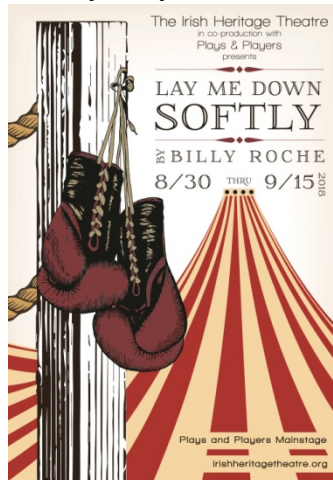


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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



Lay Me Down Softly
by Billy Roche



Contact: Kirsten Quinn
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It is with great excitement that the Irish Heritage Theatre announces our Fall 2018 production *Lay Me Down Softly* by Billy Roche. After a highly successful and critically acclaimed "Women of Ireland" season last year featuring *By the Bog of Cats* (several critics' awards including third place overall in Best Actor (Female) category and our first Barrymore Recommended production) and *The Women of Ireland*, a risky choice of short classics (*Riders to the Sea* and *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*) mixed with a few absurdist contemporary Irish pieces directed by three female directors, we now turn to a season dedicated to The Irish Family. The phrase, "You can't choose your family" springs to mind immediately.

This Fall and next Spring, we will be producing plays including characters richly drawn by some of the world's greatest Irish playwrights. Our first offering is Billy Roche's *Lay Me Down Softly*, a rarely performed masterpiece and Philadelphia Premiere about the rag tag world of Irish Boxing and the carnival troupe who form a dysfunctional family of sorts. The second play is the Irish classic, *Da* by Hugh Leonard, which won the 1978 Drama Desk Award Outstanding New Play, the 1978 New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play and the 1978 Tony Award for Best Play. With this show, we will honor our founder, our Da, John Cannon, who will play the patriarch of the Tynan Family.

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 the Plays and Players, who will co-produce the show. And we are thrilled to announce that we will be on the Mainstage once more!

About the play: Set in 1962, Midland Ireland, we enter the dangerous, topsy-turvy world of Irish boxing and meet a host of colorful characters who spar and jab until they are knocked out by two unexpected visitors (one seen, one unseen), both of whom will throw the already precarious equilibrium totally off balance, and may threaten the makeshift family completely. In the play, we meet Theo, the dangerous and charismatic Ringleader; Lily, his scrappy, defiant lover; Peadar, a world-weary boxing coach who fathers the group; Dean, a cocky prizefighter hell bent on proving himself; Junior, the injured Adonis, who may still have to enter the ring; and Emer, Theo's long lost daughter who is up to no good. When a pro boxer comes along, a man never seen but powerful nonetheless, Theo can't give up the chance to possibly make some money, even if it puts the entire troupe at risk.

The Irish Heritage Theatre is taking a bold move this year with this lesser known play, making it our third Barrymore eligible production. Like Philly favorite *Rocky*, we have a "family" of underdogs. Unlike *Rocky*, "the family" in this play are constantly turning on one another, fighting with each other just as much as they would with their opponents in the ring. Like *Rocky*, *Lay Me Down Softly* is not just a piece about boxing. In fact, a few of the matches occur offstage. It is a character study about an Irish carnival troupe and the ties that bind them like the ropes of the ring.

Finally, we are most proud to announce that **Brian Anthony Wilson**, one of our city's finest actors, will be playing Peadar, the true heart of the show. We are deeply honored that Brian has stepped into the ring to join some IHT returning favorites (Ethan Lipkin, Kirsten Quinn, Katie Stahl and Dan McGlaughlin) and one other new member of the team: boxer/actor, Lee Stover.

This Barrymore eligible production will be directed by Peggy Mecham, and featuring an original score by Jack Zaferes, lighting design by Allen Clark and Andrew Chupa, fight choreography by Oliver Donahue, costuming by Peggy Mecham and Kirsten Quinn, and set design by Rick Miller.

The show will run August 30-September 15th, with our last two weeks as part of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. 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, our Brown Paper Ticket link, <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3508988>, or the Fringe website (note: fringe will only be available for the last two weeks of the run).

Respectfully submitted,

Kirsten Quinn
PR director
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FACT SHEET

The Irish Heritage Theatre in Co-Production with Plays and Players presents...

By the Bog of Cats by Marina Carr
directed by Peggy Mecham

Plays and Players Theatre Mainstage, 1714 Delancey Place Philadelphia, PA 19103

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

Friday, August 31st- 7:30pm, Opening (Press Opening)

Saturday, September 1st- 7:30pm, Performance

Sunday, September 2nd- 2:30pm, Performance

Wednesday, September 5th- 7:30pm, Performance

Thursday, September 6th- 7:30pm, Performance

Friday, September 7th- 7:30pm, Performance

Saturday, September 8th- 7:30pm, Performance

Sunday, September 9th- 2:30pm, Performance

Wednesday, September 12th- 7:30pm, Performance

Thursday, September 13th- 7:30pm, Performance

Friday, September 14th-7:30pm, Performance

Saturday, September 15th- 7:30pm, Performance

(Doors open one half hour prior to curtain)

Tickets are \$15-\$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>

or <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3508988>

Note: Tickets will also be available on the Fringe website for the last two weeks of the show