

Balally Players Newsletter

Sinners Go Down A Treat

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Some dates for your diary in June and July 2011!

- **27th June:** Acting Workshop, 8:00pm, Methodist Hall
- **29th June:** Balally Players AGM, 8:00pm, St Olaf's GAA Club
- **1st July:** Len and The Olympic Experience, 8:30pm, live at Scott's Bar, Dun Laoghaire
- **9th July:** Balally Players Summer BBQ, Fillies, Leopardsdown, time tbc

Congratulations to Brian Molloy and his band of "Sinners" on staging the group's second full-length production this year, "Unoriginal Sin", in the Mill Theatre from 26th to 30th April 2011. Billed as "the comedy with a little extra bite", the show was not short on laughs. Each night the audience were drawn into the interactions of six quirky characters and their sometimes farcical situations, the plot all the time thickening under the skilful acting of lead actor, Declan Brennan. Declan had the unenviable task of playing Bill, "an alcoholic with the sex drive of an adolescent bull on steroids" - not an easy role to fill at the best of times, but one that Declan performed with aplomb each night!

Supporting Declan were cast members Ciara O'Byrne, who made a welcomed return to the group after a numbers of years absence to play Jenny (Bill's long-suffering wife), Susie Nix, who played the innocent Eve, and Francis Cahill, who played the family lawyer, Miles. Len reprised his Fr Ted persona to play Eve's father, Fr Tomlin, and Oran O'Rua played the

cameo role of Eve's fiancé and super-nerd librarian, Neville.

Led by director, Brian Molloy, the production was blessed with a great creative team behind the scenes that included Aoife Braiden, Lorraine O'Hagan and Muriel Caslin-O'Hagan adeptly managing the stage; the octopus-like operation of sound and lights by the multi-talented Mark McLoughlin; and the efficient PR work of Aoibhinn Finnegan making sure we had bums on seats each night. Costume and makeup were pulled together with input from Dymrna Murray, Doris Cullen and Teresa Dempsey. We were delighted to work for the first time with Bobby White and his team from SceneMaker, who brought Joe McCarthy's set design, and Brian Molloy's vision of the setting for the play, to reality on stage.

In the end, it seemed the only sin committed was breaking the lesser known twelfth commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Make People Laugh", but I think we'll be forgiven!!



Fr Tomlin (Len Nealon) makes his point crystal clear to Bill (Declan Brennan)



Bill (Declan Brennan) helps the innocent Eve (Susie Nix) recover from her first ever hangover



Ciara O'Byrne and Declan Brennan celebrate after a performance

Tarry Ho! - Mill Celebrates 5th Birthday



The set of "Tarry Flynn", designed by Geoffrey O'Keefe, and constructed by, among others, our very own Pat Hand

Happy 5th Birthday Mill Theatre!! It's hard to believe it's only been five years since the theatre opened—there's been so much going on that it seems the theatre's always been there and at this stage it's hard to imagine performing in any other venue!

The Mill celebrated its fifth birthday in style this June with a two week run of Conall Morrison's "Tarry Flynn", directed by Padraic McIntyre, and starring some of the best actors drawn from the local amateur groups. Balally Players was particularly well represented with Claire O'Donovan playing the role of Tarry's mother, Sean Murphy as Tarry's girlfriend-stealing "friend", Eusebius, and Aoibhinn Finnegan as Tarry's love interest, Mary Reilly. Excellent supporting performances were also given by Joanne Keane, Joe McCarthy, and Hilary

Madigan, with hilarious ensemble and animal acting from Eilis O'Brien, Doris Cullen, Ronan Horgan, Jarushka Naidoo, Fergal Cleary, Mairin Condon, Niall O'Kennedy, and Teresa Dempsey. Pat O'Grady's performance as the priest, Fr Daly, was particularly scary, and the image of Mairin Condon being born as a calf and then taking her first faltering steps was a moment of genius, made all the more comic by Tom Ronayne, playing the bull father of the calf, lighting a cigar and drinking brandy to celebrate!

