An **Abbey Theatre** commission

# 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



# **COMPANY**

Charlene/Ensemble Hazel Clifford John John Connors Nancy/Ensemble Hilda Fay Julia (show 1 and on-demand) Sorcha Fox (shows 2 - 6 and live-stream) Sarah Morris Jimmy the Garda/Ensemble Mark Fitzgerald Hotel Manager/Garda/Ensemble Ruairí Heading Kayleigh/Ensemble Ericka Roe Deirdre/Aga/Ensemble Nyree Yergainharsian

Writer Rosaleen McDonagh Jason Byrne Director Set Designer and Video Designer Joanna Parker **Video Designer** Dick Straker **Lighting Designer** Paul Keogan **Costume Designer** Catherine Fay **Sound Designer** George Brennan **Hair and Makeup** Caroline McCurdy **Dramaturg** Louise Stephens **Voice Director** Andrea Ainsworth **Casting Director** Sarah Jones **Costume Supervisor** Síofra Ní Chiardha **Assistant Director** Holly Griffith **Associate Sound Designer** Cameron Macaulay

**Producer** Jen Coppinger **Producing Assistants** David Doyle Éadaoin McCarrick **Production Manager** Cliff Barragry **Deputy Production Manager** Sally Withnell **Company Manager** Danny Erskine **Company Stage Manager Bronagh Doherty Deputy Stage Manager** Tara Furlong **Assistant Stage Manager Audrey Rooney** Dresser Yvonne Kelly **Costume Team** Donna Geraghty Vicky Miller

Props Master Eimer Murphy
Props Assistant Adam O'Connel

Sandra Gibney

Virgin Mary Statue ArtFX.ie
Video Production/Livestream Areaman
Producer for Areaman Shane Hogan
Director for Areaman David Keeling
Director of Photography Tommy Fitzgerald
Camera Operators Simon Crowe
Tommy Fitzgerald

Susan Gorzalczynska Esme Pum McNamee Luke Sweetman Pell David Keeling

Video TechnicianLuke WeirPost-ProductionAisling CaltDavid KeelingSet ConstructionQuiver DesignHead ElectricianDave CarpenterLighting OperatorEoin ByrneSound SupervisionMorgan DunneSound OperatorDerek Conaghy

Live Mixing for Stream Karima Dillon El-Toukhy

Radio Mic TechnicianAidah SamaFlymenPat Dillon

Davy McChrystal
John Finnegan
Darren Magnier
Martin Reid
Maura Campbell
Fergus Hannigan

Heather Maher Róisín McGann Jack O'Dea ZOO.

Irish Sign Language Interpreter

Audio Description Mo

Amanda Coogan Mo Harte



**Vision Mixing** 

**Stage Technicians** 

**Marketing and Press** 

**Graphic Design** 

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**

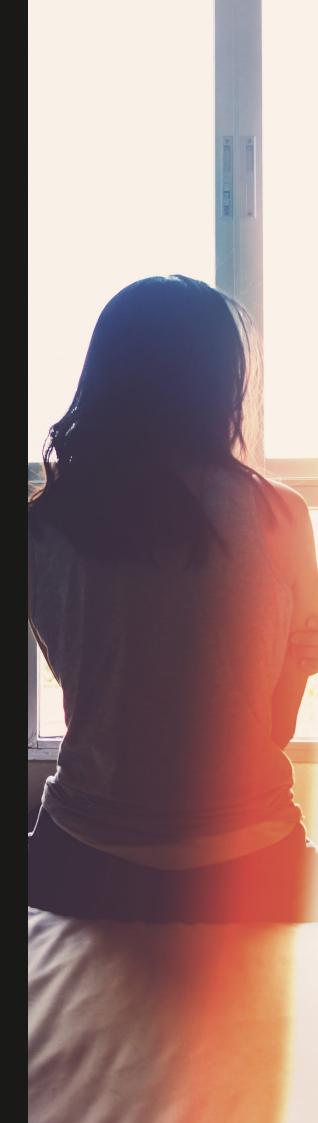
WALLS AND WINDOWS IS A LOVE STORY, AND A STORY ABOUT REMEMBERING LOVE. JOHN AND JULIA'S RELATIONSHIP IS EMBEDDED IN WHO THEY ARE, BUT THEIR STORY CANNOT BE ISOLATED FROM THE SOCIETY IN WHICH IT OCCURS. THE CHARACTERS IN THIS PARTICULAR LOVE STORY ARE ACTED ON BY EXTERNAL FORCES THAT WOULD NOT AFFECT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



