



AN ABBEY THEATRE PRODUCTION

THE LONG CHRISTMAS DINNER



10–31 DECEMBER 2022
ON THE PEACOCK STAGE



funding theatre

Principal Partner:

BANK OF AMERICA



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaehachta, Spóirt agus Meia
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



CREATIVES

CAST

Roderick II	Liam Bixby
Roderick I	Bryan Burroughs
Charles	Emmet Byrne
Mother Bayard	Rachael Dowling
Genevieve	Fionnuala Gyax
Nurse	Fiona Lucia McGarry
Lucia II	Úna Ní Bhriain
Ermengarde	Máire Ní Ghráinne
Leonora	Rachel O'Byrne
Cousin Brandon	Will O'Connell
Lucia I	Valerie O'Connor
Sam	Benjamin Reilly

Writer

Thornton Wilder

Directors

Sarah Jane Scaife

Raymond Keane

Set Design

Sally Withnell

Costume Design

Sinead Cuthbert

Lighting Design

Stephen Dodd

Sound Design

Aoife Kavanagh

Voice Director

Andrea Ainsworth

Hair and Makeup

Leonard Daly

Wigs

Trudy Hayes

Casting Director

Sarah Jones

Company Stage Manager

Orla Burke

Deputy Stage Manager

Tara Furlong

COMPANY

Producer	Jen Coppinger
Production Manager	Cliff Barragry
Company Manager	Danny Erskine
Producing Assistant	Aoife McCollum
Producing Assistant	Clara Purcell
Costume Supervisor	Eimear Farrell
Costume Dresser	Yvonne Kelly
Costume Breakdown Artist	Sandra Gibney
Costume Maintenance	Vicky Miller
Costume Cutter & Maker	Tara Mulvihill
Lighting Programmer	Simon Burke
Sound Supervisor	Conall Coleman

Props Master

Eimer Murphy

Set Construction

TPS

Scenic Artist

Sandra Butler

Stage Technicians

Pat Dillon

Conor Kelly

Marykerin Naughton

Marketing and Press

Muireann Kane

Heather Maher

Sharon Sorohan

Graphic Design

AAD/Wove

Production Imagery

Ros Kavanagh

Irish Sign Language Interpreter

Amanda Coogan

Running time
50 minutes. There is no interval.

THANK YOU

Susan Holmes, Jody O'Neill, Dr. Jen Shook, Eleanor Walsh.

PROGRAMME NOTE

Directors Raymond Keane and Sarah Jane Scaife

November 2022

From our initial reading of this one-act play, it was clear that Thornton Wilder had such a gift not only for the creation of a poetic text, but for the visual and sculptural form that can embody it. It is rare that this is combined in the one writer.

Wilder creates a dramatic shape for the poetic interrogation of the human condition. What seems simple on a first read is revealed as a profound meditation on the cyclical nature of birth and death; the tensions and joys of family and home.

For the ensemble of actors involved this can be both exhilarating and frustrating. There are no props that they can play with, everything except the glasses and carafe are imagined. Time, although spoken about continuously, provides no safe haven of stability for them. Whilst one character complains that, 'time passes so slowly here that it stands still', it also passes at an alarming rate, making their acting choices very problematic. They can age 12 years in a couple of minutes... So, it is on one hand an actor's dream, on the other an actor's nightmare. Just as they have created an emotional through-line in their imaginative body, they have to let it go, as the scene shifts and it belongs to a Christmas past. The death of a loved one can happen moments before the birth of twins, as indeed it does in real life.

Wilder's play was set over a ninety-year span, the span of a live history. If you imagine what your granny could tell you about her past up to your young self, whenever that was. Inevitably during that time the full drama of life takes place. Babies are born, old people die, babies die, parents row with their children only to reconnect on their death bed. History unfolds outside the home, impacting on the inhabitants of the household, their journey through life and choices made. The beauty of the piece lies in how it reveals the shape of life, the points of connection and repetition, the humanity that scaffolds a fragile society.

We deliberately set the play aesthetically in America's past, but not the past of the nineteenth century, as that would entail the use of very stiff and sculptural costumes and set. We chose to use the paintings of Wilder's contemporary, Edward Hopper as an aesthetic palette for our setting and costume choices.

We hope that you enjoy this piece as much as we all enjoyed making it for you.

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