

A photograph of a man upside down in the ocean, his head near the surface and his legs pointing towards the top of the frame. The water is a deep blue with gentle ripples. The sky is a pale, clear blue. The man has dark, wet hair and is looking upwards with a slight smile. His skin is glistening with water.

AN ABBEY THEATRE PRODUCTION

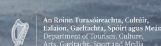
LUCK JUST KISSED YOU HELLO

ABBAY THEATRE
29 APRIL — 14 MAY
ON THE PEACOCK STAGE

Written by Amy Conroy
Directed by Wayne Jordan

CAST: RILEY CARTER, ROSS O'DONNELLAN AND JAMIE O'NEILL

ABBAYTHEATRE.IE
#LUCKJUSTKISSEDDYOUHELLO



CREATIVES

CAST

Mark	Riley Carter
Gary	Ross O'Donnellan
Sullivan	Jamie O'Neill

Writer	Amy Conroy
Director	Wayne Jordan
Set and Costume Design	Sarah Bacon
Lighting Design	Sarah Jane Shiels
Sound Design	Fiona Sheil
Voice Director	Andrea Ainsworth
Casting Director	Sarah Jones
Casting Assistant	Laura Quinn
Fight Director	Eimear O'Grady
Hair and Make Up	Leonard Daly

COMPANY

Producer	Jen Coppinger
Production Manager	Cliff Barragry
Company Stage Manager	Clive Welsh
Deputy Stage Manager	Lianne O'Shea
Assistant Stage Manager	Shannon Cowan
Costume Supervisor	Lauren Murphy
Properties	Dylan Farrell
Lighting and Sound	Eoin Byrne
Production Assistant	Aoife McCollum
Set Builder	Theatre Production Services
Marketing	Heather Maher
Social Media	Jack O'Dea
Press	Sharon Sorohan
Graphic Design	ZOO.
	Maeve Keane
Production Photography	Ros Kavanagh
Cast Portrait Photography	Rich Gilligan
Irish Sign Language Interpreter	Vanessa O'Connell
Co-Directors	Caitríona McLaughlin Mark O'Brien

Running Time: Approx. 80 minutes (no interval)



The performance on Thursday 12th May has a professional interpreter who translates the production into Irish Sign Language

WRITER'S NOTE

Amy Conroy

I know this piece in all directions, both as a writer and an actor, so when the prospect of returning to this play was presented to me it was both electrifying and daunting. Our understanding and experience of the subject matter and the various lenses that it is seen through have shifted and grown since its first performance. Did it still achieve what I intended within this new context and in our growing conversations? Important conversations about representation, and who gets to tell what stories, delicious conversations about gender and what that even means, relentless conversations about family and legacy. On returning to these characters, I found that they still invigorated my curiosity and occupied my mind as relentlessly as they previously did.

Sullivan, Gary and Mark are as ineffable and alive to me now as they were then. The interrogations in the piece still vibrate in our day-to-day consciousness, or perhaps more specifically, in mine. I began to relish in this next imagining and watched with utter sympathy as this new cast wrestled with the aggressive subtext, the shadowy themes, and the challenges of the form. (Sorry lads).

Wayne Jordan has skillfully led the team in playful imaginings and bold choices, which have been a joy to explore and share. The process has also rekindled my utter appreciation for the herculean work of the original director, designers, and cast.

This play is a labyrinthine endeavour, it masquerades as reality then twists and turns through time, memory and intention. Narrowing from broad strokes to fine lines and shading, it is a tender and lacerating excavation of the making of one man; Mark.

THANK YOU

Noah Halpin and all at TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland), Ann Bell and Julian Ellison at the Digital Hub, Lynne Parker, Paul Fahy, John Crumlish and all at Galway International Arts Festival, Jayson Coogan, Aedín Cosgrove, Suzie Cummins, John Crudden, Katie Davenport, Mark Fitzgerald, Carl Kennedy, Will O'Connell, Zoe Quinn, Caoimhe Regan, Val Sherlock and Marie Tierney.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Wayne Jordan

**'Uncage the colours
Unfurl the flag
Luck just kissed you hello
When you're a boy'**

Boys Keep Swinging, David Bowie (1979)

The extraordinary title of Amy Conroy's 2015 drama is taken like a slice from the heart of a song. David Bowie's ironic celebration of male privilege (quoted above), forged in the fire of 70's glam rock. However, Conroy's characters exist today in a rural hospital, on the edge of an Atlantic pier, hesitating before a grieving congregation. They gather and scrap against hard concrete by a cold ocean in the shadow of a dying father, piecing together an idea of themselves. They rehearse and resist the idea of being a man, a limited and limiting set of possibilities at best. At least here, in their homeplace.

Each of Amy's characters (Mark, Gary, Sullivan) are scrambling for space to survive in – fighting over who gets control over which aspects of manhood – success, children, favour, the right to speak. They scavenge over the nearly dead corpse of their father. As Mark notices more than once in the play – on this field of brotherhood: 'It's dog eat dog'.

And yet, somewhere deep in the entrails of this play is a glorious dream of possibility for men. The man Mark wants to be. The men Gary desires. The father Sullivan might become. Maybe even the father Ted tried to be. If only the play's trio could allow themselves some beauty in this broken place.

Conroy's play takes a cubist approach to Irish masculinities. It comes at the concerns of men from

many angles and often all at once. It uses a language of archetypes and stereotypes, of cliché, slang and slur to pitch its protagonists against each other in a battle for the right words in the worst of moments. It places its subject under a variety of lenses and exposes them to specific stresses. Conroy then composes with the shards of shape and colour she finds there and creates a strange, darkly comic and rhapsodic elegy.

Rehearsing this play has been like sitting on one side of a chess board with the wraith of Irish patriarchy sitting opposite and trying to carve out some pattern of hope. The text is layered and echoes at itself in search of new endings to age old and outdated stories.

Luck Just Kissed You Hello is a play full of grief – grief for our fathers, for what they did to us, for who we were and who we might have been.

It's a play that directs us toward legacy – how we might excavate possibility from the debris of memory. How we might walk out of the pool of our own history with a strong spine and a sense of self.

And most importantly it's a play about change – the pain and bravery of changing, of becoming and the necessity of always being open to change.



Wayne Jordan (Director), Ross O'Donnellan (Gary), Riley Carter (Mark), Jamie O'Neill (Sullivan), Amy Conroy (Playwright)
Image: Rich Gilligan

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