

Working with Michael

In storytelling, the teller - the performer - holds the vision, rather than the director; and so the huge benefit of working with a director needs to be accessed through another approach than traditional 'setting'. Michael's approach as a director meets this challenge magnificently; and with great imagination, sensitivity, rigour and commitment.

He gave me tools, protocols and situations with which to explore the material, and ways of telling in the moment, to allow the story and the performance to unfold in ways I could never have predicted. The result was a real alchemical process, and a journey into perpetually new and exciting territory. Furthermore, these tools and protocols came out of my own initial performing of sections of the story to him: he teased out those aspects that showed interest, and created focused ways for me to let these fully unfold. This personalization of the process to the particular teller, performance and story was really important. Responsive to exactly what was needed for each stage I found myself in, he created new approaches day-to-day in some circumstances, always designed to challenge and free me to manifest the material on stage as fully and creatively as I could in a way that was true to myself and to my relationship with the material.

The process with Michael was, above all, empowering. It was also about much more than a good show at the end of it: the richness of the work will see me continuing to unpack, reflect on and apply it to this performance and to others for a very long time ahead.

Complimenting Michael's directorial work leading up to the shows was his attentiveness of observation in every moment of the initial performances and the wonderfully acute and comprehensive feedback he gave. Like the directorial work itself, this feedback has become such a rich resource for continuing growth and refinement of the performance, and for my storytelling development in general.

Dominic Kelly

