

Freddie: 0:15

Welcome to Sound In Motion, a podcast as part of Dance Umbrella - London's International Festival for Dance. The festival is designed to be in-person across our wonderful global city and online to our international audiences. This is a podcast series where we delve into the relationship of composers, musicians, or sound designers working with choreographers. This is the unheard part of the process. My name is Freddie Opoku-Addaie, Artistic Director and Chief Executive at Dance Umbrella. Today we have Michael 'Mikey J' Asante MBE. He's a London born producer, composer and DJ who forged his sound as a pioneer in the UK Hip Hop and Grime scene, producing and writing with artists including Kano, George the Poet, Estelle, amongst others. In 2001, he co-founded the world renowned hip hop dance company Boy Blue with Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy. Boy Blue is an Olivier award winning company and an associate company at the iconic London arts venue, the Barbican Centre, where also recently Mikey J became board member. Asante is also an honorary fellow and professor of electronic music at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He is also a governor at The Place Theatre, where he is the co-chair of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and also sits on the Nominations Committee. So how did you come to work with choreographers, as well as your long term relationship with a specific choreographer that you've had collaboratively? Yeah. How did it start? When?

Mikey: 2:17

So for me, dance has always been a part of my life, interestingly enough. So like if you were to talk to my mum, my mum, she loves dance, she's always danced, but she never did it professionally or anything like that. But from like five years old, that was my thing. Like I would always be dancing or moving in some way, shape or form towards music. But there was this kind of calling for music creation, but it wasn't solid. But then, yeah, I kind of like started, like my cousin did like a dance group back in like 1995, '96. And that's when I started learning about choreographic dance. Like, you know, we did things together. But yeah, before it was just parties, you know, trying to win dance competitions. I was always trying to win dance competition, going clubs, winning dance competition. So my dance journey has always been like solid in terms of me moving. And then obviously I started a company with Ken now back in 2001, which is Boy Blue. But then we had had a group before that called Matrix and that had, that came about literally in 1999. And that then

turned into a bigger movement because now the dance, street dance scene was a bigger movement at that point in time. So a lot of people that I guess are in the scene now or have done things in the scene now would have been dancing with us. Then, it wasn't until like 2003-4 that I said to Ken yeah, I, I can't do this dance. I need to just focus on my music. It just...the bug bit me at 14 to make music. I continued to do it because I was doing acting. I was doing I was doing everything with regards to performance. I played all different types of instruments, all of that stuff. But dance was always there. You see what I mean? 2003 is when I just said nah I need to concentrate on music. For, for my vocation and my job, but then also in the sense of supporting what we would do from a Boy Blue perspective, because I was doing all of our music soundtracks and then I started doing soundtracks for everyone in the dance competition world, doing GWI or any other kind of shows or whatever. So I've always been connected to it from, from early, from, from childhood.

Freddie: 4:20

I have a question, but I'm going to save it for later on just about your experiences as a mover as well as a composer and how that translates, because, you know, some others don't come through that. Shall we go straight into it? So what's the first track we have is from the Animal Technique?

Mikey: 4:35

So the track's called Animal Techniques. That track was a piece from one of our shows called The Five, which we premiered at the Barbican. I forget 2013. I'm hoping I get that right. Yeah. And yeah, it's like the moment when all of the, the characters that we're dealing with - because like everyone's a down and out, you've got down and out kind of Sensei, you got down and out bunch of kids who on their last kind of opportunity of doing something good with themselves and we put them two together. And then this is the moment that like, you know, when you're watching them, what's the what's it? Karate Kid. Where all the things come together. So they've been taught these things and they're like, Why are we doing these things? And then all of a sudden it makes sense one day.

Freddie: 5:17

Wax on, wax off.

Mikey: 5:19

Yeah wax on, so all of a sudden it makes sense. And this is the track that they kind of, they kind of see that, that twist because he comes to, he goes, okay, cool. You guys are not happy with what we're doing. Okay, come attack me. And then they begin. And that's the track. [First track plays]

Freddie: 6:10

So how does this process works then? I mean, because this music was not in place before the section choreography was realised? Or was it, was it the same time? I mean, how, how was the working process for you to come to this score?

