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GATE THEATRE



Molly Sweeney

by Brian Friel



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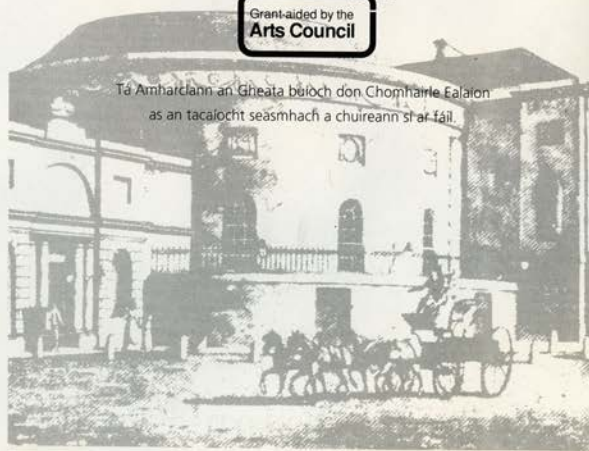
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GATE THEATRE PRESENTS

The World Premiere
OF

Molly Sweeney

by
Brian Friel

Directed by Brian Friel
Set Design by Joe Vanek
Costume Design by Joan Bergin
Lighting Design by Mick Hughes



Gate Theatre
Tuesday, 9th August, 1994

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Brian Friel

Brian Friel was born in Omagh, Co. Tyrone in 1929 and in 1939 moved with his family to Derry City.

He has published two collections of short stories, *A Saucer of Larks* and *The Gold in the Sea*. He has also edited, in 1986, *The Last of the Name*, the recollections of a Donegal weaver, Charley McGinley.

The first performance of *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (opening in the Roundabout Theatre, New York on September 6th, 1994) was given at the Gaiety Theatre in September 1964 and was subsequently produced at the Lyric Theatre, London and at the Helen Hayes Theatre, New York. *The Loves of Cass McGuire*

followed in 1966, *Lovers* in 1967, *Crystal and Fox* in 1968, *The Mundy Scheme* in 1969 and *The Gentle Island* two years later. During the 1970s *The Freedom of the City* opened simultaneously at the Royal Court in London and at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. It was followed by *Volunteers*, *Living Quarters* and *Aristocrats*, which were all premiered at the Abbey during that decade. *Faith Healer* was first produced on Broadway in 1979 and has recently been seen at the Abbey and the Royal Court.

In 1980, Brian Friel co-founded Field Day Theatre Company in Derry. *Translations*, his translation of *Three Sisters*, *The Communication Cord* and *Making History* were all produced by Field Day. The company recently published the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*.

Fathers and Sons, his adaptation of the Turgenev novel, was first produced at the Royal National Theatre, London in 1987 and at the Gate Theatre the following year. In 1990 *Dancing at Lughnasa* opened at the Abbey. It transferred to the Royal National Theatre the following year and then moved to the West End's Garrick Theatre. *Dancing at Lughnasa* won the Lawrence Olivier Award and the Broadway Tony Award.

In 1992 the Gate Theatre produced *The London Vertigo*, Brian Friel's shortened version of the eighteenth century play by Charles Macklin, and his version of Turgenev's *A Month in the Country*.

Brian Friel served in the Senate from 1987 to 1989. He has received honorary doctorates from N.U.I., T.C.D., D.C.U., Magee University and Queen's University. *Molly Sweeney* is published by Gallery Press.

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Emily Dickinson (1830 - 1886)



In Search of Miracles

by Richard Pine

On 11 August 1991 Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* was performed in his mother's home town of Glenties, County Donegal - the imaginative resource of 'Ballybeg' from which most of his drama has emanated. Probably no other production of any of his plays - not even *Lughnasa*'s prize-winning successes in London or on Broadway - can have had such significance for the playwright or his work. The man whose theatre concentrates on language and meaning, on memory and on homecoming, came home to Ballybeg. He was playing to neighbours, making clear that there are different kinds of homecoming - to self, to truth, to the past. The play's ultimate message, that there is a level of meaning beyond the clumsy fumbblings of language, meant more on that evening than on any other. That event becomes a benchmark

from which all future consideration of Friel might start, because it represents his strongest challenge to language and to the ways in which we work towards meaning.

