

ABBAY THEATRE AMHARCLANN NA MAINISTREACH

The Abbey Theatre announces new season for 2012

~ A world premiere musical, award-winning independent theatre artists and exciting revivals for Ireland's national theatre ~

Monday, 5th December 2011 – [The Abbey Theatre](#) is delighted to announce its forthcoming season of productions from January 2012 until September 2012.

Across both the Abbey and Peacock stages the new season features new and established writers with new and revived work and the very best of independent theatre in Ireland.

Ireland's national theatre is proud to present the world premiere of **ALICE IN FUNDERLAND**, a **THISISPOPBABY** commission, **I (HEART) ALICE (HEART) I** by **Amy Conroy** and **HOTFORTHEATRE** and **SILENT** by the award-winning **Pat Kinevane** and **Fishamble: The New Play Company**.

The Abbey Theatre is delighted to be staging the first ever revival of **THE HOUSE** by **Tom Murphy** since its world premiere in 2000. Commissioned by the Abbey, **THE HOUSE** is one of **Murphy's** greatest works and takes on a new resonance in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. Back by popular demand on the Abbey stage in 2012 will be productions of **BOOKWORMS** by **Bernard Farrell** and **Sean O'Casey's THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS**. The *Dublin Dance Festival* will return to the Abbey Theatre for 2012 presenting the Irish debut of **Trisha Brown Dance Company**.

Fiach Mac Conghail, Director of the Abbey Theatre said, *'Collaborating with the finest theatre artists in Ireland, commissioning new plays and, indeed, reviving those new plays*

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forms an important part of our engagement with artists and audiences at the Abbey Theatre. My promise to our audiences every year is that the Abbey Theatre will engage with Irish society with the best of Irish writers, actors and theatre artists.

*This year is no exception and we will present and produce the best of new and established writers and theatre companies to the highest standards. We welcome back **Tom Murphy** with the first revival of **THE HOUSE**, which was an Abbey Theatre commission and I'm personally delighted that **Annabelle Comyn** has agreed to direct it. I'm looking forward to producing the world premiere of **ALICE IN FUNDERLAND** with the emerging generation who will now occupy our national theatre. It also gives me great pleasure to welcome the best of Irish independent theatre artists to the Abbey with **HOTFORTHEATRE** and **Fishamble**.*

I am delighted this season continues our commitment to great Irish writers and a new generation of theatre makers and this is just the first half of next year, there is more new writing to come later in 2012.'

The Abbey Theatre is delighted to be staging a revival of **BOOKWORMS** by celebrated playwright **Bernard Farrell** as part of our strategy to extend the life-span of new plays commissioned by the Abbey Theatre. Other recent revivals have included **THE SEAFARER**, **TERMINUS** and **THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD**. Directed by **Jim Culleton** and following its successful run on the Abbey stage in 2010, **BOOKWORMS** is back to entertain audiences and brighten the winter evenings with its razor-sharp wit. In **BOOKWORMS**, everyone's favourite Book Club reforms for more outrageous revelations where hostess Ann is struggling to stay calm, desperate to deliver the perfect evening of literary classics.

This will be followed by a new generation bursting onto the Abbey stage with the world premiere of the musical **ALICE IN FUNDERLAND**, a **THISISPOPBABY** commission, originally

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created by **Phillip McMahon** and **Jennifer Jennings**, and developed with **Raymond Scannell**, **Wayne Jordan** and the company. **ALICE IN FUNDERLAND** is a modern day fairy tale in which Corkonian Alice has a chance encounter with a delivery boy, sending her spiralling through the Dublin night, in an epic pursuit for meaning on the strangest night of her life. **Phillip McMahon** was Playwright in Association at the Abbey Theatre in 2009.

Phillip McMahon of **THISISPOPBABY** said, '*ALICE IN FUNDERLAND*, the musical is a rollercoaster parable for our times. It reflects what's been happening in Dublin over the past fifteen years, both on the dance floor and on the street. The Abbey hasn't produced a new musical in over twenty years, and this is an ambitious project, it's a challenge, but a brilliant one.'