Well done to all involved in this fitting tribute to the Mill Theatre and it's importance as a resource for the local community and its amateur groups. Here's hoping the theatre made lots of cash to keep things going for many more years to come!!



View from the Director's Chair

In April 2011, the group was delighted to have Fiona Walsh make her directorial debut with the company, directing the Greek classic, "Medea", by Euripides. When asked about the choice of play Fiona says she was delighted with the opportunity to direct and wanted to make the most of it by doing something different, while at the same time picking a play that would work in the Mill Studio Space.

In total, Fiona coordinated the efforts of some ten cast members and seven crew to bring Euripides' tale of betrayal and revenge (with a splash of rage and passion!) to life on stage. Fiona says she was particularly conscious of the difficulty in staging the ending of the play (a chariot being pulled by fire-breathing dragons!), but thanks to the efforts of cast and crew this difficulty was cleverly overcome.

Fiona is quick to recognise the contributions of all her cast and crew in bringing the play from the page to the stage, and in particular singles out Jenny Flynn, who played the difficult leading role of Medea and Aoibhinn Finnegan, who acted as producer/programme designer/PR per-

son/whatever else needed to be done!

The high point of directing according to Fiona was seeing everyone's hard work come together each night. The play was a great success and enjoyed by those who came to see it, so well done to all involved both on and off-stage with "Medea". We look forward to seeing more from Fiona in the future!



Fiona Walsh with her cast of "Medea", which was performed in The Mill Theatre Studio from 10th to 13th April 2011

"The high point of directing was seeing everyone's hard work come together each night."

Shakespeare Meets Stoppard

With all the performance and pageantry of our usual Shakespeare productions, Balally Players and director Gerard Bourke were proud to bring Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" to two very different venues in June. For four nights, Gerard and his team celebrated midsummer in Airfield, from 18th to 21st June (Midsummer's Night). As usual, the weather played its part and moved the performances indoors, but luckily the cast and crew got to do it all again in the Mill Theatre, Dundrum, on 23rd June.



Lorcan Dunne, Caroline Williams, Mary Ryan and Eoghan Boyle

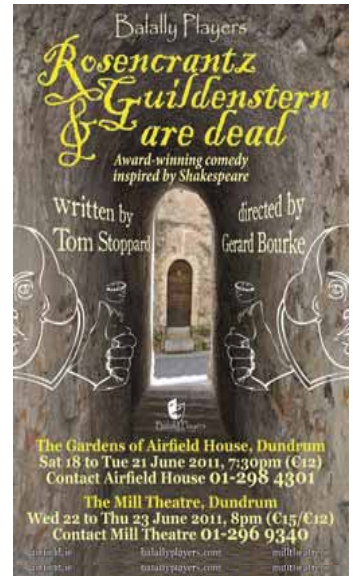
Not familiar with Stoppard's plays, I wasn't sure what to expect when someone told me that the play was like "Waiting for Godot",

but I was pleasantly surprised to find a very funny take on the exploits of the two minor characters from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" as they navigate their limbo world between scenes.

The play has been a huge favourite with audiences ever since its first performance on stage at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1966. Set "in the wings", in all senses of that phrase, there are brief guest appearances by major characters from Hamlet, including the Prince himself, each of whom graces the stage with fragments of the original work. However, between these momentary lapses, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern give expression to their confusion in a play that is great fun at the most respectful expense of the Bard's immortal lines!

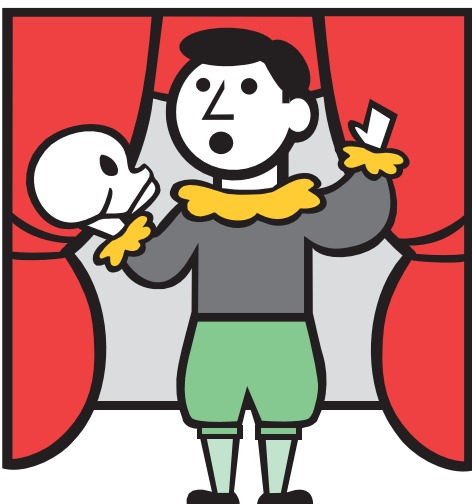
There were some particularly entertaining performances from Brendan O'Sullivan as Rosencrantz (or was it Guildenstern?!) and Gerry Clabby in the title roles, and the ensemble work by Brendan Dunne and his band of mute Tragedians was hilarious.