Mikey: 6:58

Yeah. I mean, so both myself and Ken wrote the script for this. And so the script existed and really the script is -

Freddie: 7:04

Sorry what you mean by the script?

Mikey: 7:06

The script for the show, because the dance, the dance was a part of the movement. That's the best - that's the best way to describe it. The dance was a part of the movement of the characters, but there was an overarching story, meaning there was vocals, there was words, there was a narrative. And the narrative was really kind of embedded in classic kung fu film kind of lore, you know, where...like it's funny. There was one of the critics spoke about the piece and they said we had a problem sinking the voices with the actors because the actors were like doing their mouths, like, you know, like as if they were speaking another language. And then we would put dub the vocals on top. But that was like a homage to kung fu films and they hadn't, the critic had no idea of what - they were like ah maybe they'll sort out some of their technical issues and it was like, Nah, bro, that's - we're staying true to form, right? And so, yeah, it had a full on narrative and we had dubbed voices for all of the characters. We, we really put a lot of energy into that aspect. And I would say, I would say what ended up happening was I started making the music as we, as Ken was a week ahead. So what would happen is as we're working through it and dealing with all the other elements, which is lighting, which is, you know, all the other sections of any kind of production, I'm like a week ahead of him. So I've made music for, so he could do choreography that

week. And so then we continued to build and create as we went along. So we're allowing both of the energies to kind of coexist and feel responsive. And I think that's what we get over a lot of other choreographic, well, choreographers. In the sense that they would usually have to just, you know, employ someone to do their music and then that would be the music, it would be set, and then they would go on to then create their choreography. But with myself and Ken in that circumstance, so it's a forever evolving process on all the pieces of work. You know, simply just from shortening and editing and extending, we get to do that. But then the other part is like, actually that doesn't connect with that. So I can remake something just the same way Ken could re-choreograph, I can remake something as well. So that's how I guess we benefit a lot in that way kind of creatively.

Freddie: 9:27

And actually I'll come back to that question I was going to ask earlier on. So do you think that kind of synergy is from you also having to have a really well seasoned physical practise as a dancer as well? Do you feel that's...yeah, that speaks to that? Because not many composers I think would be able to work that way.

Mikey: 9:45

True. Like recent as a job as a piece I'm going to be working on soon, yet to be announced at the end of this month and it was sort of - Yet to be announced? Yet yet to be announced. I won't announce it here, but you hear of, you know, exactly what I'm talking about when it comes out. And it was like the lighting designer we're working with was a dancer. So I already see the how important being a person who's a move-matician at some point and how it affects the other field of what you do. Because yeah, for me, I understand the timing, I understand the feeling. And then I can understand the you know, there's sometimes a language just simple, a simple thing like bars to eight counts. You know, just that, you know, I go and teach dancers how to speak to composers because there was a whole totally different language in that regard. So yeah, you know, there's a way that we can understand and also at the same time feeling, just knowing when to something needs to drop. But I think the biggest aspect is like, so from the competition world, it was like sound effects and adding them in to accentuate the moves. I knew how to kind of, I could see the move and I can feel the move and and get the right sound for that. And interestingly enough, something new came to me, well, not too long ago that a

lot of people that do sound for cartoons or any animations are ex-dancers, and it's because they can understand the timing. You know, they understand how to move, when they can watch something and move to it. There is something in it that really is, is important. So I think it is one of our cheat codes as well.

Freddie: 11:12

Actually, something that comes up as well is I know especially - I mean, I'm not sure how many times you've had a music live or you edit the music. Has there ever been a question from the dancers who are just about to go on stage and you've played with the music before they do that and they have gone ooh the tempo's a bit fast or it's too slow? Has that ever happened to that?

