



CRIPtic
2021

CRIPtic Arts Podcast, Episode Eleven Mik Scarlet

Hello, and welcome to the last in our series of CRIPtic podcast meets with the artists behind what's going to be a fantastic night at the CRIPtic arts pit party, at the Barbican, the pit theater at the Barbican, tonight, November the 19th and tomorrow, November the 20th. And we've got something a bit different for you today because I'm going to introduce you to the wonderful Anna Davies, who is the brains behind the podcast and has one that made all the magic happens. So hello, Anna?

Hello? I don't know if I'm the brains behind this. I think you're driving it.

And I'll know. I've always, you know, you've got to understand as a presenter, I'm basically a dancing monkey, you know, I mean, you know, you wrote the scripts, you know, you're the one that comes in after basically what's happened. Folks is which animal to pair it with, have a chat with the interviewees, then we'll do a interview and then she comes back and goes on and goes, yeah, that was good. That was good. And then she cuts out all the waffle they've all run over a time because my stories were waffle. So, you know, Sterling work has been done.

This might be the one I need to do the most work.

So what's gonna happen is you're gonna interview me on.

Yeah, I'm going to interview you. You'll be on the other side of the desk for a change considering you ask everyone else. I've got to ask you the obligatory, what is your one line bio? Because like, what do you tell people about who you are, what you're doing and you know, yours off by heart, like everyone else.

Yeah. Well, mine is one line is different. So here we go. Are you ready? Folks? Hi, I'm mix Scarlet and I am a broadcaster journalist, a TV presenter, actor, singer songwriter. And I also run my own access consultancy where I work with architects and developers to make buildings accessible. And I work with clients to make sure what they do is accessible. So services plan changes in business structure, all that kind of thing. So I have a fun life where I'm artsy and creative. I'm currently writing for some magazines. I'm doing a bit online stuff with a kind of chat show called, I don't know what it's called. She was on disability, arises TV where myself and two other guys just basically waffle a lot. We have wonderful guests, so that's quite fun. And then I'm working on kind of big sort of accuracy projects, and in between them that I'm the producer. So I'm helping Jamie and all the wonderful artists sort of fulfil their artistic vision. And I'm the one that's running around trying to make sure that people have the props they want and the tech they want and that they've got cabs where they need them and all this kind of stuff. So that, to me, bad, one line is the bad one line

No, that was really good. You got a lot of things on your plate, like coming up with, well, so you mentioned a bit about CRIPtic there. How did you personally start working with CRIPtic? How, what brought you into the organisation?

I'd heard about Jamie already bubbling up during the six I've been on the disability art scene. You know, when, when I started, everybody was kind of, you were playing in kind of church halls and it was very small and it's funny cause I've watched the thing grow and blossom and, and really amazing talents develop. And Jamie was one of them. And then Jamie contacted me and asked me, would I at the last CRIPtic do the, the kind of after show debate chat thing. So I would just compare, basically do what I've done. And I saw the show and I was blown away. I, you know, it was an amazing night event type Jamie's show was just phenomenal, but everyone was great. And I was like, this is great. I really like this.

So then when I saw the advert going, oh, would you like to take part? I thought, well, I'll apply. So I applied to be an artist, but Jamie called me and said, well, really you're a bit more kind of established than we, you know, kind of 30 years bit established. A little bit heartbroken because

while I'm established as a presenter and a journalist and that kind of stuff, I've not really ever got to do my, this was going to be Art, man. I was going to be Art, but yeah, you kind of have to face up to those things. You know, people tell you, you no, I always get told no anyway, so they're not, I saw the producers gig. And I thought, ah, because when I started out, I started out in music and when I was doing the music, I, as well as being a musician, I was doing a lot of band management and tour management and basically tour managing is very much like theatrical producing. It's kind of arranging everything. So it all runs well. And then digging with creatives as they have their various meltdowns.

