

THANK YOU  
VERY MUCH



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# THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Dear CODA Audiences,

Welcome to tributary, an exhibition that traces back to the source my research for the show you should have been here to see, Thank You Very Much. A show performed by myself and 3 other disabled artists, Vicky Malin, Tanja Erhart and Dan Daw, where we share the truths, insights and moves learned from training sessions with professional Elvis Presley Tribute artists. We had hoped to be there in Oslo with you this year but...

**Wise men say... too bloody much.**

No, wait., that's not it...

**Only fools rush in...**

But I can't rush in. I can't be there with you. Not yet. I'm not a fool and neither are you. We both know we just need to wait. A bit longer. We can't do everything we once did, we can't be everywhere. And just because we want to, (or even if some supposed wise man politician says we can...) doesn't mean we should.

**Shall I stay...?  
Would it be a sin?**

Thank you for your patience. For understanding that things take the time they take. For recognising along with us that limitations to our choices or having our choices be taken out of our hands is a way of life for many people, especially disabled people. Some people still can't leave the building, and we mustn't forget them just because some of us can now go and play outside.

**Take my hand  
Take my whole life too**

So we can't be there this year with you, not yet. But perhaps you can imagine that we are there, in the artefacts and video Vicky and I invite you to spend time with in tributary and also in imaging us there too with our full show, in all our sparkling jumpsuited glory. I can't look you in the eye, feel you breathe, see you smile. Maybe even see you stifle a little yawn... especially towards the end of the evening, when we are coming to the end of the show, together but...

**Like a river flows  
Surely to the sea**

At approximately 9.26pm I would start my last scene. A small square stage with a glowing lit surface in the downstage right corner of the room. You would be close, some of you only two feet away, sitting below and all around, looking up at me, or listening to the Audio Describer's voice in your headset describe me standing above you. Wearing a white jumpsuit with a high collar and a heavy turquoise leather belt with a large golden lion on the buckle, turquoise and diamond-like gems emblazoning the front of my chest, and wide turquoise accents on the flared legs of my white jumpsuit, with my short grey hair now wet with sweat and with my two grey shining crutches and holding a handheld microphone. And you would feel me breathe or see me breathe and you would feel or hear the weight of my body on the small square glowing stage. I would tell you how my dream to end the show is to sing a song, my favourite song by Elvis, as I pass through the crowd and make my way to the door to "leave the building".

**Darling so it goes  
Some things are meant to be**

I would ask for your help to do this because I can't hold my microphone to my mouth and move at the same time because I need my hands on my crutches. So I would ask you to help me. To be my hands. To hold my microphone for me, and to pass it between you, from one person to the next, from one hand to the next, to the person sitting close beside you, asking you to hold it close to my mouth as I sing to you.

**Take my hand  
Take my whole life too**

And Carly would cue the backing track of music from the sound desk and I would pass the mic to you. I would sing to you. To each of you, and look in your eyes as I pass, you would feel my breath, you would feel my leg perhaps brush your leg, or your chair, or your wheelchair as I lean in close to you and move along and through all of you. And Chris would press a button on the lighting desk to bring up a spotlight that follows me as I move, lighting me and you and the Sign Language Interpreter alongside me as I pass. Singing to you. For me. And for you.

**For I can't help falling in love with you**

And some of you would smile and laugh, some of you would be nervous. Some of you would hold the mic too close to yourself, or too high, or too low and I would have to lean close to reach my lips to it and I would ask you maybe to lift it up a bit, or to move it more slowly, in snatched moments between the lines of the song.

**Take my hand  
Take my whole life too**

And we would get there, gradually, by the last verse of the song, in time for a final chorus where I stand by the door, holding the mic again, standing with Vicky, with Tanja, with Dan, and I would look at you all and I would sing to you all, sometimes with tears in my eyes, sometimes with tears in your eyes, and sometimes you would join in and sing along.

