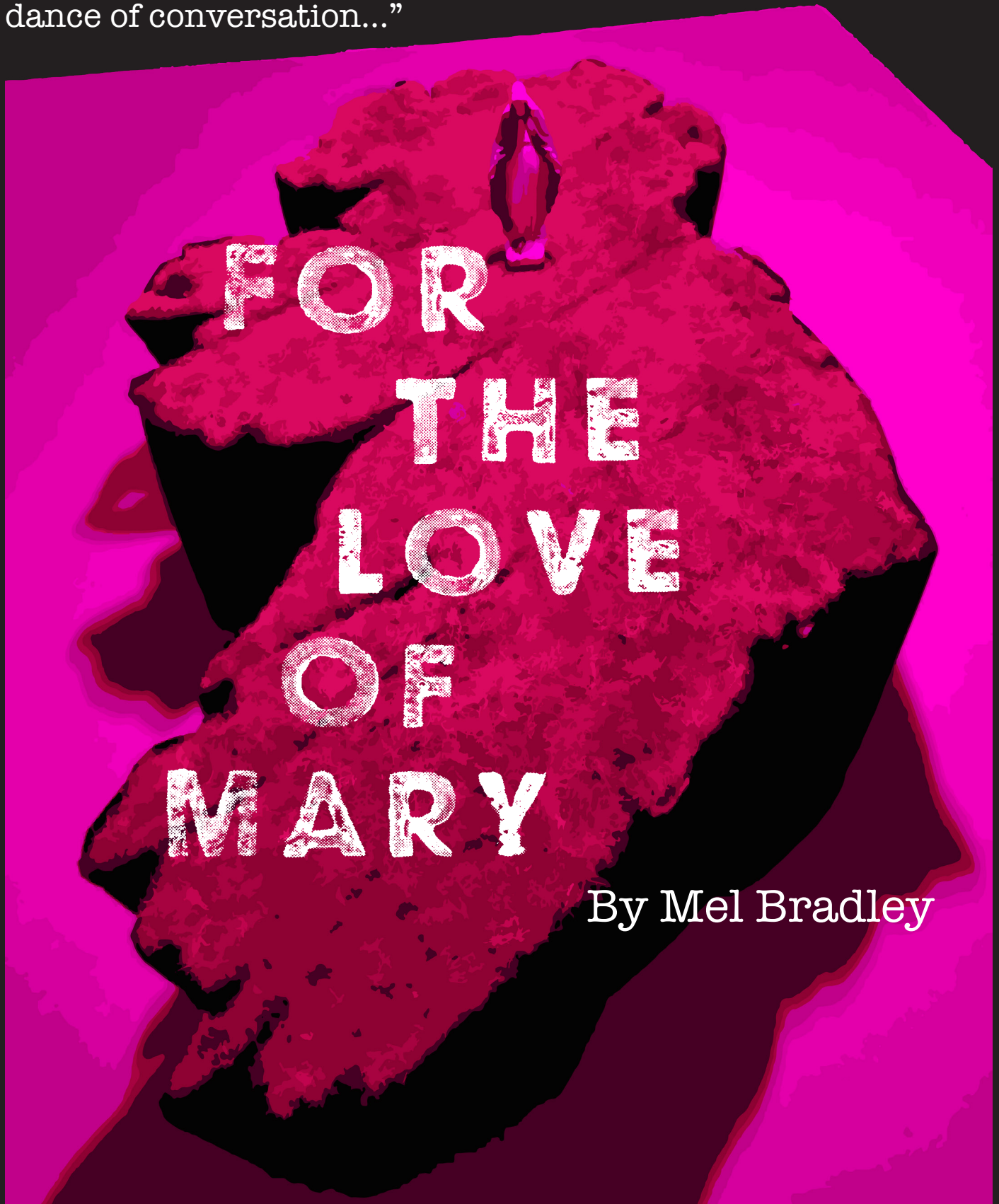


“I love it when moments of connection happen through stories shared. When we seek out a common ground through the dance of conversation...”



Photograph take from Laura O'Connor's *Uncomfortable State*

‘...a seed of fascination was planted. Why was she everywhere and yet nowhere all at the same time? Always in the periphery, but rarely in focus?’

For The Love of Mary is a bilingual autobiographic mapping of a journey to find the Virgin Mary, a figure glorified as the epitome of female identity. It examines her lost humanity, rediscovered through stories shared by women living in Ireland, gathered around the kitchen table, often over a pot of tea.