And I've always found myself quite good at calming or binging people up and calming the situation down. And I'm also quite good at going away and telling people off without it sounding like I'm telling them off kind of, I thought I'd apply. And I got it. And I was just like, wow, I mean, it's been a real honour. One because you know, I've never really worked on anything where access is so embedded and it's so much, I mean, I've learned so much about theatrical, creative access myself from this project, but you know, there's nothing that we can't organise.

There's nothing that we can, we can't alter to make it so that it's accessible both for the audience and the artist. Cause everybody else is a little bit, but they're proper artists. And so they're all a little bit, you know, when you've seen folks you've seen, you've met the artist, some are introverts, some are a little bit more, you know, but most are artsy. And most of us have had this. We've all discussed the kind of barriers. And one of them has all been that core lack of belief. We've not been told you can do it. And everybody involved has got that.

Whereas I am this bubbling mounting of kind of cultivating confidence and arrogance in the, I believe everybody is brilliant and they should know it. So I think that's one of my going to be one of my prime jobs as we get closer to the night, which of course means it's probably already happened at while you're watching this folks that I've been going Yeah, you're brilliant. And so you can guarantee that as you all sit down tonight or tomorrow, or even watch it online and sort of see what's going to happen, you know, that backstage I'm going to be there with pompoms going. Yeah, you're great. And you're going to do really great, and that's going to be my job really.

I mean, so then in, when you do it a big performance like that, that you have the cheerleader though, you don't like, that is a key role.

You know, it's funny, like I said, asking all these people about the barriers and you know, I thought I'm going to be like, you know, external attitude, access to buildings, you know, understanding of neuro diversity. All this. And it wasn't, the key thread was a lack of belief that I could do this, but this was a career I could follow. And it's, you know, I, I'm really lucky. I've had a really long career, you know, and it's it's, as you can tell from my bio, it's a scattergram, so I've done loads and I've never gone into a room thinking I shouldn't be there. And so I want, if I can bring that, if that's, if that's all I bring to the table, is that everyone leaves cryptic, learn loader, create your stuff from Jamie. And they've all been mentored. And the thing that I bring is that I give them all just a tiny core of arrogant confidence.

And you talked a little bit about there, about talking to everyone else about the barriers, but I wanted to ask you as well, because we've asked everyone else. And when you were a bit of a different position, so what barriers do you think you faced in your career?

I think the one, I mean the one about attitude was at the start when I was young and I want it to be in music for as long as I can remember. And I was always told by everybody, oh, you can't do it. My music teacher told me I was tone deaf (Laughs sarcastically) Proved him wrong. But also, I was lucky because just when I hit that age where you go, what am I going to be when I grow up? I know I'll be a pop star I had in jury who was number one in the charts and I'd turn on top of the pops. And there would be a guy who walked with calipers and I walked with caliper. So it was like, oh, he's like me, I'll be a pop star like him. So for me it wasn't that big of a thing. Whereas there hasn't been that since. So I think that lots of younger people don't have that instant, massive role model. You've got to find your role models now.

Whereas back then, if you were on the top of the pops at 7 o'clock, Woo, number one! Ian Jerry number one, Midge Scarlet, sounds obvious. So that was that. Once I started doing it, then I found that pretty much all of the industries that I wanted to go into where, well, the word now is ableist. But back then it was just wankers. So basically they were all the kind of people that just wouldn't believe you could do it. And I, you know, a lot of the bands I were in were massive. And I mean, when I say massive, I mean, you know, I was playing 3,000 to 6,000 capacity venues. I was touring with my jacks. We ha you know, one of my bands got a residency in a club where every other band that played there got signed and they do one gig. And we did a full week residency because we sold out every night for four weeks. So, and yet we couldn't get a deal. So that's

where I kind of fell out. Love the music just kept getting rejected over and over and over, over again.

