



**CRIPtic**  
2021

## CRIPtic Arts Podcast, Episode Three Alice Christina-Corrigan

Well, hello again? Yes. It's another one of our wonderful CRIPtic arts podcasts, where you get to meet the artists that will be performing this year's CRIPtic arts Pit Party at the pit theatre Barbican in London's, glorious London, on November the 19th and November the 20th. And don't worry, it's also going to be transmitted live on, well not live but a recorded version online on the Barbican theatre website. So you can watch it even if you can't get to London, which of course most people can't. It's a varied jamboree bag of a night, and we thought that rather than have us try to explain it, we'd introduce you to the artists and get them to do it for us because we're like that, lazy. And so today we're going to be joined by Alice Christina Corrigan. Now. Hello, Alice, how are you?

Hi. I'm good thank you. How are you?

I'm very well. I know that we have interrupted your creative flow haven't we.

Yeah. Well, I'm currently doing all of the visuals and creative cautionings for CRIPtic. So it's a really exciting week, but it is a very much a week where I'm just staring at a screen. So I'm low key losing my mind, but it'll all be worth it. (laughs)

Yeah. Now I, I, cause I've seen your, where we had this kind of sharing where everyone involved saw everyone's work and kind of the, the, the early fledgling sort of project of each, each artist. And there's a lot of graphics for yours. Isn't there.

[Alice] (laughs) Yeah.

So it's not a great job, so we'll get this over quick so you can get back to being stuck in front of a laptop.

[Alice] Oh my gosh.

I get everybody to introduce themselves, you know, in our industry, everybody says, oh, have you got a short bio?

[Alice] Yeah.

And so basically I'm going to get you to, if you, cause I know mine's etched in my mind to just give us your short bio telling who you are, and what it is you do. Yeah. So over to you.

Well, my name is Alice Christina Corrigan and I am a visually impaired actor theatre maker based in Manchester. I am originally from north Hampton, but I'm a bit of an adopted northerner been up here now for 8, 9, 8 years maybe? My whole practice is about creatively intertwining access into theatre and looking at how we can really like utilise the technological world that we have and go, actually, I'm going to break the boundaries of what we're capable of doing onstage to make theatre more accessible, predominantly looking at making accessible for blind and visually impaired and deaf or hard of hearing audiences. That's me.

Yes. Well, like I said, I've already seen the sharing of what's coming and it is fantastic and it really uses technology to add

[Alice] Yeah. to the tension, the humour, the, you know, it's, I'll ask you a bit about the piece in a moment,

[Alice] (laughs) but first I want to know. Yeah, you've just finished your degree in, now let me just make sure, theatre making? No, what was it?

No, just finished my Master's at drama school. Yeah.

Ah! See drama school, when I was young to be an actor, they wouldn't let us join a drama school because when I, when I started acting and there were still people who professionally played disabled people.

[Alice] Yeah. turned up with a wheelchair and a bag of crutches and thick glasses and a cane. And, and they said, what do you want? Do you want me to be limping in the right leg or limping in

a left? So it was like a really weird and then annoying people like us turned up and took their jobs.  
(laughs) Tee hee

[Alice] Gosh!

So what was it that made you go do you know what theatre that's for me?

Yeah. Well I think I was, I was really shy kid growing up. And then when I was about nine, I just randomly got like a part in the school play and I think it was, it was, it really was like a light bulb moment and it wasn't an easy process. Like I always knew I wanted to be in the arts in some realm, but I'd kind of convinced myself with my disability that it wasn't going to happen for me and I, it was quite hard like I went to university and I'd done a drama degree and I think there, what I really learnt there was about theatre making and making your own opportunities,

Yeah.

and I think that was a really key thing to learn quite early on and, from there I still kind of shied away from talking about my disability and kind of really embracing that side of, of, of who I am until I really started my master's. So we're talking like the last couple of years, that I looked at kind of implementing what I really enjoyed about theatre making, questioned it in my master's thesis about how do we creatively make theatre accessible, and simultaneously kind of questioning that, making theatre, made me look at myself, and my journey with that and my disability. And I feel like I've managed to kind of implement all these three different aspects into, into my practice over the last, over the last nine months really solidly, which has been a really, really great experience. But yeah, theatre making, I just want to make a change in the world, I think, and I'm not going to be the next prime minister, but I sure as hell will make a bit of theatre that hopefully can bring a change to the audience.

