

An **Abbey Theatre** commission



ABBAY THEATRE
AMHARCLANN NA MAINISTREACH

WALLS AND WINDOWS

WRITTEN BY
ROSALEEN MCDONAGH

DIRECTED BY
JASON BYRNE

IN-PERSON: 23 – 28 AUGUST
LIVE-STREAM: 27 – 28 AUGUST
ON-DEMAND: 29 AUGUST – 11 SEPTEMBER

abbeytheatre.ie
#WallsandWindows



Principal Partner:

BANK OF AMERICA



2021

COMPANY

Charlene/Ensemble
John
Nancy/Ensemble
Julia (show 1 and on-demand)
 (shows 2 - 6 and live-stream)
Jimmy the Garda/Ensemble
Hotel Manager/Garda/Ensemble
Kayleigh/Ensemble
Deirdre/Aga/Ensemble

Hazel Clifford
 John Connors
 Hilda Fay
 Sorchá Fox
 Sarah Morris
 Mark Fitzgerald
 Ruairí Heading
 Ericka Roe
 Nyree Yergainharsian

Writer
Director
Set Designer and Video Designer
Video Designer
Lighting Designer
Costume Designer
Sound Designer
Hair and Makeup
Dramaturg
Voice Director
Casting Director
Costume Supervisor
Assistant Director
Associate Sound Designer

Rosaleen McDonagh
 Jason Byrne
 Joanna Parker
 Dick Straker
 Paul Keogan
 Catherine Fay
 George Brennan
 Caroline McCurdy
 Louise Stephens
 Andrea Ainsworth
 Sarah Jones
 Síofra Ní Chiardha
 Holly Griffith
 Cameron Macaulay

Producer
Producing Assistants
Production Manager
Deputy Production Manager
Company Manager
Company Stage Manager
Deputy Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Dresser
Costume Team

Jen Coppinger
 David Doyle
 Éadaoin McCarrick
 Cliff Barragry
 Sally Withnell
 Danny Erskine
 Bronagh Doherty
 Tara Furlong
 Audrey Rooney
 Yvonne Kelly
 Donna Geraghty
 Vicky Miller
 Sandra Gibney
 Tara Mulvihill
 Eimer Murphy
 Adam O'Connel

Props Master
Props Assistant

Virgin Mary Statue
Video Production/Livestream
Producer for Areaman
Director for Areaman
Director of Photography
Camera Operators

ArtFX.ie
 Areaman
 Shane Hogan
 David Keeling
 Tommy Fitzgerald
 Simon Crowe
 Tommy Fitzgerald
 Susan Gorzalczynska
 Esme Pum McNamee
 Luke Sweetman Pell

Vision Mixing
Video Technician
Post-Production

David Keeling
 Luke Weir
 Aisling Calt
 David Keeling
 Quiver Design
 Dave Carpenter
 Eoin Byrne
 Morgan Dunne
 Derek Conaghy
 Karima Dillon El-Toukhy
 Aidah Sama
 Pat Dillon

Set Construction
Head Electrician
Lighting Operator
Sound Supervision
Sound Operator
Live Mixing for Stream
Radio Mic Technician
Flymen

Davy McChrystal
 John Finnegan
 Darren Magnier
 Martin Reid
 Maura Campbell
 Fergus Hannigan
 Heather Maher
 Róisín McGann
 Jack O'Dea
 ZOO.

Stage Technicians

Marketing and Press

Graphic Design

Irish Sign Language Interpreter
Audio Description

Amanda Coogan
 Mo Harte



ISL interpreted performances feature a professional interpreter who translates the production into Irish Sign Language.

Walls and Windows is part of Graham McLaren and Neil Murray's final season of programming at the Abbey Theatre.

Running time:
 Approx. 100 minutes. There is no interval.

This production contains themes of suicide, sexual assault and alcohol abuse. Age recommendation: 14+

Special thanks to:

Myles Maher, for his warm and generous work in the rehearsal room, Lisburn Caravan Breakers, Sarah Fitzgibbon, MMS Medical, ArtFX.ie and Creative Technology Ireland

WRITER'S NOTE

The monologue for *Walls and Windows* was written on a Saturday afternoon.

