatre.

About Dan Canham

Through his company Still House, Dan Canham is developing a portfolio of visually poetic work within a variety of forms that includes dance-theatre, short film and audio-visual installation. Dan is Artistic Director and chief investigator of Still House and he works collaboratively with a diverse range of practitioners in both his solo and ensemble output.

Primarily engaged with live performance as a choreographer/dancer; what lies at the heart of the work is an exploration that puts the performer(s) and the stories of real human experience in the spotlight. The aesthetic of the live work is detailed but often stripped down, leaving space for the performers to conjure on stage without the clutter of overtly literal design. Dan is interested in the collective imagination of performers and audiences and uses intricate sound design and movement as a playful narrator through the work.

Dan has previously worked as performer with DV8 Physical Theatre, Kneehigh, Punchdrunk and Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre among others.

His first piece 30 Cecil Street was met with considerable acclaim and continues to tour internationally.

Ours was the Fen Country



What other people say

"Canham's trio of dancers gets a well deserved ovation, and there are quite a few wet eyes in the house, including mine. A moving, rich and resonant piece of work with huge promise." *Venue Magazine, Bristol*

"Mixing verbatim techniques championed by such works as *London Road*, *Canham* and company mix live performance with actual residents' testimony ... looks set to be a show to savour" *The Public Reviews*

"I liked this so much, I've lost my critical faculties. I got completely lost ... I think you've invented a new kind of folk dance. A tribute to dying ways of life... Entrancing. Great to see work of this quality" *Audience feedback from Bristol Ferment work-in-progress showing*

"It's an incredibly engaging representation of generations of people who are from the fenland in East Anglia – a patchwork of memories, recollections, and so true to the people who lived or are living in that part of the country. It made me think of my grand parents. A wonderfully talented cast of movers illustrating an incredibly interesting and complex story" *Audience feedback from Pulse Fringe work-in-progress showing*

On Dan Canham's 30 Cecil Street

"Dan Canham raises ghosts in spine-tingling dance-theatre ...exquisitely crafted, thoughtful theatre." *Lyn Gardner, The Guardian.*

"Canham's breathless dance and movement....There are moments where (his body) seems to glide through the air, unconstrained by the laws of the physical space it moves in." *Venue Magazine*

About MAYK

MAYK is a theatre producing organisation based in Bristol that collaborates with artists and audiences to make exciting things happen in unusual ways. It is led by Kate Yedigaroff and Matthew Austin who are Artistic Directors of *Mayfest* – Bristol's annual festival of contemporary theatre. mayfestbristol.co.uk

MAYK produces and develops new live work by inspiring and unconventional artists wherever they may be, and curates and commissions bespoke theatrical events for Bristol.

MAYK is an associate company of Bristol Old Vic and is currently working with *Sleepdogs*, *Dan Canham*, *Sam Halmarack*, *Richard Allen*, *Firebird Theatre* and *Search Party*.

For more info have a look at mayk.org.uk

Twitter: @maykithappen

Ours was the Fen Country is available for touring. If you are interested in the possibility of bringing this piece to your venue or festival we would love to talk to you more about it. If you have any further questions about *Still House*/*Dan Canham* or would like info on other projects please email Kate Yedigaroff at MAYK on kate@mayk.org.uk or call 07951 698012.