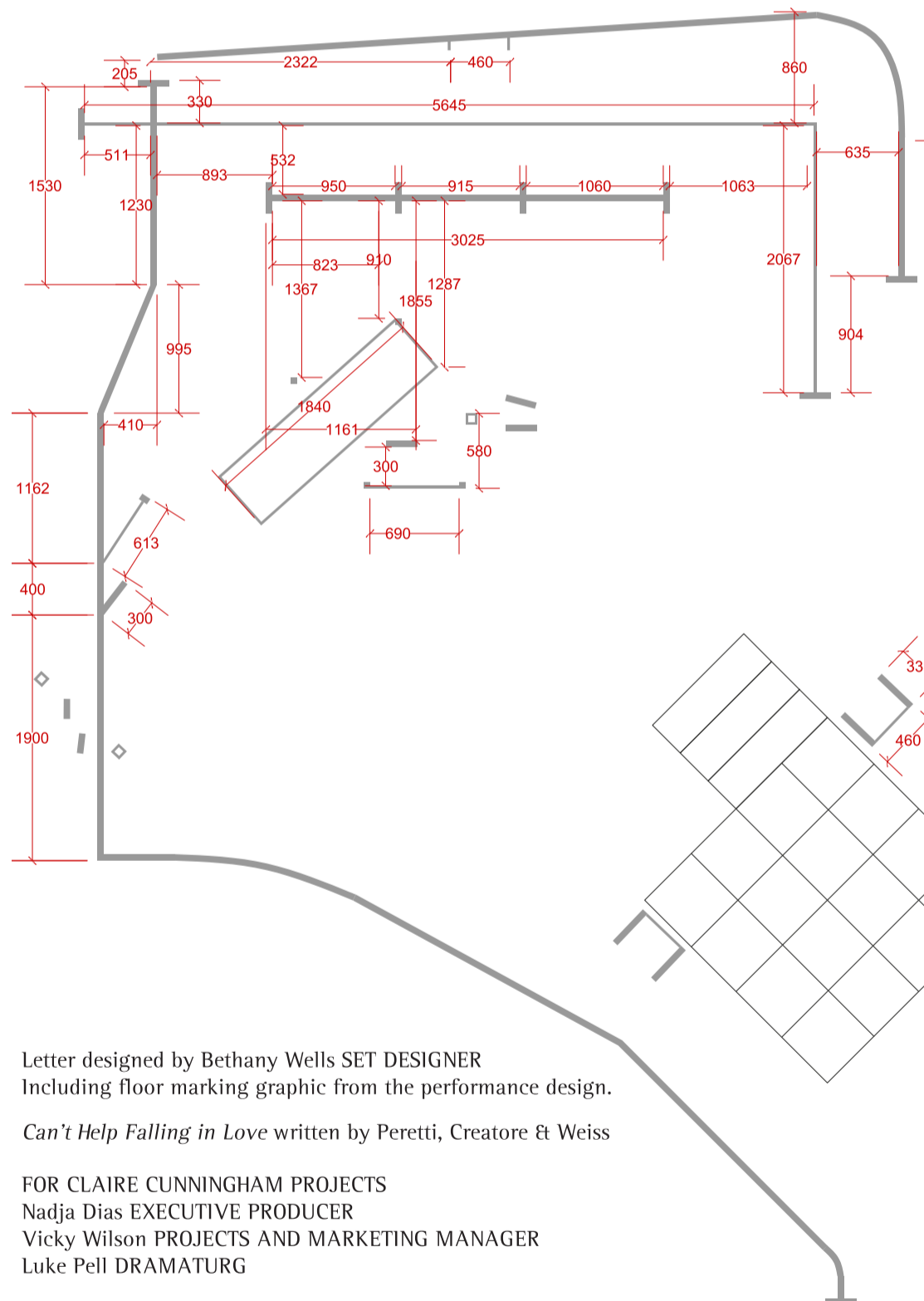
**Shall I stay...?  
Would it be a sin?  
If I can't help falling in love with you**

**But I can't help  
Falling in love with you.**

And Chris would fade down the spotlight leaving us in darkness.

With love to all who cannot leave the building,

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH**  
Claire Cunningham



Letter designed by Bethany Wells SET DESIGNER  
Including floor marking graphic from the performance design.

*Can't Help Falling in Love* written by Peretti, Creatore & Weiss

FOR CLAIRE CUNNINGHAM PROJECTS  
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**THANK YOU VERY MUCH**

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