Since then he has given us *Wonderful Tennessee*, a 'Canterbury Tales' examining privacies, memories, expectations, versions of the truth. It was a disarming play, a cruel play, most likely a conscious decision on Friel's part to deconstruct the beauty and the tranquillity he had achieved in *Lughnasa* - as if he intended once more to cast the people of Ballybeg loose on the tide of uncertainty, ambivalence and irony. Now he returns to the company with whom, thirty years ago, he celebrated his first international triumph with the play which changed the direction of modern Irish drama, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (under Hilton Edwards' direction at the Gaiety during the Dublin Theatre Festival). Tonight's experience will further demonstrate that he has relinquished none of his intellectual rigour and yet has lost none of his capacity to sing with the utmost eloquence and transparency in following the inner voices who have demanded a place in the script of *Molly Sweeney*.

Never has Friel written with such lucidity, never have his voices spoken so clearly. Never has he allowed magic so much latitude in demonstrating the capacity for play. It is a play without handles - if it has any antecedents, we might mention Synge's *The Well of the Saints*, Maeterlinck's *Les Aveugles* or - a play presented at the Gate in 1928 as a curtain-raiser to *Salomé* - Evreinov's monological *Theatre of the Soul*. Moreover, it is a thoroughly seamless play. And yet at its centre is a bitter argument, fuelled by Berkeley's *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* (1709), about the nature of internal and external vision, and its relation to belief, understanding and expression. Like Berkeley's thesis, it is passionate and at the same time political. The idea that 'esse est percipi' - that existence depends on being perceived - is taken further here, with the insistence that the inner perception, the private world inhabited (and inhibited) by unseen ghosts, is another way of knowing, that it can provide perhaps more rewarding glimpses of 'truth'.

When she was rehearsing for a revival of *Aristocrats* (again, in this theatre) Susan FitzGerald described the poetic remorselessness of the work: 'It's just someone looking out of a window in Ballybeg, but it breaks your heart'. Nothing expresses more successfully the fact that Friel's world is one of necessary tragedy in everyday life. But in *Molly Sweeney* the speakers use inward-looking windows in search of miracles. The intensity of the writing underlines the fact that Friel's work demands the utmost complexity of thought and at the same time the simplest clarity of response. The result is the transparent texture of the language, ironically counterpointed by the opacity of Molly's 'vision', between the brief light of childhood and that of her last autism, as she re-creates, in vibrant stillness, a dance of anger and despair which gives a new dimension to that which we have witnessed from the Mundy sisters at the feast of Lughnasa: *rosca*. The sighted world is one of inevitable loss and disappointment, the dark one is powered by its own tyranny of images.

However compelling the magic may be, audiences leave Friel's theatre not wondering, but knowing that a statement, however intangible, has been made, that a finality of sorts, however brief, has been reached, and that it somehow concerns and affects them deeply.

Richard Pine, who organised the Gate Theatre Golden Jubilee Exhibition in 1978, is the author of *Brian Friel and Ireland's Drama* (Routledge, 1990).



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Joe Vanek

Molly Sweeney marks Joe Vanek's third collaboration on a new Brian Friel play over the past four years. In 1990, he designed *Dancing at Lughnasa* for the Abbey Theatre, which was seen subsequently at the Royal National Theatre, London, in the West End and on Broadway. His designs for this production have been seen in extensive tours in Britain, Ireland and Australia, as well as in Japan and Israel. In 1993 he designed *Wonderful Tennessee* for the Abbey, followed by a further Broadway run. 1994 marks a ten year association with theatre and opera in Ireland, which began at the Gate in 1984 with *A Woman of No Importance*. Gate shows since then include *The Recruiting Officer*, *Heartbreak House*, *Innocence*, *Peer Gynt*, *The School for Scandal* and *The Threepenny Opera*.

