

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Irish Heritage Theatre in co-production with Plays and Players Theatre



presents...

*The Women of Ireland:
Short Irish Classics*



Contact: Kirsten Quinn
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It is with great excitement that the Irish Heritage Theatre announces our Spring 2018 production of *The Women of Ireland: Short Irish Classics*. After the highly successful and critically acclaimed production of *By the Bog of Cats* (The Irish Heritage Theatre's first Barrymore Recommended Production) and an incredible 2016-2017 season featuring *Molly Sweeney* (several critics' awards including Best Actor (Female) Phindie Critics' Awards and D.C. Metro's Best Ensemble) and *Making History*, we turn to our next production dedicated to iconic and contemporary Irish women. This production features several short plays, all directed by women, featuring fierce female characters. We bring you the following offerings: *Riders to the Sea*, John Millington Synge's masterpiece, the haunting *Catleen Ni Houlihan* by William Butler Yeats and the great Lady Gregory and contemporary shorts by female playwrights from Fishamble's Tiny Plays for Ireland.

The Irish Heritage Theatre is Philadelphia's only professional company dedicated to preserving and acquainting new audiences with the poetry and power of classical and contemporary Irish and Irish American theatre. We are also happy to return to Plays and Players Theatre, who is also co-producing the show. Great thanks goes out to the Wyncote Foundation and all of our donors.

We begin with the heartbreaking tragedy of *Riders to the Sea* by John Millington Synge (directed by Tori Mittelman), in which matriarch Maurya has lost her husband and most of her sons to the unrelenting sea and now fears the worst for her other two sons. Her daughters struggle with how they will share the truth with Maurya without destroying what is left of this strong, powerful woman.

In *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* by Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats (directed by Marcia Ferguson), a mysterious old woman visits the Gillane family and it is soon clear that she is the much abused Mother Ireland calling for the ultimate sacrifice in the fight for Irish independence.

Finally, we have four contemporary shorts by female playwrights from *Fishamble's Tiny Plays for Ireland*: *Poster Boy* by Antonia Hart, *Commiserations* by Niamh Creely, *Hearts* by Lucy Montague-Moffat, and *Isolation* by Joan Ryan (all directed by Tina Brock). All of these plays explore women's lives in modern Irish society in ways that are simultaneously smart, funny and insightful.

To say that the subject matter and the themes we are choosing to explore are timely is to put it mildly. Before the #meeto movement grew into what it is today, IHT decided to dedicate its 2017-2018 season to women. Our artistic director, Peggy Mecham, and Board President and associate producer Kirsten Quinn saw the need for us to focus on the amazing female characters in Irish theatre. Now, more than ever, we are seeing women taking a stand and sharing their stories. These Irish tales are just a few of the rich and poetic examinations of what it means to be an Irish woman.

This is the first time that we will be using multiple directors for multiple plays. This is a big risk for a small company, but the Irish Heritage Theatre is now known for taking risks. Tori Mittleman will direct *Riders to the Sea*, Tina Brock will take the helm for our rarely produced *Tiny Plays for Ireland*, and Marcia Ferguson will lead the charge for *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. The plays feature several returning favorites and mainstays of the Irish Heritage Theatre including Jackie Cohen, John Cannon, Mary Pat Walsh, Barbaraluz Orlanda, and Carlos Forbes. We also have new-comers Katie Stahl, Brian McManus, John O'Donnell, and Connie Martinez rounding out the cast.

The show will run April 5-21st at Plays and Players Theatre (Upstairs). Performances are Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays at 2:30pm. Tickets are \$25 for general admission; \$20 for seniors; and \$15 for students, theatre industry members, and groups of ten or more. Also check for us on Funsavers for certain performances. For production information and to purchase tickets go to: www.irishheritagetheatre.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Kirsten Quinn

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(Note: See next page for the fact sheet. Thanks!)

FACT SHEET

The Irish Heritage Theatre's in co-production with Plays and Players Theatre presents...

The Women of Ireland:

Short Irish Classics

(*Riders to the Sea* by John Millington Synge, *Catbleen Ni Houlihan* by Yeats and Lady Gregory, and *Fishamble's Tiny Plays for Ireland*- multiple authors)

Thursday, April 5th- 7:30pm, \$10 Preview

Friday, April 6th 7:30pm, Opening (Press Opening)

Saturday, April 7th- 7:30pm, Performance

Sunday, April 8th- 2:30pm, Performance

Wednesday, April 11th- 7:30pm, Performance

Thursday, April 12th- 7:30pm, Performance

Friday, April 13th- 7:30pm, Performance

Saturday, April 14th- 7:30pm, Performance

Sunday, April 15th- 2:30pm, Performance

Wednesday, April 18th- 7:30pm, Performance

Thursday, April 19th- 7:30pm, Performance

Friday, April 20th-7:30pm, Performance

Saturday, April 21st- 7:30pm, Performance

(Doors open one half hour prior to curtain)

Plays and Players Theatre, Skinner Studio
1714 Delancey St. Philadelphia, PA 19103
near Rittenhouse Square

Tickets are \$10-\$25 Some discounts on certain performances may be made available through the Philadelphia Fun Guide. Advanced reservations are strongly recommended as seating is very limited. To find out more and to purchase tickets go to:

<http://www.irishheritagetheatre.org>; Box office phone: 215-751-8495 (when possible, please order online)