Mikey: 11:29

Nahh. I mean, if that's happened, the only thing that's happened is I remember we did one of these shows and and this when I was still dancing. So I was doing the music and still dancing at one point and it got too much. I was like, I can't. But yeah, we went to do this show called Fit Fantastic. I'm sorry. This event, called Fit Fantastic, which was like a weekend away. And all of these fitness people come together and we would just like some of the entertainment. And I think the DJ had just put the pitch up on, on his CD player, and we gave a CD so the tracks was faster. That's the only time that it was. But not I mean, usually it is what it is. You can't really do nothing. You know, on the day I wouldn't really change anything on the day if I'm honest.

Freddie: 12:08

The music is pre-recorded most of the time when you're working and it hasn't been...has there ever been a process where you've worked with Boy Blue or any other composer - choreographer where there's live music?

Mikey: 12:18

Yeah, I did it with Dance Umbrella once for I can't remember what her name is. I feel so bad now. I've come unprepared, but I did it with Dance Umbrella. But this was at the time when Emma was Artistic Director.

Freddie: 12:30

Yes.

Mikey: 12:31

So I think it was just the...I think it was her tenure when she started. So wherever that first show was, I did that. And I've got my own show called Outliers, which I did at the Barbican. And that had a combination of dance as well connected to the live performance. But yeah, we did have a click track and I, you know, I would always augment some of my sound with some kind of pre-recorded sound. It's just the vibe that I have and the way that I've created. But yeah, I've done kind of live stuff before.

Freddie: 13:03

Yeah, I really want to get to the bottom of this as well because you have a very unique position of being a dancer as well as a composer or less dancing, less now.

Mikey: 13:14

Yes, that I'm not saying you take that for granted, but is there things that you can suddenly just...notice when you're in a choreographic, when, when you're in a dance studio and Kenrick is working on a choreography or whoever you working with and you go, Oh yeah, I see where this is going. And I can translate it into a composition with musical instruments. What, what, what are those things? If you just help us out. I think. I think at time there's, it's focussing on what the feeling is and then trying to articulate what that feeling would be like in the sound. Sometimes it's obvious. Sometimes it could just be something needs to be low and rough and raw, but then sometimes it could be....something is euphoric and beautiful, but then it has to have that essence of, I don't know, mystical mysteriousness, you know what it is? And it's just trying to you have to kind of constantly listen to your sounds, like for me it's going through samples, it's going through my own VST's. VST's is virtual, virtual instruments? And basically what they are is, what allows me to kind of do like the, the orchestral sounds. Because these are orchestra, all the orchestral notes and everything are in my head, but I don't have an orchestra. So these VST's allow me to kind of have sampled versions of these things that are at my fingertips in the studio. So it's like sometimes you have to kind of taste all of those things. And the best way to kind of describe it is I always describe it like this. It's like being a chef, right? But what's happened is, is Freddie's walked in and brought me a meal and he goes, This is the meal. And then I have to eat the meal and then go hmmm. So you want a recreation of that? No, I want it to be a little bit more spicy, but I want the, the vibe to be like that. Okay, cool. So we don't have no ingredients, right? We don't have the ingredients in front of

us. But I have to just sit there and taste the food and I'll taste a little bit more. So okay, cool. If I do this and this, I think that will bring this taste. So you constantly are doing that, but I have to go and taste all of the different individual ingredients to understand that. And that's what happens in the studio. That's what happens with me playing with the VST's and understanding each one's flavour and then being able to kind of hear and see the choreographer or listen to what the vibe is and go back and then create that meal. That's the best way to kind of describe it. Does that make sense?

Freddie: 15:34

Yup. And actually question that I really want to get a bit more insight to is...let's say you have a six weeks of a making process in the physical dance studio. How many of those weeks are you actually in the studio and how many of that time are you in the other studio? I just wanna...

Mikey: 15:51

Yeah, I think it's changed somewhat due to technology. You know, there was some some things that maybe I could only ever do in the studio, because in part, all of the things that allow me to have the most amount of processing power or all my sounds, meaning all the space. Like sometimes I need a bigger harddrive because that hard drives in the studio. So the space is there.