In January of this year Joe joined the National Theatre in Dublin as Director of Design and, alongside the two Friel plays, past work includes *St Stephen's Green* and, this season, *Moses Rock* and *The Broken Jug*. He is currently designing *Chamber Music*, two one act plays by Hugh Leonard.

His opera designs over the last eight years have been seen at Opera North, Welsh National Opera, English National Opera, Wexford Festival Opera and the New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv. Currently he is designing *The Love for Three Oranges* for the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, directed by choreographer Flemming Flindt, opening in October. Major operas designed include *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, *La cena delle beffe*, *Turandot*, *The Duenna*, *Don Pasquale*, *Ariadne and Bluebeard*, *Rigoletto* and *Caritas*. In St Louis and San Francisco he designed Ken Hill's operatic version of *The Phantom of the Opera*.

He has received three Harvey's Theatre Awards for Design in Ireland, two West Coast Critics' Circle Awards for *The Phantom of the Opera* in the U.S. and, in New York, two Tony nominations for set and costume design for *Dancing at Lughnasa*.

In England recent work includes *Sienna Red* for the Peter Hall Company and *The Matchmaker* for the Chichester Festival Theatre.



Joan Bergin

Joan Bergin began her career as a designer with Focus Theatre and was nominated as Best Costume Designer for three consecutive years, against competition from the larger theatres. She was in-house costume designer for Noel Pearson, Ireland's leading theatrical impresario, from 1977 to 1987. During that period she also worked on a variety of productions at the Gate, the Abbey, the Gaiety and the Olympia. She received Harvey nominations for her work on *Bugsy Malone* and *John Bull's Other Island*. From 1986 to 1990 she worked as a freelance costume designer on a wide range of R.T.E. productions. She has designed for several films, including *My Left Foot*, *The Field*, *In the Name of the Father* and, most recently, *An Awfully Big Adventure*. She was costume designer for the Gate's recent Pinter Festival. In September she begins filming

The Dork of Cork, which is based on the novel by Chet Raymo. It will be shot in Cork, Normandy and Texas.

GATE THEATRE PRESENTS

Molly Sweeney

by
Brian Friel

Cast

<i>Molly Sweeney</i>	Catherine Byrne
<i>Mr Rice</i>	T.P. McKenna
<i>Frank Sweeney</i>	Mark Lambert

There will be one interval of 15 minutes.

No photographs or recordings may be taken in the auditorium.

Director	Brian Friel
*Set Design	Joe Vanek
Costume Design	Joan Bergin
Lighting Design	Mick Hughes
Assistant to Director	Bairbre Ni Chaoimh

Production Manager	Ken Hartnett
Stage Director	Lita O'Connell
D.S.M.	Arnold Fanning
Electrician	James McConnell
Sound	Edward Walsh
Wardrobe Supervisor	Joy Gleeson
Stage Carpenter	Liam Pawley

Gentlemen's Tailoring	Louis Copeland
Production Photographs	Tom Lawlor

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Mick Hughes

Mick Hughes started his career in 1961 as electrician for the Margate Stage Company. The first West End production he lit was *The Fighting Cock* in 1966. He directed forty plays for Worcester Rep from 1967 to 1972 and lit all the plays at the Chichester Festival Theatre from 1966 to 1969 and from 1974 to 1979. From 1978 to 1982 he was Lighting Consultant for the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

He has lit numerous shows for the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain, including *Fuente Ovejuna*, *The March on Russia*, *Angels in America*, *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* and *Sweeney Todd*. He has lit *Partytime* at the Almeida Theatre, and *Passion Play* and *The Danton Affair* for the Royal Shakespeare Company. His work in opera includes the Wexford Festival from 1982 to 1985 and *Don Pasquale* at the Colosseum, London.

In 1986 he won the Harvey's Award for his work with Joe Vanek on the Gate's production of Frank McGuinness's *Innocence*. He also lit *The Threepenny Opera*, *A Month in the Country* and the recent Pinter Festival at the Gate. He has worked in the West End, where productions include *Veterans' Day*, *The Cherry Orchard* with Judi Dench, *Vanilla*, *Never the Sinner* with Joss Ackland, *Burn This*, *Man of the Moment*, *The Caretaker*, *The Resengers' Comedy*, *Hay Fever* and *Time of my Life*. Most recently he lit *Communicating Doors* for the International Theatre Festival of Chicago.