I was thinking it's perfect timing. I think that, you know I've, I've been in this industry for longer than I care to mention as I am. I'm old enough to be your grandfather which is depressing, but anyway, and it was, it was just impossible for so long. And so you kind of had to work for Graeae, or one of the kind of specific, or you just had no hope. And I think now things are changing and I think it's a lot to do with the fact that there are so many people like yourself coming up that are saying, we can use it as a force for good. And we, you know, like I said, having seen, you know, you're showing this early stages, it so embeds access, but you don't notice it because it's part of the show. It's not like it's, well I'll ask you more about that later.

[Alice] (laughs)

Erm what was it that made you go CRIPtic! I must apply for that.

A few people had mentioned it to me. And they were like, this is a perfect match. like what you want to do and what CRIPtic sets out to do really just reflect in each other. And it's, it's difficult sometimes to be able to get on the stage, in London and be able to show your work. And I think, I think cryptic had picked wonderful, a wonderful array of artists that all have completely unique formats and practices. And actually it's a chance for all of us to stand on a stage and showcase what we're capable of doing what, you know, if you give us the space, this is what we can do. And I think that, you know, it, it just screamed. I want to be a part of that. I just, it's, it's insane. It's such a good opportunity. And it's been really, and I think it isn't just about the final thing. It's actually been about the mentoring process that's happened alongside that. And being able to work with Amy has been, who was my mentor has been so rewarding because we've really got a chance to focus on again, like who I am. I know that that might sound very cliché, but actually looking at my practice and what, and what, how I can confidently step into a room and kind of own it. I think sometimes especially being a disabled artist, it can be quite apologetic or feel like you're there to tick a box and something that's been great with the mentoring is kind of really building up my self confidence as an artist, but hadn't into the industry.

Yeah. Well, that's got, I mean, this is what I got involved for as well with this whole it's a package, it's not, everyone will see the finished piece and they'll be like, wow, because it is going to be a wow night. But, there's so much going on behind the scenes that we're hoping to lift people up. And like you said, give them the confidence skills they didn't have, whatever so that they go forward. So, tell us about your piece that you're going to be performing.

So I'm showing an extract of Past Life, which is a one person show intertwined with embedded access, discovering the journey of a breakup and self discovery. Now it has all the music that I decided to teach myself how to make, it's got audio descriptive language, it's got visualisations, some shadow puppetry work and it is just a mixture of, of the sensory exploration of what it feels like to, what those few steps feel like when you go through a breakup. It's my little baby. Yeah.  
(laughs)

It's funny because I haven't seen him. It's early stages. It does. You suddenly find yourself back and there's the highs and the lows, Yeah.

and the kind of self doubt. And then the kind of anger it's brilliant. It was like, it encapsulates the kind of grief come how blooming dare you leave me. Yeah.

I thought it was brilliant, but what, how did you get the idea?

I, the original like steps of past life were really inspired by Tame Impala's music. I'm a real visceral creative, like I'm inspired a lot by colours and music and I love the album and there was something that the journey that, that, that album took, takes the listener on, I found really dramatic and really, and I just, I really gravitated towards it. And it was a mixture of that and like life experience and, going okay, well, how, how can I bring an audience together? I often describe it as looking through the key hole in someone's bedroom and it's the emotions that sometimes we feel when we are on our own. And I think it's really messed up, actually that it's probably one of the most human experiences we go through the sense of loss, or grief, whether that be your partner, a friend, a relative, it's such a universal and a universal feeling.

And I was, I wanted to be able to make a show that really could help bring an audience together in some realm. And I think the more it's progressed, the more it's been really, the more it's become a response to the world that we live in and really looked at empowering women and, you know, a lot, there's a lot of bad stuff in the press about stuff that we've been through and abuse and things. And it's actually about going, okay, well, how, how can I respond to that? And my response has been to make a show that hopefully, one of the first lines of the show is about, it's about unity, it's about embracing the fall. It's actually finding the, the joy within, within the heartbreak, because it's not all doom and gloom.

No That's the biggest thing, it's actually, sometimes you don't even realise you're going through it because you'll be laughing your head off at something. And it's actually, it's getting that human, that human side of it across on stage. That's really important for me.