The performance explores the atrocities committed against women, the institutionalisation of women, the Repeal and Decriminalise movements alongside acts of devotional faith and love. All layered against a backdrop of religious ideology and national identity. Using monologue, poetry and spoken word and a fusion of English, Hebrew and Gaeilge, this journey is an interwoven expression of womanhood.

Viewed through the lens of a woman from a Protestant/Unionist background, displaced by the troubles into a Nationalist area two years before the Good Friday Agreement was signed. The performance questions the cultural influence of her prescribed ideals of courage, endurance, hope, faith and confidante in parallel to the experiences of pregnancy, consent, agency, crisis and sexuality by Irish women.



BIO:

Mel Bradley is a spoken word artist, writer, actor, life model, multimedia artist and creative facilitator. Her practice as an artist is focused on the gathering of the untold stories, often the stories of women and marginalised people. An outspoken queer feminist performer with a candid voice and an unhealthy obsession in the Virgin Mary.

With over 15 years experience of writing for performance including 3 spoken word shows and a play.



AUDIENCE FEEDBACK:

“For the Love of Mary was an examination of the familiar that was in turn comforting, harrowing and uplifting. Beautifully performed by Mel Bradley, we were introduced again to Mary and to all the women that surround her, worship her and love her. It was interesting to examine the woman behind the statue and her relevance to today’s world.”

“Congratulations Mel! You were brilliant. You can really see how you’ve dug further into those characters. The visuals worked really well. Loved the walls, glitches, the petitions, the driving footage. The Ann Lovett piece was devastating and perfect with the blue lights and Mary statue. I still cannot fathom the amount of work you’ve done on this and the depth of what you’ve been through on this Mary journey.”

“It was obvious how much work and research went into ‘For The Love Of Mary’ and it shows as Mel takes us on her very personal journey of discovering what Mary/ Our Lady meant to women in Ireland. We laughed and shed a tear as she told each story with compassion and authenticity and, as I know personally, treated all with the respect they deserved. If this makes Mel’s one woman show sound ‘worthy’, it’s not meant to, it’s anything but, it’s fast paced and thoroughly entertaining even though each story was handled sensitively, you could have heard a pin drop as she went from one character to another, a must seea well-deserved standing ovation. So honoured to have been a part of it, thank you, the rosary beads part hits me in the gut every time and will resonate with so many women who went through these institutions.”

TECHNICAL SET UP REQUIREMENTS:

Lighting:

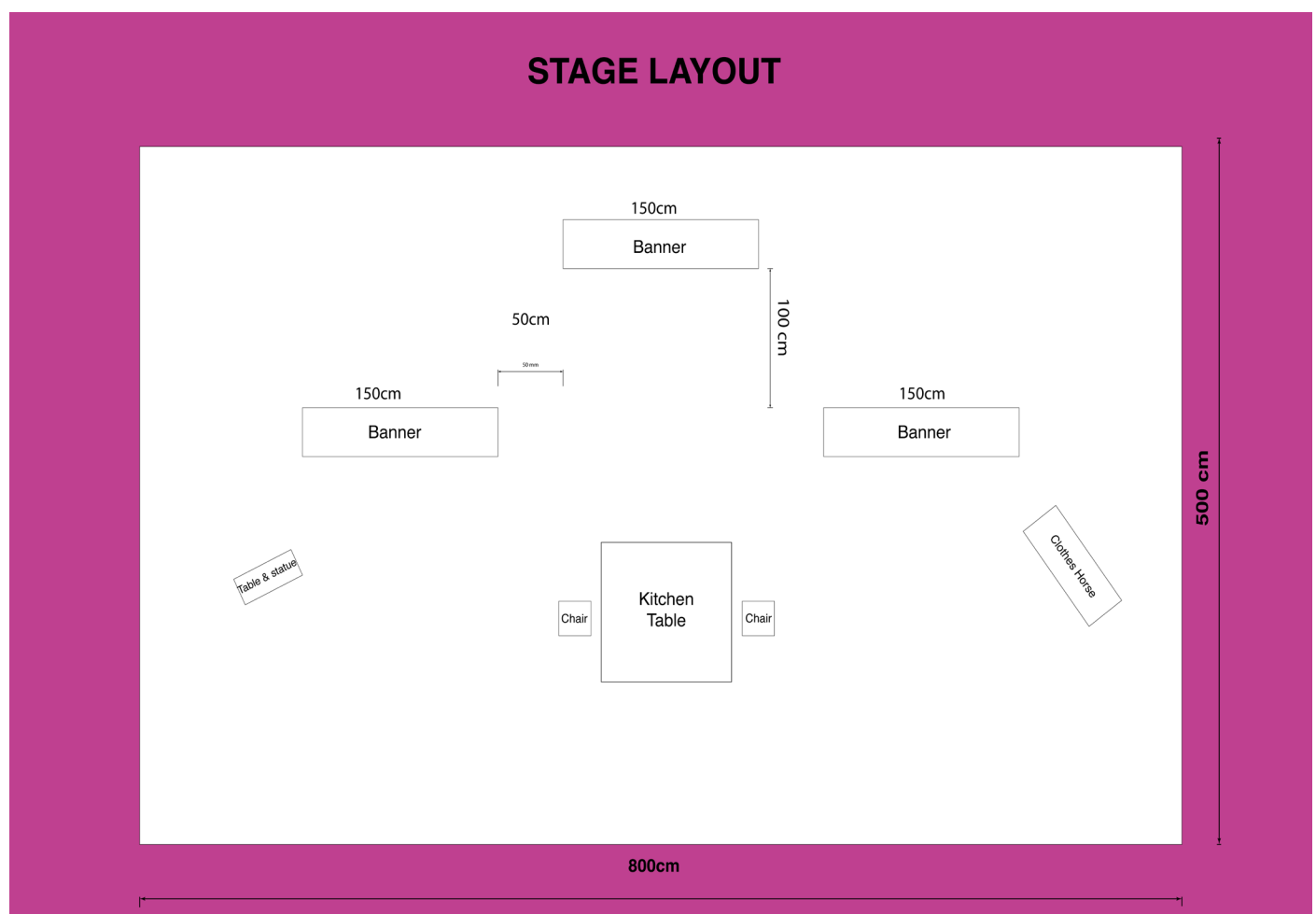
Front Left Spot
Front Centre Spot
Front Right Spot
Front Centre gobo size B or M

Stage Left gobo size B or M
Stage Left Downward Spot

Centre Stage Downward Spot

Stage Right Spot
Stage Right Downward Spot

Upstage Left Colour LED Spot/Bar
Upstage Centre Colour LED Spot/Bar
Upstage Right Colour LED Spot/Bar



Projection:

Projector with throw to 550cm wide
3 Banners to display projections attached to rigging

Sound:

PA sound system

SET REQUIREMENTS:

3 x Banners attached to rigging each banner is 150cm wide fire-retardant white muslin fabric

1 x Kitchen table plus two chairs
1 x Clothes Horse for costume pieces
1 x Small side table to hold Virgin Mary Statue

Props:

1 x Cup and saucer
1 x mug
1 x teapot
1 x set of rosary beads
1 x bandana
1 x script
1 x tobacco tin

GET IN:

Installation of banners plus projection mapping takes 4 hours.
Mapping using Qlab.
Preset Qlab showfile with projections and audio cues

OTHER INFORMATION:

Age guidance: 14+

Duration: 1 hour 10 minutes

Cast: 1 performer

Min. stage dimensions: 8 x 5 m

Language: English, Irish

Trailer: <https://youtu.be/TufutqhRSYY?si=x25BYg3PEsmq9h6P>

Funders:



Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Support for the Individual Artist Award
This allowed me to travel, document shrines, meet with women and create the podcast and exhibition of poetry.
<https://houseofmel.podbean.com/>

The Irish Writers' Centre, awarded me a bursary to work with a mentor, Jessica Traynor, on the development of the script.



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle Chathair
Dhoire & Cheantar
an tSratha Báin

Derry Cittie & Strabane
Destríck Cooncil

Derry City and Strabane District Council
Arts and Cultural Practitioner's Award

Provided time to develop the script, have the soundtrack scored, and develop and create the My Pocket Mary mobile phone app.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.hom.shrine>

University of Atypical Deaf and Disabled
Artist Support Fund
Funded the development of the visual elements including lighting and technical mentorship.



Culture Ireland provided funding so that the show can tour in Internationally.



Cultúr Éireann
Culture Ireland

Contact:

Email: mel@houseofmel.com

Phone: 00447720780938

URL: <https://houseofmel.com>