So then I got into television by mistake, basically got spotted, doing a gig where one of my computers blew up and I talked like this and told jokes and they came up and said, well, you didn't get bold off stage because you were funny. Would you like to do a screen test? Suddenly I was a TV presenter and I did a load of, I mean, you know, I was, I was, I did loads of first sort of stuff I did. I was like, you know, first kids TV presented her first. I want, em, is the thing is, is what disability arts used to be really little. And it was, it was kind of a bit niche. And so if you want you to get on, you have to break out of that. And you had to, and I, I, most of my music career was spent doing mainstream gigs in venues that weren't accessible.

I mean, this is before the disability discrimination act. So venues weren't really accessible and you kind of fought to get in, to see a band, let alone to get on a stage, which meant you had to be kind of with, you got to have an impairment that was going to impact you as little as possible. All the, all the ability to say, I don't care if I crawl or whatever, which I used to do all the while. The thing about cryptic is critic is saying, no, that's, that's old, that's not the way we want to say let's make it so that anyone can follow their artistic dream in an environment that is safe, supportive, where access is built in. And that's all types of access. That's not just a ramp and a loo and they are important, but it's everything.

And I think that's, that's what I've learned the most from this is all about, you know, access riders. I love the workshops that we've provided. I love the mentoring, that whole lifting people up is why it's so wonderful. And what's great is it's going to be such a great show because of it. You've got really talented people that have been given every support to build a great piece that they will then go on and further and create more. And I mean, that's how we'll drive of what this is, is it's a showcase of stuff that will get bigger. And, you know, there will be bigger shows coming out of each one of the, the short pieces that, you know, people will see, and that is kind of wonderful cause, and it kind of proves that it can be done without having to be this big deal and you not having a, you know, put yourself out and go on stage and think, crikey, I don't often need the loo. Oh, well, I'll just have to do the whole show. And then wait and then sit in the wings while the other band goes on, because I can't get off until the end of the night, which is stuff I've done. (Laughs) which adds a freeze onto the performance. But yes.

So what are you most excited about in terms of the show, which we'll be airing tonight because this episode is going to be on the 19th of November. What are you most excited for, come the performance tonight?

I couldn't, I wouldn't say any particular act because it's, it's such a, an eclectic roller coaster overnight. that kind of every, every single performance is going to be different. So it's going to be funny and then thought provoking and then challenging and then uplifting. And so you're going to be doing this or not. And I think that's going to be the most exciting bit, because this really does show the breadth of talent out there. And so there's something for everyone. There's an, And even if it's not your thing, you're going to find that it is your thing. I've fallen in love with a couple of the acts that really, I didn't think I was going to like, and I'm like, oh wow. And I couldn't name one over another that I'm looking forward to.

I think it's just going to be such a great night. And I, one of the things I'm looking forward to actually is being with Jamie when each show is finished, because you know, Jamie, however much the artists have been treating their piece, Jamie has been this wonderful captain guiding the ship. I can't wait to be with them to see like, well, I hope they'll be euphoric because they deserve to be. And yeah, it's, there's no, you, you know, as I've said on the end of all the other pieces, you absolutely have to get your tickets. If you can, if you can get to the barber can do it.

You've got the 19th tonight and the 20th tomorrow, if there's tickets left by now, go get them, if not, watch it online and then see, and then watch what happens because each of those artists are going to go on to do big things. And there's something quite real pleasing for me to know that I played a very small role in that. And I'm going to watch them all and feel like a kind of loving father that as I look at them, watch them fly. And that's it.

So, and annoyingly, there won't be an after show party because of COVID. So I can't even, there was a planned after show party on the Friday. And I was like, are you sure? Because that means it's Saturday might be a little bit more hung over, but now, because of Covid there isn't, so come along, it's all safe. It's all wonderful. But if you are a bit worried, watch it online, it's going to be available for two, two weeks, I think, on the Barbican website, but whatever you do, don't miss it because it's going to be great.

Amazing. Well, I think I was going to ask you to sell it, but you did. You sold it right at the end, so thank you very much, for being the interviewee for a change. And that's it from me.

And that's it for me. So bye, bye, bye and don't forget, see you tonight. If you see a worried looking blonde head person in the room. So you know that I'm trying to fix something. So.
(whistles)