It's funny. Cause it really, like I said, it really does take you back. And it, and it's strange for me to think, oh, I remember when I was young and all that kind of stuff would happen and it was so big and great I mean, my wife (indistinct) [Alice] (laughs)

just, just thinking of it has made me, it rendered me

[Alice] Yeah, yeah. speechless, but you know, it's, it's funny how, when you're young, your, your, your experiences are kind of invalidated by everybody. Do you know what I mean, it's like, well it's only a breakup

[Alice] Yeah.

Yeah but this is the most painful thing I've had to now. And you capture that brilliantly. So how ready are you? How's it coming?

(laughs) I have like a wonderful artistic light bulb moment last week. And it's now kind of made me go, oh, there's so many more possibilities. So I'm currently in this mixture of going, which is great, but it also means that I've got a lot of work to do, but that's really exciting. I am so eager to be on a stage, in front of a real life audience. Let's all keep our fingers crossed about this.

Oh, absolutely. Everyone, fingers, toes, anything we can move, that's all crossed.

If you're listening to this, cross your fingers, and, send a little prayer because that, as an idea, I am so ready. Like that will be absolutely, I'll probably cry, but I can't let myself think of that because like I said, right now, I need to get these visuals and captions done.

Get focused get working, as producer of this, I'm going to say, get on with it,

[Alice] Get on with it.

because I want you to be ready and rocking.

(both laugh)

But I'm really, I, I'm, I'm so, so excited to share this. Like it's, it's come on a really long journey, like since March, like it's just so exciting to actually be in the last steps I think of like getting it ready, which is really, really, really fun.

It's going to be great and I can't wait for the audience to see it. Now, a serious one, what barriers have you faced as a visually impaired artist? You know, talking to Tom earlier about some of it, you know, his experience in it, it's very much, but we all have different experiences, but actually they're very similar. And I wonder what yours were, negative experiences you've had

It's a difficult one to, you know, I think if you'd have asked me a few years ago, I'd have tried to brush it off and be like, it's fine. And I think sometimes it can get seen as an invisible disability. Like, you know, it, it's not until I think you really like, spend a lot of time with me that you might notice the, the issues that I face. Like for me sometimes the biggest barrier that I feel sometimes is like that I'm in a room just to tick a box, and that's more of a mental barrier. I think, I think sometimes it can feel like, you're too disabled or you're not disabled enough. And I think the moment you feel like you're in a room, just because you are the disabled one, it can make you question your worth, question your art, question if you're only here because that is what you're

seen as and, that can be really hard. And I think, I think that's the biggest, like barrier I personally feel like I face is being seen as just my disability, not being seen as who I am. And that can be really, that can be really detrimental. But I think that, I think that can be solved by having a really good support unit around yourself and kind of, you know, having the right people in your back pocket who will support you and make sure that you don't feel like that. Cause that can be really detrimental.

I can tell you from only having seen some of your work and your application to be on CRIPtic, definitely not the case.

[Alice] (laughs) thank you.

Now I'm going to get you to try it, because I could tell you why you need to come for Alice because it's stunning and great, I mean it is this wee hee emotional just like (indistinct) it's fantastic, but I want you, Alice to try and sell it to are you a viewer, reader, listener? I can't quite work out what method we're

[Alice] (laughs)

Whatever way you're engaging with us, sell your show, to get people to buy tickets.

Listen, if you want to go on a 20 minute rollercoaster of emotions that will have you laughing and then crying and then applauding and then crying again and maybe laughing again, then come, come down and watch past life. It is a, it's just an absolute whirlwind. And if you like music, if you like animations, if you like one person shows that just kind of make you look at yourself and go, oh my gosh, then come on down and watch Past Life and then we can have a bev after and you can tell me what you think. And I can maybe spill the deets on the bits that you didn't see.

And your little (indistinct)

[Both] (laugh)

Well thank you so much, Alice. That's fantastic. And as she said, the tickets are available on the Barbican website. You can come on the 19th and the 20th if you can get to London, if not on the website, it will be live as of the 20th. It'll be recording of the night before, because of course you want to make sure it's all looking

[Alice] (laughs)

But it will be there available to you so you can watch it. And with that, I'm going to say that was the wonderful Alice.

[Both] Yay.

I was going to introduce you doing my Kermit, but I didn't, I did it at the end. Yay.

[Alice] (laughs)

So hopefully we'll see you at the CRIPtic Pit Party in November in some way or other. And that's the end of another one of our wonderful CRIPtic arts podcasts. Bye.

[Alice] Bye.