Mark Lambert

Mark Lambert trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. His performances at the Gate have included Arkady in *A Month in the Country*, Andrei in *Three Sisters*, Mozart in *Amadeus*, Clive in *Season's Greetings* and Mark Meddle in *London Assurance*. At the Abbey he has appeared in *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*, *The Patrick Pearse Motel*, *Send Lawyers Guns and Money* and *Ullaloo*. He appeared with Field Day Theatre Company in *High Time* and *The Riot Act*, and in Boucicault's *The Streets of Dublin* at the Tivoli. He has also worked with the Irish Theatre Company and at the Lyric Theatre in Belfast.

His work in British theatres includes *Our Country's Good* at the Garrick; *Dancing at Lughnasa* at the Phoenix and Garrick theatres; *Ourselves Alone*, *The Recruiting Officer* and *Built on Sand* at the Royal Court Theatre; *Juno and the Paycock* and *Red, Black and Ignorant* with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and *Comedians* at the Young Vic, as well as various productions at the Bush and Hampstead theatres, Soho Poly, Oxford Playhouse, 7:84 and several seasons at the Bristol Old Vic. He recently played Joxer in Joe Dowling's production of *Juno and the Paycock*, which ended its tour at the Albery and Wyndhams theatres in London and for which he won an Olivier Award nomination. He also played the Mayor in Dubbeljoint Theatre Company's successful run of *The Government Inspector* at the Tricycle Theatre. His television work includes *Time after Time*, *The Young Ones*, *An Affair in Mind*, *Caught in a Free State*, *All in the Game*, *Boon*, *Bottom* and *The Bill*. His film work includes *Prayer for the Dying*, *Champions*, *The Fool* and, most recently, *Hooked* and *Scarlett*.



Catherine Byrne

Catherine Byrne trained at the Abbey School of Acting. She joined the Irish Theatre Company where her roles included Mary in *Juno and the Paycock*, Eileen in *The Erpingham Camp*, Petra in *Enemy of the People* and Emily in *Our Town*. She then joined the Abbey Company and played in *Hamlet, Da*, *Tarry Flynn*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Sive*, *A Whistle in the Dark* and *The Field*. She played the title role in a version of *Yerma*, by Frank McGuinness, at the Peacock and won the Harvey's Award for Best Actress in 1987. Other roles include Nora in *The Plough and the Stars* at the Gaiety, and Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Claire in *Aristocrats* and Natalya in *A Month in the Country* at the Gate, all directed by Joe Dowling. Most recently she appeared in *Old Times* during the Pinter Festival at the Gate.

Catherine played in Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *Wonderful Tennessee* in Dublin, London and on Broadway. She is delighted to be back at the Gate playing Molly under the direction of Mr Friel.

Her television and film work includes *Fair City* and *Eat the Peach*.



T.P. McKenna

T.P. McKenna joined the Abbey Theatre in 1955 and remained with them for eight years. He was made an honorary life member of the company in 1966. He has appeared in *The Ginger Man*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Seagull* at the Royal Court, and in *Exiles*, *The Balcony* and Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple* during two seasons with the Royal Shakespeare Company. He spent a season with the Nottingham Playhouse, appearing in *King John*, *Macbeth* and *School for Scandal*. Other appearances include *A Doll's House* at the Haymarket Theatre in Leicester and *The White Devil* at the Royal National Theatre in London. He has previously appeared at the Gate in *Uncle Vanya* and *The Cherry Orchard*.

His television appearances include *Bleak House*, *The Christmas Tree*, *Shoot to Kill*, *Rumpole*, three series of *The Chief*, *Holocaust* and *The Mannions of America* for American television, *The Lawlord*, *Events at Drimaghleen* and, last year, *Stendhal's Scarlet and Black* for the BBC. His numerous films include *Girl with Green Eyes*, *Ulysses*, *Charge of the Light Brigade*, *Anne of a Thousand Days*, *Straw Dogs*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Memed*, *Red Scorpion* and *Valmont*.