Whereas now we've got masses of space. You can now just get on a laptop. So you are expected in some part to be in the space. But more than anything else when it comes to mixing and that's always going to be the biggest part of what I think my process, especially as a music producer, is, is that you need...It's weird. You need silence, you need a sort of treated room. You need a space that the world has not disturbed. In order to create the noise. And that's what music production kind of lives in. It's like it's different with a violin, for argument's sake, or a cello when you can do it in space...like you need the room. You know, if he was going to do it in a cathedral, a violin is going to sound very, very different in a cathedral than it is going to sound like in just a toilet, so to speak. And each one has its charm or its vibe, but in the studio space, to be able to kind of create the thing you want to hear, you need that kind of acoustically treated solid space. So I can start in the, in the dance studio space, but I will always have to finish in the in the studio nonetheless.

Freddie: 17:22

So the next one is the one that's from the Light Swings?

Mikey: 17:26

It's called Light Swings. Yeah. Yes, yeah. Black White Grey.

Freddie: 17:30

So actually, can you tell us before we listen to it, this was your - I think - I'm not sure which was your probably third or fourth commission with Barbican?

Mikey: 17:41

I will go through it. So we don't add Pied Piper. Over the Edge. That's the piece that shall never be named Over the Edge. The Five and then, Yeah. Black White Grey. I think that's our third commission. Yeah. From the Barbican.

Freddie: 17:56

I mean I've seen this piece live and I'm a fan but also want to know what is the journey that you've gone from one piece to the next? Even before we start to talk about the score, that you went on to realise this epic score.

Mikey: 18:10

Yeah. Black White Grey, it started in my head. And it became like the nucleus of my energy, meaning the music specifically became the main nucleus surrounding the creation of this show. And yeah -

Freddie: 18:31

Where did that come from? Sorry, cos I know this but, but it would be good to hear it.

Mikey: 18:34

Yeah, it was two. It was from two spaces. I think the first one was trying to, to, because The Five was such a big show and had so many moving parts that the notion of, of touring it was quite challenging for other, other territories because the amount of money cost to do that was on the same kind of levels as say maybe a ballet piece. But. When you're doing hip hop, when you're talking to a younger demographic. You know, you can't get the same level of tickets in to support that price tag. So in part, there was me trying to kind of think of what could we make that could look a particular way, feel a particular way, showed the level of elite energy and skill that lives in hip hop. But then also at the same time, make it lightweight so that people could take it into their spaces. So that was, that was kind of lightweight.

Freddie: 19:24

Just to be specific. Touring wise.

Mikey: 19:27

Specifically. So that made that was kind of stage one. And the number two was just the energy of the world at the time. So when making that piece, you know, we had just had Philando Castile, we had just had Freddie Grey, we had all of these - Sandra Bland. We had all of these things that was going on. But it really kind of also was kind of...doubled up with a small conversation with my dad. And that conversation was around as a Ghanaian - you would know Freddie. Are you Ashanti or Ga?

Freddie: 20:05

I am Ashanti.

Mikey: 20:06

Ashanti. Right. So. Yeah, I'm no, I'm both. My mom is Ga and my dad is Ashanti. Yeah.

Freddie: 20:13

You got double gifts.

Mikey: 20:13

Yeah. Asante There we go. So. So nonetheless, when we go home, six weeks, holidays, you know. That's the time that Mum and Dad would make us spend six weeks there. Yeah.

Freddie: 20:26

Summer holiday, summer holidays.

Mikey: 20:27

Right. So I would go and each time there was a, an event that's called Homowo. So Homowo, each time we would go to someone's house, they would give us Kpekple and soup. Yeah. Which is obviously a ground corn. Orange kind of maize, orange maize soup it's very nice, but it becomes a bit tedious because now every house you go to - because the festival is going, because essentially that's what it is now, it's festival - you're eating this food. So I asked my dad a simple question of Dad, why when we go home each time,

