

# Pain and I

// Dance Performance

// Audio

// Graphic Score

Created, choreographed & performed by Sarah Hopfinger

Original music by Alicia Jane Turner

*What does it mean to care for our bodies, ourselves and each other in times of personal and collective pain?*

***Pain and I*** is an **award-winning** performance by Sarah Hopfinger, which boldly explores chronic pain experience and unashamedly celebrates the rich complexities of living with pain. Featuring playful choreography, experimental dance, intimate autobiographical text and original classical music composition by Alicia Turner, Hopfinger asks: *'what can pain teach us?'* in this powerful, honest, and compelling work.

A diversely accessible body of work, ***Pain and I*** can be experienced as live **dance performance**, digital **audio experience**, digital or published **graphic score**, and **installation**. ***Pain and I*** has been presented internationally, including Edinburgh Fringe in the Made In Scotland Showcase, The Roundhouse, The Place, Festival Quartiers Danes (Canada), and venues across Scotland. Hopfinger won the International Choreography Award from FQD for ***Pain and I***.



A 50-minute solo performance that straddles dance, live art, and new classical music composition. A bold, honest, and intimate choreographic meditation on living with chronic pain, Hopfinger embraces and celebrates the realities of her chronic pain body as a site of knowledge. An integrated BSL version is available.

★★★★ The List

*Extraordinary... every moment is a revelation... A vital personal work that exudes the universal.*

★★★★ Neurodiverse Review

*Accessibility is woven into the very DNA of the piece.*

★★★★ The Wee Review

*Searingly beautiful... elegant... honest.*

★★★★ Three Weeks

*Accessible and affecting.*

## Documentation Links

[Full-length Performance \(Pirolo Media\)](#)

[Trailer](#)

[Images \(Tiu Makkonnen\)](#)

[Social Story \(example\)](#)

The audio version of *Pain and I* is a 30-minute headphone experience. It can be accessed in a venue or from wherever is most suited to an audience member – their home, in bed, on a walk, in a park. Particularly relevant to blind and partially sighted audiences.

Written and performed by Sarah Hopfinger with sound composition by Alicia Jane-Turner, this audio work involves personal poetic text framed as a love letter to Hopfinger's pain along with creative movement descriptions.

Originally commissioned and presented at Take Me Somewhere for their 2021 festival.

★★★★ The Guardian

*A poetic audio piece that reflects on the performer's chronic pain not as enemy... but as an old friend.*

Hit The North Blog

*Incredible... Hopfinger's words...have weight and nuance... raw, honest.*

Exeunt Magazine

*Demonstrates the immense value of learning to be with that which you can't leave – pain, grief, regrets.*



[Link to audio piece](#)

[Link to audio excerpts](#)

## 3: *Pain and I*



## Graphic Score

[Link to digital graphic score](#)

The graphic score is an original visual artwork designed by Michaela Pointon and Rachel O'Neill in response to the live and audio versions of *Pain and I*. Available both digitally and as a printed publication.

The score documents the different elements of *Pain and I* - text, movement, music – to create a unique visual piece for anyone to experience. This distinctive artwork aims less to represent or imitate the performance and more to creatively explore and share its qualities and intentions. The score can be a reflective and support document for those who have experienced the performance and/or audio piece, as well as an artwork in its own right to be experienced by those who have not seen or heard the other versions of *Pain and I*. This work is particularly relevant to audiences from the D/deaf community.

Designed by Michaela Pointon and Rachel O'Neill, with images by Brian Hartley.

### Publication

If you would like a physical copy of the publication, please email [contact@sarahhopfinger.org.uk](mailto:contact@sarahhopfinger.org.uk) and a publication can be posted to you.



### **Making *Pain and I* - [video link](#)**

This film provides insights into Sarah Hopfinger's creative process of making *Pain and I*. Hopfinger shares why she made this work, what audiences can expect, practices that she has developed of dancing with chronic pain, and the wider relevance of the themes and ideas. Hopfinger and Alicia Jane-Turner reflect on their collaboration and discuss the different ways the work can be accessed.

Short video extracts also available via the link above.

Videos created by Lucas Chih-Peng Kao.



### **Choreographer Biography**

Dr Sarah Hopfinger is a queer disabled dance artist and researcher based in Glasgow (Scotland). Her work sits between choreography, experimental dance, live art, contemporary performance, crip and disability practices, queerness, and ecology. She creates solo, collaborative and participatory choreographic performances, often working with diverse collaborators including children and adults, trained and non-trained dancers, disabled and non-disabled performers, artists from different disciplines, and materials/objects. Her work explores lived experience, drawing on the personal and particular to shed light on wider ideas and questions. She approaches performance as a way of to ask questions, be in the unknown and complexities of those questions, and practice alternative and more ethical ways of being in the world.

She recently presented her critically acclaimed body of work, *Pain and I*, at Festival Quartiers Danses (Canada) where she won the International Performer Award. *Pain and I* premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2022 as part of the Made In Scotland Showcase – a showcase for leading Scottish world-class dance and performance – where she was nominated for the Birds of Paradise Exceptional Theatre Award. The audio version of the piece premiered at the international festival Take Me Somewhere in 2021.

Her performances have been presented nationally and internationally with organisations and festivals including South London Gallery, Made In Scotland, Battersea Arts Centre, The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Take Me Somewhere, The Round House, The Place, Summerhall (UK), ArtFart (Iceland), EMOS (USA) and FQD (Canada).

Her research is regularly disseminated through publications in peer reviewed articles and book chapters, in blogs, and as workshops, performance lectures and conference presentations. Her current Carnegie funded research project, *Ecologies of Pain*, uses dance to explore how living with chronic pain can provide insights into, and knowledge about, what it means to live and relate with wider ecological pain. She is a researcher at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.