

Fiona Keenan O'Brien

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October was jam packed and not without its fair share of challenges; the threat of not being able to finish my residency due to the level 5 restrictions, adapting my showcase to online streaming and a last-minute change to working with a new soundscape artist. I was hanging with dear life onto my *'the best kind of artist, is the artist who can adapt'* mantra! Although I can't ignore that some positives did evolve from said situations; having daily chats with the Gardai at Covid checkpoints calling me 'the dancer' and asking me about my day, an online stream made it possible for more people to view my performance and I had the opportunity to collaborate with the insightful and talented Dylan Connolly who created a beautiful and mesmerising soundscape. Dylan had just finished his residency at An Táin at the end of September, so it felt very fitting to combine our worlds.

They were the outside adaptations but I also had to deal with my inner world changes, such as, choosing a costume for my new body! A combination of age, lack of exercise and extra tasty treats during lockdown challenged my technical movement ability, my daily mantra and how I viewed myself dancing when revising my movement videos. How can one 'cover up' and also highlight the movement, black/dark colours not allowed!? I came to the conclusion the important thing to do is just focus on the piece and put my choice of loose bright coloured clothing to the back of my mind (notice how I demoted the costume to clothing).

It didn't take long before I was at a crossroads of choosing to continue creating more and more movement or choosing to connect all the dots, create a map and incorporate my three characters. Thankfully I chose the latter and allowed time for myself to settle into each character and how it affected the movement sequences. I'll be honest and admit, initially I struggled finding the character of the crone, I was too fixated on how someone in the later stage of life is perceived and forgot to consider her actual physicality. One call to Leah Rossiter, who said one-word (well she said more but I only need to share that one word) NOSE, and I was set. It turns out, the crone is my favourite to dance. Time was flying, performance day was near and I was nervous but I had so many people supporting me and everyone involved were going above and beyond. It was amazing to create a choreography again and the magic was in the performing of it, there is nothing quite like the feeling of dancing your own work.

I achieved so much during this residency; worked alongside an aspiring dancer, collaborated with a musician, created a 25-minute choreography, formed a new collaboration with a soundscape artist, collaborated with a videographer which resulted in a professionally shot video and I had the opportunity to dance again. I plan to develop the piece into a full-length production and I am excited to see how my work will unfold.

Before I sign off, there are a few people who were part of my process and I wish to thank them for all their encouragement and support.

Vocal recordings; Anthony Kinahan, Megan Foy, Alana Duffy Larkin, Gerard Connolly and Annie June Callaghan.

Advice: Leah Rossiter.

Music collaboration: Annie June Callaghan

Invite designer: Linda McConville.

Lighting designer: David Durnin.

Soundscape artist: Dylan Connolly.

Videographer: Steven Larkin.

Support & advice: Alana Duffy Larkin

Support & advice: Paul Hayes

All the staff at An Táin Arts Centre.