

SIOBHAN MAC MAHON

PERFORMANCE POET/WRITER/DRAMA FACILITATOR



‘In her Irish lilt Mac Mahon brought magic to even the most mundane aspects of life’ - Bradford Book Festival - Telegraph and Argus

‘A declaration for Life by a very talented poet who gives us a liberating glimpse of an alternate way of being’ - Halifax Irish Festival

“A Very charismatic performer engaging the audience with her humour, talent and warmth. Courageous and honest I loved her, I think we all did!” - Bernadette Azari, development librarian Leeds.

I am a writer, performance poet and drama facilitator with a particular passion for live literature and the spoken word. I perform my poetry widely as well as devising and running projects which explore and celebrate the magic and mystery of words.

Diploma in Drama from the Drama Studio London, member of Equity and a member of National association of Writers in education (NAWE), B.Arch. from Trinity College Dublin.

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PERFORMANCE POETRY

‘Moving, funny and inspiring – a rare combination.’ – Audience response

‘Prepare to be swept along by a swirling, heady evocation of the joy, ecstasy, existential excitement and libidinous energy submerged in us for so long and now prompted as possibility by this explosive playfest of word crafting’ – Joe Sheeran, Arts programmer

My current piece, **The Mouth of the Cave**, which I perform with Musician Sabrina Piggott, is a passionate and provocative piece of Performance Poetry and music invoking the magic, myths and mayhem of the ancient Irish Goddesses and their modern day counterparts, interweaving word, sound, music and drumming. I perform my poetry widely at Arts centres, Literature festivals and theatres including:

Irish Centre Leeds 2010
Bradford Playhouse 2010
York Cathedral -2009
Sirius Arts Centre, Cobh, Ireland 2009
Space Inside – Ireland 2009
Wicklow Arts Festival, Ireland – 2009
Sheffield –Spoken Word Antics -2009
Manchester Irish festival 2009
Halifax Irish festival 2008
Saltaire Arts festival 2008
The Carriageworks, Leeds 2007
LadyFest Leeds 2007
Ilkley Literature Festival 2007
Seven Arts Centre Leeds 2007
Morley Literature Festival 2007
Stanza Poetry Festival, St Andrews, 2007.
Sounds of Ireland, Leeds Library 2007
Sheffield Off the Shelf festival 2006,
The Gathering - Festival of Irish music and poetry Leeds 2006 & 2005
Calling Down the moon – Theatre in the Mill Bradford, 2005
Bradford Book Festival – Alhambra studio theatre 2004
Leeds University Refugee Film Festival -2004
Drum Arts Centre – Birmingham 2003.
Chapel Allerton Arts Festival, Leeds – 2002

Awards: First prize at the 2007 Ilkley literature Festival open mic. competition and first prize at the 2006 Off the Shelf Literature festival Sheffield and Slam poetry winner at Lit Up – Brewery Arts centre, Cumbria.

WORKSHOPS

I find it moving, beautiful and indeed powerful when witnessing a workshop participant beginning to trust their ability to use words to express themselves and beginning to delight in that ability to take risks and experiment, growing in confidence as they do. Facilitating this journey of discovery through either creative writing or through performance (and often both) is a great privilege and a very rewarding experience

'Everyone's confidence has grown immensely and lots of people who before were ashamed to admit they write are now proud to say 'I am a writer' – Young woman participant from the Archway project

'Thank you again, for all you brought to the project. What an absolutely fantastic couple of days. It exceeded my every expectation and has left me feeling very inspired' – Participant on a bereavement writing workshop.

I devise and run workshops and projects in creative writing and in performance and drama skills, often combining the two. I have worked with Primary schools, Secondary schools, Community groups, Youth groups, Adults and People with learning difficulties including:

Artworks, Bradford 2010– Wagtails, creative writing with disabled people.

Artworks, Bradford 2010– Supermums, creative writing and drama with young mothers.

Artforms, Leeds 2010 – Spoken Word project in Asquith Primary school.

Parkwood primary School, Scunthorpe – 2010 and 2009 Drama and writing, devising a piece for performance on topic of WW2

Speak Up! – A series of workshops in Ireland and England teaching performance skills to writers. 2010 and 2009

Kala Sangam, Arts Organisation Bradford – writing and drama workshops 2009

Story Capture 2008 and 2009 Poetry workshops with people who have experienced the death of a baby during pregnancy or shortly afterward.

