

**Balally Players
presents**

**Happy
Birthday
Dear
Alice**



**by
Bernard
Farrell**

**The Mill Theatre
26 to 29 March 2008 at 8pm**



Happy Birthday Dear Alice

by **Bernard Farrell**

Bernard Farrell was awarded the Rooney Prize for Literature in 1980, the Sunday Tribune Comedy of the Year Award for “Forty-four Sycamore” in 1992 and in 1998 “Kevin’s Bed” was nominated as Best Irish Play in the Irish Times/ESB theatre awards. He is a member of Aosdána and in 1996/1997 was the Anglo-Irish Bank Writer in-Association with the Abbey theatre.

In ‘Happy Birthday, Dear Alice’, he examines the family, its associated relationships, power struggles and conflict. As an often dysfunctional family conspire to put Alice into a nursing home, his usual wit panache and style give voice to the elderly in our society, questioning the whole nature of the family itself. The story proceeds as Alice tries to cope with her family, helped, in a series of flashbacks, by her next door neighbour and friend, Jimmy.

Directed by Jean Monahan

This is Jean’s third production as director. Her first venture as director took Balally Players to the ‘Acting Irish International Festival’ in Florida where she presented ‘The Country Boy’ by John Murphy. Last year she directed Balally Players critically acclaimed production of ‘By the Bog Of Cats’ by Marina Carr, in the Mill Theatre and An Táin Theatre, Dundalk.

Crew

Stage Manager & Facilitator	Patrick Hand
Assistant Stage Manager	Doris Cullen
Stage Design and Costumes	Dympna Murray
Make-up	Teresa Dempsey
Sound	Gary Wall
Lighting	Barry Donaldson
Production Assistants	Caroline Williams and Francesca Torreggiani
Stage Construction	Brian Dempsey , John Carleton, and Patrick Hand
Programme	Declan Brennan and Doris Cullen
Publicity	Muriel O’Hagan and Joanne Keane

Margaret Toomey (Alice)

Margaret has been with Balally Players for many years and has played numerous roles, most recently in our highly successful 'At the Black Pig's Dyke'. An inveterate actor, Margaret has performed numerous roles for Balally Players and other groups. A very experienced performer, she studied drama with the Focus Theatre and has acted not only on stage, but also on film and television.



Oran Ó Rua (Barry)

An excellent actor and 'sound man', Oran has also been with Balally Players for many years. He has appeared in many of our plays, most recently as Cripple Billy in 'The Cripple of Inishmaan' and Feste in 'Twelfth Night'. He is now venturing into directing. The forthcoming Balally Players production of 'The Moon Cut Like A Sickle' by Ken Armstrong is directed by Oran and will be in the Mill Theatre in April.



Judy McKeever (Sandy)

Judy's first drama experience with the company was the multi-award winning 'Under The Stars' by Martin Maguire. She has since played Celeste in 'La Corbiere' in the All Ireland One-Act finals and Eileen in 'The Country Boy' which toured in the USA. She won Best Actress for her role as Angela in 'Bedtime Story' in 2005 and Slippy Helen in 'The Cripple of Inishmaan'.



David Foley (Cormac)

Dave joined Balally Players a couple of years ago and was part of our annual Summer Shakespeare at Airfield. He is also a member of Insight Players, Celbridge and his most recent role was with them as Orgon in 'Tartuffe' at the Dundrum One-Act Festival last year.



Hilary Madigan (Barbara)

Another long term member of the company, Hilary was awarded Best Actress in the first of our All-Ireland winning plays, 'Melody'. In 'Top Girls', that classic of contemporary theatre, written by Caryl Churchill, she played Nora. Most recently, she appeared in our second all-Ireland winning production 'Riders To The Sea'.



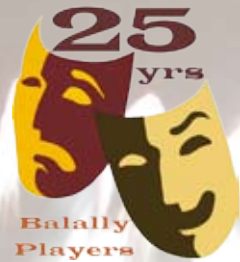
Jack Kelly (Jimmy)

After some years absence, Jack makes a welcome return to Balally Players. The role of Jimmy is made for him. He has been treading the boards for more years than he cares to remember. His favourite roles were Charlie in 'Da', Dale Harding in 'One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest' and Willie Mossop in 'Hobson's Choice'.



Balally Players - Twenty Five Years Playing

This year, Balally Players celebrates twenty five years in amateur drama. Over that period many productions have showcased the acting, directing and productions skills of the members. It is particularly gratifying in this anniversary year to celebrate three significant achievements over the last eighteen months.



Recent productions

Last December, the group became the proud holders of two All-Ireland Drama awards, won in 2006 and 2007. This made history not only for us, but also for the Drama League of Ireland, as it is the first time it has been achieved.

The winning all-Ireland productions were J. M. Synge's '**Riders To The Sea**', directed by Geoffrey O'Keeffe in 2007 and '**Melody**' by Deirdre Kinahan directed by Gary Wall in 2006.

Most recently, in the Bray One-Act Drama Festival and the Manx Amateur Drama Federation's Festival of One Act Plays in the Isle of Man, Wes Scully's production of Harold Pinter's 'One For the Road' swept the boards, winning awards in most categories.

Forthcoming productions

Oran Ó Rua (who plays Barry in 'Happy Birthday Dear Alice') is directing a group of young Balally Players actors in '**The Moon Cut Like A Sickle**' by Ken Armstrong. This is a play written for a cast of young actors and highlights the talents of some of the younger members of the group. The play will be performed in the Mill Theatre Studio from Tuesday 15 to Saturday 19 April.

And for one night only in April at the The Mill, there will be a special opportunity to see our two all-Ireland winners. The date will be published on the website as soon as arrangements are finalised.

Around Midsummer Day in June, our annual Summer Shakespeare will be performed outdoors in the gardens of Airfield House in Dundrum. Always one of the most popular productions on the calendar, this year's play will be '**As You Like It**' directed by Karen Carleton.

Full details on these productions and all other aspects of Balally Players activities are published on the group website.