

Balally Players AGM 24th July 2019

Chairman's address - Joanne Keane

Successes:

Here we are, at the end of another busy and productive year for Balally Players with 2 Full length plays, 2 One Act plays, a Christmas Variety show, 2 workshops, 4 Page to Stage evenings, a Quiz and many social nights. The standard has been very high, it has been very sociable and we have made money! Not that making money is the most important thing, it is simply fuel to keep the Balally Players engine going, and gives options, such as perhaps having a play go out in the Full Length Circuit, but there is great satisfaction in looking back over such a successful programme.

Social side:

When I took up the position of Chairman 2 years ago I spoke about the importance of fostering the social side of the group and having more group outings as some felt it was becoming all about doing the plays and not enough about the people. It is hoped that the many outings and social gatherings this year helped group members re-establish links and feel like they are part of the 'Balally Drama Family'. (*Kate Canning's The Playboy of the Western World in August, The Open Night in Sept, One Acts in Studio in Oct, Trip to the One Act Finals in Kilmuckridge in Dec, the trip to Bray One Act Festival at end of Jan, The Cripple of Inishmaan in The Gaiety followed by dinner in The Dropping Well (Christmas Do) early Feb, Great Expectations designated Social night in Feb, Glencullen's 'My Fair Lady' in March (Congratulations to Brendan O'Sullivan on being nominated for AIMS best actor award), The Country Girls in The Abbey Theatre in April, From Page to Stage in April & May, and the Quiz night, Farewell to Aoibhinn and A Midsummer Night's Dream in June*).

It is heartening to see many of you support other local groups' plays. (eg Glencullen's One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest in Nov and Rathfarnham Players The Salvage Shop in April.) These evenings are enjoyable in themselves but attending helps to promote the spirit of local groups supporting each other.

Support

Balally Players has a great reputation and has a lot of supporters. It was an honour to have Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan come to wish Balally Players well with 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Josepha has invited Balally Players to come on a private group tour of Leinster House, which would be a lovely outing.

Theatre Training

When looking to the future, it's important to develop the skill sets in the group. With this in mind funding was made available to subsidise acting, directing and technical training this year.

- €100 subsidy per person was given for **3 members** to attend the Sound and Lighting Course, Lir Theatre. Aoife Braiden, Aoibhinn Finnegan and Aisling Uí Laoire.
- There were **2 free Workshops**: 26th Feb Geoff O'Keefe. 6th March Cathal Quinn, voice workshop

- Page to Stage, 24th & 25th April 'Soldier's Field', 13th May, 20th May 8 plays, coordinated by Mark Coen. New and original writing is encouraged in the group. At the Page to Stage Evenings new writing by Pat McCarry, Sean Daly and Mark O'Laoire was explored to see if they would suit the group. I'm delighted to say 'Soldier Field' by Pat McCarry and 'Waiting for You' by Mark O'Laoire, directed by Aisling Uí Laoire, will go on in the dlr Mill Theatre Main Auditorium at the end of October, and 'Waiting for You' will be the groups entry in the One Act Festival Circuit.
- **3 half Scholarships** have been DLI Summer School 27 July – 3 Aug 2019: Oran O'Rua, Mark Coen and Fiona Walsh.

Congratulations:

Babies: Aoibhinn Finnegan's daughter Féile, Brendan Phelan's daughter Alana, 31/12/18. Peter O'Brien's daughter Molly. **Engagement:** Eimear Smyth and Emmett O'Reilly 14th Aug 2018.

Condolences: Oran O'Rua's father Jack Rowe passed away 25th Aug 2018. Many thanks for all the support and offers of condolences from Balally Players on the passing of my mother Mary on 10th February. It was a big help. Could we have a moment's silence to remember all who are no longer with us.

Thanks:

I'd like to thank the outgoing Committee, for their hard work and support over the year.

- Aoife Braiden - Treasurer
- Doris Cullen – Secretary
- Sinead Donovan
- Mark Coen
- Pat McCarry
- Eimear Smyth

Thanks to our venues, Marlay House and to St. Enda's Park (Pearse Museum) and in particular to the Mill Theatre for facilitating our programme.

I'd like to acknowledge the great support of the group members, helping out in so many ways, eg doing Front of House and Crew for our productions and of course the support in attending plays and spreading the word.

I'd like to acknowledge Dun Laoghaire Co. Co. for the welcome grants of €1,300 and €500, Barry and Aoife for taking care of the grant applications, and the generous contribution given by the Dundrum One Act Finals in 2016, a portion of which enabled us to contribute to the travel expenses of the cast and crew who made it to the All Ireland One Act Finals.

Special thanks to individuals:

Many thanks to all of you, who contributed to making this a successful year. We would like to honour the valuable input of **Dympna Murray** by giving her life honorary membership. We want all our members to put their shoulders to the wheel when help is needed. Well Dympna does this with gusto and doesn't even let a broken shoulder stop her!