why do we eat that? And he said, Oh, no, no, that's nothing to do with me. That's your mum's people. We're very different people. That's something to do with them. So that particular feast there is connected to a massive famine that the Ga's had. Right? So now he goes, you see, when they call, when we do libation. Cha cha cha, man. Yeah but you know that yes? Right? That's when we're pouring the libation. He goes, they call the Nile. And when they speak, we the tree people, we the Ashanti's we don't do that. And I was like, what? So my mind went all the way back to school. Because where is the Nile connected to? Everyone knows the Nile is connected to Egypt. Right. So there was this travel, something happened. It was a travelling that happened with these Ga people that they they now connect with this feast day. And so then all of a sudden, my mind goes back to school and sitting there and learning about Egypt. And never, ever once thinking or feeling - this is in the eighties - thinking or feeling that it was Africa. Or that I could, or that I could even be connected. So it made a question of what is truth? Where do we get our lessons from? Where is our education? How does that kind of fit? And if you look at the show, now that I've kind of, cos the show now exists, that will make sense as you see the whole piece. But there's about five different strands, and I gave you one already kind of talking about the feeling of the world at the time. But that was like the main nucleus point. And then I just thought, how could I show the growth of an individual, a person. Of taking themselves away from what they're being told, to start to believe what's inside themselves? And that's what Black White Grey kind of as a show, piece kind of is. [track two plays]

Freddie: 23:19

So what was the process in the studio? Or, actually no because the score had already been realised. Was was this ready made before?

Mikey: 23:55

Yeah. The ideas were. This particular track is connected to so many other smaller things, which I thought maybe I'd be interested to talk about in the sense that first and foremost, like this track came out of an accident, you know? And I think it's also important for people to understand and embrace those, those things. Because I was struggling, trying to make a sound that I needed that started the whole piece. I could hear the sound in my head. I knew what it was. I knew I wanted it to be, but I couldn't realise it. So I made a couple of attempts and this was one of the attempts and you know. So when I thought I was failing, I didn't know I was making my favourite track. This is my

favourite track in the show. And also what's funny is that this track all being my favourite and the one that I put so much energy - because it took me so long to kind of realise it. Everyone's like, Yeah, yeah, that one's cool. But they like this other track on the album that's on Spotify called Yeeeleh? And everyone loves that track and dude, I made that song in 5 minutes. That other one that everyone loves. 5 minutes. It was even worse.

Freddie: 25:03

Don't take it personally.

Mikey: 25:04

I know. It was even worse because like, I came into rehearsals after finally actualising what, because that section is Grey. So finally actualising that section. I'm going, okay. Ken yeah - so this is because Yeeeleh was made time ago and Ken goes, Yeah, yeah so we've been doing that, de de de - that's the finale. And I was like, what? So nah man that can't be the finale bruv. Like, there needs to be another track after that, he was like, Nah nah nah nah nah. That's the finale.

Freddie: 25:29

And why was it the finale? Just to...

Mikey: 25:34

He just knew. The dancers knew it.

Freddie: 25:36

Was happening in the choreography though?

Mikey: 25:39

They've, they've already made the piece. I haven't seen it yet, do know what I mean? I've made this stuff...everyone's got...because what's happened is that when I've made the music, I've also given the lighting designer this is the vibe I'm looking for, and then they've run away and done their thing. That was Lee Curran. Then the same with Ryan on costume. I've given him his thing and he's done his thing and Ken's done the same with choreography and he's known, nah, that's the finale, that's the end of the show. And I was like, How kind that? In my head I'm like, How can that be the finale? But that's been a common theme in the, in my tracks over my life. The ones that I spend all the time going

hammer on, everyone's like, Yeah, they're cool. But the one that I spend less time on, that's the one people love, you know? And it's just this dichotomy that just exists in just creating what you create, is that sometimes the one that resonates is not the one that you think is the one. And, and I love it. I love the fact that it came out because it was the finale and everyone watches that. You feel the breath of air in the show and how the audience members respond and react. And it feels like it's the moment in the show where people can open up. And feel like because Grey...Black is...well White is quite tense. Grey is even more like, you know, you're heavy and then Black is the sense of release. So that's what kind of always panned out. But yeah, it's that track. It took me so long to make it, so long to actualise it. But then the one that everyone loves is the one that took me 5 minutes.