Continuing our collaboration with the *Dublin Dance Festival* the Abbey welcomes the **Trisha Brown Dance Company** as part of the *Dublin Dance Festival 2012*, for its Irish premiere in May 2012. This evening of repertory will include a selection of old and new works, including the iconic *Set and Reset*, *Watermotor*, *For M.G: The Movie* and *Les Yeux et l'âme*, which premiered in Paris this autumn.

In June 2012, the Abbey Theatre presents **Tom Murphy's THE HOUSE**. An allegory of Ireland, **Tom Murphy** returns to the topic of the emigrant in this tragic tale of the search for home. **Annabelle Comyn** directs on the Abbey stage for the first time since her hugely successful production of **PYGMALION** in 2011. **Murphy's** most recent work **THE LAST DAYS OF A RELUCTANT TYRANT** was staged at the Abbey in 2009.

THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS by **Sean O'Casey** and directed by **Wayne Jordan** returns to the Abbey stage for a seven week run during summer 2012 following its sell-out run in 2010. A classic of the Abbey Theatre repertoire **THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS** is set in a tenement house, against the backdrop of the Easter Rising in 1916. **O'Casey's JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK** is

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currently enjoying a run at the National Theatre in London following its sell-out run on the Abbey stage.

On the Peacock stage, the Abbey continues to showcase the best of independent theatre with **I (HEART) ALICE (HEART) I** by **Amy Conroy** and **HOTFORTHEATRE** which won two ABSOLUT Fringe awards in 2010. A fresh, human and hilarious piece written and directed by **Amy Conroy**, **I (HEART) ALICE (HEART) I** explores the monumental journey of a most unlikely couple. **Amy Conroy** is currently a participant in the Abbey's **New Playwrights Programme 2011**.

Amy Conroy said, 'I (HEART) ALICE (HEART) I will catch you off guard, it's funny, moving, tender and powerful. It's a seldom told story about seldom seen people, scratching at the surface revealing the beauty beneath. I'm very excited to present this show on the Peacock stage; I hope it stays with the audience long after they've left the theatre.'

Also on the Peacock stage the Abbey continues to invite companies to present work of excellence on its stages with **Fishamble: The New Play Company** in summer 2012. **SILENT** is written and performed by one of Ireland's outstanding actors **Pat Kinevane** and directed by **Jim Culleton**. **SILENT** is a touching and challenging story of homeless McGoldrig, who once had splendid things. He has lost it all, including his mind and now dives into the wonderful wounds of this past through the romantic world of Rudolph Valentino. The production won both *Fringe First* and *Herald Angel Awards* in Edinburgh this year.

The Abbey Theatre acknowledges the financial support of the Arts Council.

Priority booking for Abbey Theatre members opens on Tuesday 6th December 2011.

General booking opens on Tuesday 13th December 2011.

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Booking and further information on www.abbeytheatre.ie
and (01) 87 87 222.

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Notes to editor

Fiach Mac Conghail, Director of the Abbey Theatre is available to discuss the new season on request.

ON THE ABBEY STAGE

Bookworms

By Bernard Farrell

Directed by Jim Culleton

Thursday 9th February – Saturday 17th March

(Previews Tuesday 7th & Wednesday 8th February)

Alice in Funderland

By THISISPOPBABY

Book & Lyrics by Phillip McMahon

Composed by Raymond Scannell

Directed by Wayne Jordan

Wednesday 4th April – Saturday 12th May

(Previews Friday 30th March – Tuesday 3rd April)

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Trisha Brown Dance Company

Dublin Dance Festival 2012

Thursday 17th May – Saturday 19th May

The House

By Tom Murphy

Directed by Annabelle Comyn

Wednesday 13th June – Saturday 14th July

(Previews Thursday 7th June – Tuesday 12th June)

The Plough and the Stars

By Sean O'Casey

Directed by Wayne Jordan

Wednesday 1st August – Saturday 15th September

(Previews Thursday 26th July – Tuesday 31st July)

ON THE PEACOCK STAGE

I (Heart) Alice (Heart) I

HotForTheatre

Written and directed by Amy Conroy

Wednesday 1st February – Saturday 18th February

(Previews Monday 30th January & Tuesday 31st January)

SILENT

Fishamble: The New Play Company

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Written and performed by Pat Kinevane

Directed by Jim Culleton

Wednesday 30th May – Saturday 16th June