

Waterloo actor Jennifer Cornish wins award at United Solo Festival in New York

'I feel like I've won a medal at the Olympics,' Cornish says of the win

By Jackie Sharkey, [CBC News](#) Posted: Nov 21, 2016 11:05 AM ET Last Updated: Nov 21, 2016 11:05 AM ET



Waterloo actress Jennifer Cornish, pictured in costume as Myra. On Monday, the United Solo Theatre Festival announced that Cornish had been awarded Best Tragedy for her performance in the one-woman show. (Jennifer Cornish/Facebook)

Jackie Sharkey

Associate Producer, CBC KW

Jackie Sharkey has worked all over the country with the CBC over the past decade, including Kelowna, Quebec City and Rankin Inlet, NU. She frequently reports on the arts and is particularly interested in stories where consumer and environmental issues intersect.

Jennifer Cornish has won the best tragedy award for her performance of *Myra's Story* at the United Solo Festival in New York.

"It's one of those things that one dreams about but can't even quite imagine dreaming about," the Waterloo actor said before making her off-Broadway debut. She spoke with CBC News prior to her departure for the United Solo Festival, which is the world's largest solo theatre festival.

"To be invited to compete at the top of my ability, in a difficult art form, at the mecca and among the best – I feel like I've won a medal at the Olympics," Cornish said in a message to CBC News after her win.

A universal story

The one-woman play by Brian Foster features Myra, a "feisty, homeless 'wine connoisseur,'" as she tells the story of her life on the streets of Dublin and how she got there.

Though set in Ireland, Cornish said the stories she tells are universal.

"Alcoholism, addiction and homelessness are issues in pretty much every city on our planet," Cornish said. "There's almost nothing Myra talks about that every Canadian I know won't be able to connect with."

Cornish has had the exclusive Canadian rights to Myra's story since 2013, which means as long as she's playing the role no other productions can be mounted.



Cornish holds the exclusive Canadian rights to Myra's Story. On Nov. 17, she performed the show at the United Solo festival in New York. (Myra's Story/Facebook)

The light-hearted, but poignant production has been winning awards since Cornish debuted the play at the London Fringe Festival in 2013. It won that festival's award for outstanding production as well as critic's choice at the Hamilton Fringe Festival the same year.

It's also won the approval of support agencies across Waterloo region, with the YWCA, House of Friendship, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region and the Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region, all of which endorsed the

show as a community partner in 2016.

"*Myra's Story* is a powerful way for us to broaden awareness about the impact of addictions on people's lives," John Neufeld, CEO of the House of Friendship, has said about the show.