Freddie: 27:06

Yeah, I think you should just take that as a compliment, because maybe that the residue of the one that you spent, like most of the time on, the residue is the end track. You would say maybe that's just is this release.

Mikey: 27:16

Yeah, this ends the show. Sorry, that first half, you know, and it moves us into what becomes... Really what Black White Grey was is the fusion between African sounds and Hip-Hop. It was like that was the main thing for me. All of my sounds have, if you watch that show, if you listen to the soundtrack, all of that has an African bass, even if it's electronic or it's just Hip-Hop in nature. So compositionally and choreographically because they can both can inter, kind of interchange. Was there anywhere...because the music was made most previously - The majority the ideas existed before, you know. I wouldn't say there was solid, full on compositions. Not like with say, with The Five, that were happening simultaneously. Because the energy was in my head, it was like I could create a thing that I knew I wanted to kind of feel. Yeah. So they kind of existed in idea format.

Freddie: 28:12

Was there any where through thread a process where choreographic things shifted or back and forth? Like with the trio at the beginning when the first three dancers at the beginning?

Mikey: 28:22

That's a good example. That was the only one where me and Ken - actually though there was two, two moments that I would highlight. So. So White at the beginning with the trio. Yeah, like you're saying, which is a Poppin' trio. Yeah. Ken was like, Nah, bro, it needs to have that long intro. Because remember there was an intro where they stood there and did nothing for a long time? Remember? Ken was like, That needs to be extended. We need to make that extended. And you know, the point where they kind of scream without screaming? So that was meant to be another track and it just was like nah it's just we've done everything that we needed to do. So the other track was there. That the track got taken out. Then Black...in Grey specifically, we did it, we ran it in the tech and I was like, No, it needs something in between each section. And that's when I found the voices. So the voice is the first one was, is everybody going to have to die before we get there? What's it? Till we find the answer? And then the next one was, Now I want the truth. And then that's when this one starts. All right. You get me. So you do feel well when you're creative. You've got the opportunity to do that because you know you can create. It's different if someone was giving us these things. But when I have power of the music and of as part of the choreography, yeah, it can always be fluid. But yeah, we, we, we always have a strong bass by the time we hit tech anyway. But it was just those little things which got changed.

Freddie: 29:48

Yeah, I'm just thinking how unique that is because how long have you two collaborated, you and Kenrick Sandy.

Mikey: 29:54

So, so first and foremost, Ken is my friend. I've known him since I was 12. He didn't start dancing until 19. I was still doing music and everything and all of that dance stuff I was saying earlier. And then so our worlds collided then. But then yeah, from 19 till now. So we was both twenty, twenty second year.

Freddie: 30:13

22nd, 22. My favourite number. What's Future Plans outside? I mean, I know you also make work outside of Boy Blue, a prolific career as a music producer and one of the pioneers for UK Grime. I mean, so, yeah, so well it's the truth. I mean, being in East Londoner, I know that, I'm not just trying to jump on the bandwagon, which, you know. Yes, I've seen it. I know, but. Yeah. So what's

the, what's the journey, I mean in this podcast specifically about working with choreographers, but how does that translate back and forth and what's next?

Mikey: 30:45

Yeah, so interestingly enough, we've got a piece. Well, I'm working on a piece with Joseph Toonga. I've done a lot of Joseph's latest works musically, and he will be doing a piece that is celebrating. I think it's the Diamond, something at the Royal Opera House on the main stage. And I'll be using their symphony orchestra to kind of create a piece. Two pieces, actually. So that's happening next. That will be, I think is on the 7th of November. I think that that's going to happen. Me and Ken working with Danny Boyle, Es Devlin and Manchester International Festival on something that by the time this comes out, people will know what that is. But I'll let that I'll let that one drop.

Freddie: 31:30

But you heard it kind of here first.