# **ABBEY THEATRE STAFF**

Andrea Ainsworth **Donal Ayton** Cliff Barragry Roxzan Bowes Aoife Brady Maeve Brennan Susan Bryan Nicola Burke Orla Burke Simon Burke Eoin Byrne Maura Campbell **David Carpenter** Daire Cavanagh Priyanka Chidgumpi Conall Coleman Derek Conaghy **Evan Connolly** Jeff Conway Jen Coppinger Fiona Cradock Kate Crook Richard Curwood Mairéad Delaney Karima Dillon Pat Dillon Debbie Doak **Bronagh Doherty** Colin Doran Con Doyle David Doyle

Con Doyle
David Doyle
Laura Doyle
Ken Dunne
Morgan Dunne
Danny Erskine
Breege Fahy
Eimear Farrell
Lisa Farrelly
Kate Finn
John Finnegan
Craig Flaherty
Neasa Flannery
David Fleming
Ellen Fleming
Robert Flynn

Tara Furlong Sophie Furlong Tighe Derek Garland Donna Geraghty

Veronica Foo

Sandra Gibney Catherine Griffin John Gunning Fergus Hannigan Grace Healy Brenda Herbert Daniel Hickey William Hickey **Dermot Hicks** James Hickson Dara Hogan Laura Honan Narges Jahani Vlatka Jeh Larry Jones Sarah Jones Maeve Keane Conor Kelly Fergus Kelly Yvonne Kelly Ailbhe Kelly-Miller Tom Kennedy Shane Kenny Andy Keogh Phil Kingston Anne Kyle

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Nadine-Mary Moore

Conor Mullan
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Aoife Murphy
Donna Murphy
Eimer Murphy
Orlagh Murphy
Agnieszka Myszka
Marykerin Naughton
Emily Ní Bhroin
Síofra Ní Chiardha
Pawel Nieworaj

Mark O'Brien
Adam O'Connell
Esther O'Connor
Colin O'Connor
Jack O'Dea
Aoife O'Neill
Tara O'Reilly
Emma-Kate O'Reilly

Selina O'Reilly Simon O'Reilly Valentina Quiroga Martin Reid Dean Reidy Fiona Reynolds Audrey Rooney

David Roper Nolan Josh Roxby Pat Russell Barbara Ryan Aidah Sama Joe Sanders Andrew Smith Sarah Smith Fergal Styles Cydney Thompson Seán Treacy Leanne Vaughey Sean Walsh Jesse Weaver

Sarah-Jane Williams Sally Withnell Monika Wlodarczyk Bill Woodland Damien Woods

Diarmuid Woods

**BOARD** 

Mairéad Delaney Peter Lowry Máire O'Higgins Michael Owens

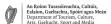
Dr. Frances Ruane (Chair) Michael Wall

Michael Wall Michael West

# ABBEY THEATRE SUPPORTERS







# **PRINCIPAL PARTNER**

Principal Partner:

BANK OF AMERICA

# **PROGRAMME PARTNERS**







# **CORPORATE GUARDIANS**



ARTHUR COX

Bloomberg









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Behaviour and Attitudes

### **SILVER AMBASSADORS**

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Richard and Sherril Burrows
Pat Butler
The Cielinski Family
Deirdre Finan
Donal Moore
Sheelagh O'Neill
Dr. Frances Ruane
Susan and Denis Tinsley
Lloyd Weinreb

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Eugenie Mackey
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