Communication with the group:

A lot of work went into keep our members informed about our programme. To this end many communication fora were used: email, text, WhatsApp, Facebook and Website. There was consciousness on informing without overdoing the bulletins and this needs to be managed on an ongoing basis.

Recommendations for the future

Social nights

Balally Players has high standards and is a vibrant group. I'd recommend that the Social side of the group continue to develop so even if members aren't directly involved in a show they feel part of it.

Training

With such a large drama group there is a need to continue to develop directors and technical skills, so as far as possible our members run the show – it's a very worthy investment of time and money.

Health & Safety

DLI has provided a template for Risk Assessment Checklist and Risk Management Policy. This will be useful in honing the Balally Players Health and Safety Policy. Maureen Hagin Meade, a representative from The Irish Red Cross was in attendance each evening in St. Enda's Park, fulfilling the obligation to have a designated person with up-to-date First Aid training. This cost a €50 contribution to the Irish Red Cross per night but worked very well.

Costume and Set & Props Storage. Annual Tidy-Up. Bigger Set Container.

Muriel Caslin O'Hagan, Mary Ryan, Mark Coen, and Margaret Twomey did a great job tidying up the costume container on 14th Sept under Dymphna Murray's guidance. The costume storage unit and Set & Props Container need **an annual tidy-up** and this needs to be factored into the calendar. The Committee recommends getting a **bigger Set Container**, with side access. It will be necessary to liaise with St. Tiernan's to determine the best course of action but there is a substantial grant with DLR Co. Co. that can be applied for to help with the purchase.

Conclusion

Balally Players means a lot to me, it is my 'Drama Family'. It is my pleasure to be involved in the group and I hope I have served you all well in my term as Chairman. I'd like to wish the incoming Chairman and Committee the very best.

BALALLY PLAYERS 2018-19

Committee:

Joanne Keane (Chairman), Doris Cullen (Secretary), Aoife Braiden (Treasurer),
Mark Coen, Sinead Donovan, Pat McCarry, Eimear Smyth.

Artistic Programme

- The Giant Killers, by Eve and Andrew Pearson-Wright, directed by Gary Wall, 11th-13th Oct 2018 dlr Mill Theatre Studio. Recipient of many awards on the One Act Festival Circuit. Proudly represented the group at the All Ireland One Act Drama Finals in Kilmuckridge Sun 9th Dec, where the production won an adjudicators award for design (Set & Costume).
- The Flattering Word, by George Kelly, directed by Aisling Uí Laoire, dlr Mill Theatre Studio 11th-13th Oct 2018, Skerries One Act Festival 1 Oct 2018 and the Bray One Act Festival 23rd Jan 2019.
- Christmas at Marlay directed by Teresa Dempsey. 12th-15th Dec 2018. Marlay House.
- Great Expectations by Charles Dickens adapted by Jo Clifford, directed by Brian Molloy, 20th-23rd February 2019. dlr Mill Theatre.
- A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare, directed by Karen Carleton, 20th-22nd and 27th-29th June. St. Enda's Park, Pearse Museum.

Theatre Training

- Sound and Lighting Course, Lir Theatre. €100 subsidy per member given to Aoife Braiden, Aoibhinn Finnegan and Aisling Uí Laoire do develop technical skills.
- Workshops: 6th March Cathal Quinn, voice workshop. 26th Feb Geoff O'Keeffe. Free to members.
- 4 evenings of Page to Stage, 24th & 25th April 'Soldier's Field', 13th May, 20th May 8 plays, coordinated by Mark Coen. Exploration of 8 plays including new and original writing by Pat McCarry, Sean Daly and Mark O'Laoire.
- DLI Summer School half Scholarships 27 July – 3 Aug 2019 in UL given to Mark Coen, Oran O'Rua and Fiona Walsh to develop acting and directing skills.

Social nights:

- 16th August: Group outing to see The Playboy of the Western World directed by Kate Canning.
- 5th September. Open night in dlr Mill Theatre Studio.
- 10th December. Trip to Kilmuckridge to support The Giant Killers in the All Ireland One Act Finals.
- 23rd January. Trip to Bray One Act Festival to support The Flattering Word.
- 2nd February. Group outing to The Cripple of Inishmaan in The Gaiety followed by dinner in The Dropping Well (Christmas Do/ Social Night).
- 23rd Mar. Outing to see Glencullen Dundrum Musical & Dramatic Society's My Fair Lady.
- 6th April. Group outing to see The Country Girls in the Abbey Theatre.
- 5th June. Table Quiz. with Quizmaster Barry O'Connor.
- 15th June. Farewell night for Aoibhinn Finnegan in The Merrion Inn.
- We supported many other local groups productions, eg Rathfarnham's The Salvage Shop in April, Glencullen Dundrum Musical & Dramatic Society's 'One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest' in November.

Maintenance

- 14th Sept 2018 The Costume Storage Unit was tidied up by Muriel Caslin O'Hagan, Mary Ryan, Mark Coen, and Margaret Twomey under Dymphna Murray's guidance.