Mikey: 31:32

Yeah you did, you kind of heard it here first. So we're working on something and that will take us through till next year it's going to be a big show. I'm currently scoring Top Boy, which is on Netflix. I'm currently scoring two other documentaries called African Queens. There are two parts this is looking at the African queens across time. So Cleopatra's one and there'll be some others. And so I'm currently doing that. I'm working on another documentary called Good Fight Club, which is on Sky. So been working on that. And then yeah, I've got, I'm going to try and get my show Outliers back out and hopefully touring next year as well. So I'm busy. Yeah.

Freddie: 32:12

I mean, I mean, that sounded like it's just like a lot of just chillaxing right now. You just. Yeah, nothing's going on. This sounds amazing. And actually, I do want to say as well, I mean, you did actually work with I mean, Danny Boyle's name popped up. So you actually worked in the Olympics with him as well during that as well?

Mikey: 32:26

Yeah.

Freddie: 32:26

Yeah. But what I mean that's a ridiculously like career like of achievements, and hugely deserved as well. Because I know the craft from seeing you at Hartley Community Centre held back in the day, nineties. East Ham which is not there anymore. But even I mean for a young up and coming musician or wanting to collaborate with a composer or choreographer, what advice would you give them in how to navigate this space? Because things have completely shifted.

Mikey: 32:54

I mean, what's beautiful is that the computer has become even more powerful. The computer is at least reduced in some ways financially, even though there are higher versions. But I mean, one thing that I always look back at my 14 year old self and be like, I look at him and I'm like, Wow, he was so sure. He was so sure. Like, he he knew he wanted to do something and he was going to do it by hook or by crook. By the time I hit 20 and I left university to kind of pursue this, I was so sure. And sometimes I think that's the hardest thing to muster, that self-belief. And it was it wasn't like I had a mentor. There was no other person there. My parents weren't in it and all of that stuff, there was just this drive. And, and I think that that's what's really cool is when I look at all - and then that's why I made Outliers, because Outliers was me focus on all of the people that done something different, who'd tried to step away to try and be that unique oddball. And that's what I've been I think. I don't know. When I look at my life, it's never like you said, I didn't think I was going to do any of these things connected to me making music or for me performing what we'd done. I had no connection with it. But these are just interests, these are ideas, and these are the thing that I think every creative needs - solve the problems. At the time when I was doing the music for, for dances in the competition thing, it was like, these guys want their stuff to look like Michael Jackson's, you know, when he goes chh chh ff ff. So that's what I did. I just solved the problem. And then I solved the problem so many times that I became the guy. Oh, the one you want to go to is Mike. He's the guy. And then the same with, like, my Grime stuff. Like, I just was really recording vocals and it was mad cheap. So I just studied that craft to make sure my vocals were the best vocals in East London. So then I get more and more artists come in and then all of a sudden one of those artists is Kano. And then I'm like, Yo Kane, here is a couple of tracks. And then those four tracks become four tracks on his first album, You know what I mean? Solving these problems. And I think that's what people allow them to say. That's what they're not going to do. They're just, oh, it's not

going to work. And it's like, no, solve the problem. You use the creative energy to solve that problem because each time it's what's progressed and allowed me...because I put it to you like this when we did do the Olympics and they wanted to do that thing wherever it was, they were like, We can't do this. We don't know how to do it. So Ken was like, you just need to talk to Mike. He will solve this problem for you. And then I did it, you know, what I mean? That's how I ended up getting involved because I'd done this thing over and over. I had created a template that existed in my mind and they said, How can we make the sixties sound like a party? And that's what they kind of challenged me with and I did it, do you know what I mean? So I would say that is the role of a creative more than anything else, to sit in a space, look at things and try and put connections together with something that doesn't make sense.

Freddie: 35:49

Yes, well, I would say this as a fellow British born of Ghanaian heritage, it's an absolute chale. You're doing amazing things and you've done it by hook and hook. No musical pun intended, but thank you. It's been absolute pleasure. And I know there's many people listening to this totally inspired by the work you do across ridiculously diverse sectors, across Grime music, to contemporary dance in its widest sense. And I think if there's anyone doing it at the top of their game it's you so I thank you for that and long may it continue. Thank you for being with us.

Mikey: 36:24

Thank you

Freddie: 36:29

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