Congratulations to all involved!



"Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead", by Tom Stoppard, was performed in Airfield and The Mill Theatre, Dundrum in June 2011

Acting Workshop



Our second workshop this year will be devoted to improvisation and will be delivered by Neil Curran. Neil is founder and chairman of "No Drama Theatre" and "Laughalot Improv" and teaches a weekly improvisation and drama class.

The workshop will be held in the Methodist Hall from 8:00pm on 27th June 2011 and is open to participants of any acting ability. Promising to be highly interactive, the workshop will also allow participants to engage and learn at a level that is suitable to them. The cost for the workshop is €6 per person and further information can be obtained from Dave Walsh at (085) 7303211.

"The workshop promises to be highly interactive, but will also allow participants to engage and learn at a level suitable to them."

Balally Players Annual General Meeting 2011

Our Annual General Meeting this year will take place at 8:00pm on Wednesday, 29th June 2011 in St. Olaf's GAA Club. The meeting will feature a review of the 2010/2011 year and reports from the Committee Officers. Elections for the 2011/2012 Committee will also be held and there will be discussion time for members where motions will be heard.

If you incurred any expenses on behalf of Balally Players over the course of the year, please let Honorary Treasurer, Tony McGettigan (email: mcg9999@gmail.com), know as soon as possible before Monday, 27th June 2011, so that you can be reimbursed and your expenses can be included in the end of year accounts.

Members' News



She came, she saw, she ran - well done Jacqui!

Jacqui Does the Double!

Congratulations to Jacqui Dooley, who recently completed her two sponsored runs in aid of The Children's Medical and Research Foundation (CMRF), raising €800 for the charity in the process.

Speaking after the two runs Jacqui thanked everyone who helped her raise money and supported her in the mini-marathons. Having injured her foot while working backstage on "The Plough and the Stars" last year (the things you do for your art!), there was some concern whether Jacqui would make it

through both runs. However, Jacqui was pleased to say (and we were pleased to hear), "I didn't have any trouble with the dodgy leg, which shows it's well and truly mended!"

Next on the agenda is the small matter of the wedding to Gary over the Summer. We wish Jacqui well in her next marathon challenge and hope she won't be "hitting The Wall" any time soon!!

DLI Summer School 2011

The Drama League of Ireland is holding its annual Summer School in the University of Limerick from 30th July to 6th August 2011. There are six wonderful courses to choose from ranging from beginners and physical acting to beginners and experienced direction, and a course on the magical and elusive discipline that is Clown. There's also an extra-curricular social programme that's second to none, so if any of this floats your boat, contact Summer School Director

Anne Meketarian (email: annemek@eircom.net) or Jane Leslie (email: ejaneleslie@gmail.com) to book your place. The cost for the one-week residential programme is €440 and further information on the courses can be found on the Drama League of Ireland website at <http://www.dli.ie>

Don't Miss The Olympic Experience, Live at Scott's Bar, Dun Laoighre

Our very own Len Nealon and his band, The Olympic Experience, will be performing in Scott's Bar, Dun Laoighre, on 1st July 2011 from 8:30pm. The gig is free, but donations will be collected in aid of the very worth charity, Concern Worldwide. According to Len, there'll be a range of music to suit most tastes including hits from The Boss Bruce Springsteen, Thin Lizzy and Kings of Leon to name but a few. All members are cordially invited to come along and join in the craic!



Summer Barbie

We hear our Social Secretary, Fiona Buckley, is planning an end-of-year Summer barbecue for all members in Fillies, in Leopardstown on Saturday 9th July (starting time tbc). More details to come from Fiona shortly, but keep your diary free!!



For the latest information on forthcoming productions, workshops, and booking information for Balally Players shows please visit the Balally Players website at balallyplayers.com or follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/BalallyPlayers