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Gate Theatre projects

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The Gate Theatre has a valuable association with the Almeida Theatre, London. Both theatres are involved in various projects and co-productions. This production of *Molly Sweeney* will transfer to the Almeida in November of this year as part of that association.

Parking

A limited number of car parking spaces is available, within the grounds of the Rotunda Hospital, to patrons of the Gate. Tickets cost £2 (proceeds to Rotunda Hospital) and spaces must be prebooked. Please enquire at box office.

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MAILING LIST

For information on the Gate's programme please write with your name and address to Marketing Manager, Gate Theatre, 8 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

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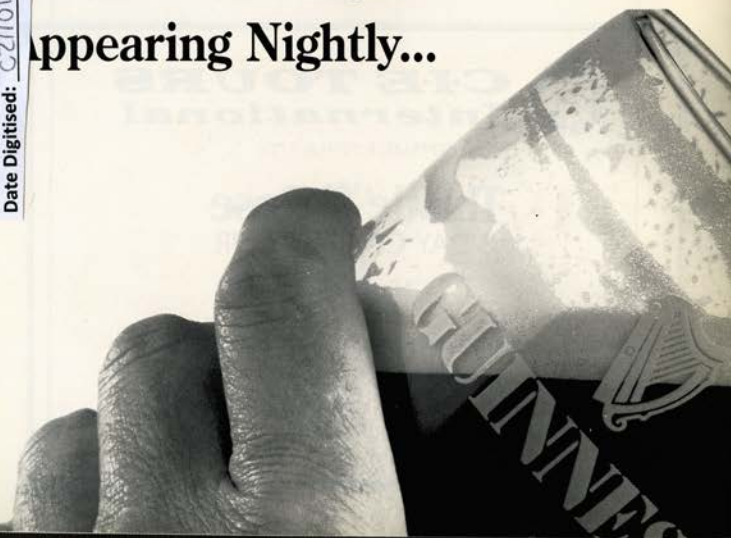
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The Gate

The Gate Theatre building is part of the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin's most famous maternity hospital, which was founded by Dr. Bartholomew Mosse in 1757. In 1767 a recreational extension, the Round Rooms, was completed and the name was soon extended to include the hospital. The Assembly Rooms, designed by Richard Johnston in consultation with James Gandon, were added in 1785 and include the present theatre.

The Gate Theatre was founded in 1928 by Hilton Edwards and Micheál MacLiammóir and became internationally renowned as one of the most adventurous and far-sighted playhouses in Europe. It was at the Gate that Dublin audiences were introduced to international theatre: to the work of Ibsen, Chekhov, O'Neill and Zola; and that the first-ever English-speaking production of Wilde's *Salomé* was seen. It was here, too, that Orson Welles, James Mason and Geraldine FitzGerald began their prodigious acting careers. During the forties and fifties the theatre continued under the dual directorship of Edwards-MacLiammóir and Lord Longford and flourished as the home of European and experimental drama.

In December 1983 Michael Colgan became Director of the Gate and highlights of the Gate's programme since then include *I'll Go On*, *Juno and the Paycock*, *Salomé*, *Three Sisters*, *A Month in the Country*, *A Doll's House*, The Beckett Festival and The Pinter Festival.

In June 1988 both *Juno and the Paycock* and *I'll Go On* represented Ireland at the First New York International Festival of the Arts. In recent years the theatre has toured Ireland and to Paris, London, Edinburgh, Bari, Jerusalem, Amsterdam, Chicago, New York, The Hague and Charleston. The theatre represented Ireland at Expo '92 in Seville.

The Gate continues to receive invitations to tour from leading theatres and festivals throughout the world.

The Gate Theatre is a not-for-profit organisation which is administered by the Edwards-MacLiammóir Trust and funded by the Arts Council.

GATE THEATRE

In 1991, due to structural problems in the eighteenth century stage and seating were installed in the refurbished auditorium. £250 (£500 in the case of corporate sponsors), and, as the theatre THE GATE THEATRE ACKNOWLEDGES WITH GRATITUDE

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