My speech impediment stops me from doing many things, but it is a gift for my writing. As a Traveller woman with a disability, my writing is my primary medium of communication. My hands can't manage a keyboard because of the spasms. The Abbey's email in connection with the *Dear Ireland* programme in 2020 was unimaginable. It was a surprise that the words of Julia, my character, resonated. Every word mattered in that monologue.

A Traveller woman during the final moments of her life, in a hotel room, narrating a horrendous journey of racism, homelessness, rejection and all its debris. The Traveller aesthetic is the kernel point of *Walls and Windows*. The balance between polemics and theatrical representation is on a constant pendulum. My own personal narrative is one of constant performance. The embodiment of my impairment also needed to have a subtle reference within the play. Writing for the National Theatre with all its prestige often means women like me cannot access the stage, the green room, not even the rooftop garden. Similarly to racism, ableism means the structure of the buildings prioritises one aesthetic over another. There was no resistance from the director and the rest of the company about ensuring my Traveller reality, my way of being was integrated into this piece of theatre. That's my job as a writer, reflect and project. My main influence in writing *Walls and Windows* was the African/American writer James Baldwin. He once wrote "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced."

**"NOT EVERYTHING
THAT IS FACED CAN
BE CHANGED. BUT
NOTHING CAN BE
CHANGED UNTIL IT
IS FACED."**



Rosaleen McDonagh and Jason Byrne Image: Mark Stedman

Walls and Windows is primarily a piece of writing attempting to capture the universality of the accommodation and the housing crisis in this country. It's told within the context of a Traveller couple, John and Julia. The cultural ephemeral and iconography in this play attempts to honour my Traveller ethnicity.

In the world of theatre my freedom is attainable. The commission for a full play was profoundly surprising. My gratitude for the support and the development of the play goes to Louise Stephens (Dramaturg), my friend Mark O'Halloran, also a particular thanks goes to Philip McMahon (THISISPOPBABY) and Jim Culleton (Fishamble: The New Play Company).

Despite racism, none of us live in a vacuum. Collaborating through the medium of art allows for the new relationship between the Traveller writer and the settled director. That relationship acknowledges perceived power differentials, while using them to push the play further than the writer's imagination

Handing my work over to a settled man was challenging and terrifying. What has gone before me by way of Traveller representation did not come from an authentic place. Artistic endeavours without Travellers being at the centre can and do become a racist typology. We had not been in touch for nearly twenty years. The director Jason Byrne broke the silence with a text – "I think I'm in love with your play."

**Dr Rosaleen McDonagh, playwright
August 2021**

PRODUCTION NOTE

***WALLS AND WINDOWS* IS A LOVE STORY, AND A STORY ABOUT REMEMBERING LOVE. JOHN AND JULIA'S RELATIONSHIP IS EMBEDDED IN WHO THEY ARE, BUT THEIR STORY CANNOT BE ISOLATED FROM THE SOCIETY IN WHICH IT OCCURS. THE CHARACTERS IN THIS PARTICULAR LOVE STORY ARE ACTED ON BY EXTERNAL FORCES THAT WOULD NOT AFFECT SETTLED CHARACTERS IN THE SAME WAY.**

The process of producing the play has mirrored one of the lessons of the last seventeen months: that none of us live in isolation from the society around us. The text of the play is a Traveller text, a Disabled text, the text of a woman, and it has been honoured and actualised by a diverse assembly of artists with many different experiences of the world. The intention of the production is to honour the cultures the text comes from by building a space in which every artist, led by director Jason Byrne, has been able to be faithful to their own artistic process and their own culture as they channel that text.

However, to say that none of us are able to separate ourselves from society is not to say that we experience society in the same way. The art and words of marginalised people have for centuries been judged according to a particular yardstick. It is a yardstick made and moulded by the most powerful in society to fit their own hands. The yardstick can be recognised for what it is – one of myriad tools for understanding art and, as a result, the world. But there are as many more as we can design.

The former artistic directors of the Abbey, Graham McLaren and Neil Murray, recognised the vivid, skilful and urgent voice in this play and programmed it in their final season. The Abbey is proud to bring the results of this collaboration to the stage: a stage which has been waiting for a century to hold this story, and will not wait so long again.

Louise Stephens, Dramaturg
August 2021



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Síofra Ní Chiardha
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Sarah-Jane Williams
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Damien Woods
Diarmuid Woods

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Máire O'Higgins
Michael Owens
Dr. Frances Ruane (Chair)
Michael Wall
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