Archway Youth project Leeds – Writing Poetry with young vulnerable adults 2007 and 2008

Full Body and the Voice 2007 2008– Drama facilitator for young people with learning difficulties

Irish Arts Foundation 2007– Poetry workshops with several primary schools, Leeds

Yorkshire Arts Circus – Performance skills for writers 2008 and 2007

Thomas Danby College Leeds 2003-2005 – Drama tutor, devising, scripting and directing productions for young people and adults with special needs.

Leeds libraries - Poetry writing workshops 2005.

Chapel Allerton Arts festival - Poetry writing workshops 2005.

Breeze Festival 2004 - Poet in Residence for City of Leeds Secondary school,

Poet Coach for Leeds Young Authors 2004 - developing performance skills.

Chapel Allerton Primary school – Bringing poetry to life for the radio

Roundhay School of technology - Drama project with Key Stage2

SPOKEN WORD PROJECTS

‘Just wanted to say thank you for a truly inspirational day. Everyone loved it and we have come away with new-found confidence, both in the material and in ourselves. It was just fabulous!’ – Participant on performance skills for writers workshop.

- I was instrumental in founding, promoting and hosting **Wicked Words** (2001-2003) a lively and inspiring monthly poetry event at Host media Centre Chapeltown, Leeds.
- I set up **Voices of Women** – a six month project working with 10 female poets to explore their rich and culturally diverse voices through word, sound, movement and chorus. Performed at the West Yorkshire Playhouse and at the Chapel Allerton Arts festival 2003. A section of the piece was broadcast on BBC radio Leeds.
- I wrote and performed a piece entitled – **Calling Down the Moon 2005** As part of **Multiversity**, a multi media project celebrating the spoken word, developed in conjunction with Yorkshire Arts Circus
- I wrote and performed in **She, close to the bone**, an experimental spoken word piece, in collaboration with other writers, with the **Word hoard**, Huddersfield 2004

PLAYWRIGHT

- I was commissioned by the Walk the Plank Festival to write **Holding Back** – a comedy, premiered at the **Wakefield Theatre and Opera House** 1996. Holding back was subsequently toured by Different Stages Theatre Co.
- I also wrote and directed **Mother’s Day** – **Chapel Allerton Arts Festival** 1999

I have read my work on BBC radio Leeds and other local radio stations and have been published in magazines including, Tadeeb, The Leeds Guide, Irish health and Homes, Print Radio, Chapel A festival guide and I wrote a monthly poetry column for Print Radio.

SOME FEEDBACK

‘...the words at times reaching into a place within me that reverberated with an echoing recognition of my own mystery as human, alive, sensual, funny and ultimately beautiful and if me then everybody and everything else.’ - **Halifax Irish festival 2008 arts programmer Joe Sheeran**

‘Thank you for a brilliant evening, the feedback was brilliant – **Paula Truman, director Morley Literature Festival**

I think that you've a wonderful, inspiring and creative show! – **Cherie Federico, Editor of Aesthetica Magazine**

I loved as ever in your work and performance the mix of humour and pathos. **Penny Sanders – Seven Arts Centre, Leeds.**

‘Fabulous! My first experience of performance poetry and I loved it’ -**Audience**

‘It was wonderful to experience such a melding of poetry and music that coursed along with such intelligence and humour.’- **Audience**

‘The workshops have helped me to find confidence in my writing again and have given me a tool to express my self. It was really good for the young people and really encouraged them to reach further’ - seventeen year old participant in writing workshops.

‘Coming to these workshops has helped to develop a new skill I didn’t know I had’ – Poetry writing workshop student

‘Thank you again for your invaluable work with the youth theatre this term’ – Paula Horton, director Youth theatre, Full Body and the Voice.

‘Gave me a whole new approach to performing my writing. Has given me the confidence and skills which I will definitely use in the future’. – Participant in ‘Speak Up’ – a performance skills workshop for writers

‘Excellent tutor, very relaxed atmosphere, made the session fun as well as informative’ – writer on a performance skills workshop.

100% of participants said they would come on another course you tutored.- From Yorkshire Arts Circus