



AN ABBEY THEATRE PRODUCTION

# THE WEIR

*Written by Conor McPherson*  
*Directed by Caitríona McLaughlin*

26 NOV–14 JAN  
ON THE ABBEY STAGE



funding  
theatre

Principal Partner:

BANK OF AMERICA



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
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Top Row: Peter Coonan, Sean Fox  
Bottom Row: Brendan Coyle, Jolly Abraham, Marty Rea  
Image: Ste Murray | Cover Image: Hazel Coonagh



# CREATIVES

## CAST

Valerie	Jolly Abraham
Finbar	Peter Coonan
Jack	Brendan Coyle
Brendan	Sean Fox
Jim	Marty Rea
Musician	Éamonn Cagney
Musician	Courtney Cullen

Writer	Conor McPherson
Director	Caitríona McLaughlin
Set and Costume Designer	Sarah Bacon
Lighting Designer	Jane Cox
Composer and Musical Director	Tom Lane
Sound Designer	Rob Moloney
Movement Director	Sue Mythen
Assistant Director	Matthew Ralli
Hair and Makeup	Leonard Daly
Casting Director	Sarah Jones
Voice Director	Andrea Ainsworth

# COMPANY

Producer	Jen Coppinger
Production Manager	Paddy McLaughlin
Production Manager	Andy Keogh
Company Manager	Danny Erskine
Company Stage Manager	Bronagh Doherty
Deputy Stage Manager	Roxzan Bowes
Assistant Stage Manager	Aidan Doheny
	Leanne Vaughey
Costume Supervisor	Síofra Ní Chiardha
Producing Assistant	Aoife McCollum
Producing Assistant	Clara Purcell
Chief Electrician	Dave Carpenter
Sound Supervisor	Morgan Dunne
Props Master	Eimer Murphy
Props Assistant	Dylan Farrell

Stage Crew	Pat Dillon
	John Finnegan
	Philip Hughes
	Larry Jones
	Darren Magnier
	Brian O’Carroll
	Martin Reid
	TPS
Set Construction	Sandra Butler
Scenic Art	Heather Maher
Marketing	Jack O’Dea
Social Media	Sharon Sorohan
Press	Wove/AAD
Graphic Design	Hazel Coonagh
Publicity Image	Ros Kavanagh
Production Photography	Amanda Coogan
Irish Sign Language Interpreter	Caitríona McLaughlin
Artistic Director	Mark O’Brien
Executive Director	

Running time: **Approx. 2 hours**



The performance on Thursday, 5th January has a professional interpreter who translates the production into Irish Sign Language.



Audio Description is a live verbal commentary fed through an ear-piece that captures the visual elements of a production as it unfolds, that a blind or partially sighted person might otherwise miss.



Captioning is similar to television subtitling and gives deaf and hard of hearing audiences access to live performance.

## THANK YOU

Peter Christian; Brian McMahon from the ESB archive; Kieran from The Brew Crew; Aedín Cosgrove; Karl Moore-Lewey; Pai Rathaya; and Dr. Doireann O’ Kiely and Ena Brophy from the University of Limerick.

‘Fact, fiction, history,  
ghosts, religion, and  
hearsay all woven  
together and I soaked  
it all up.’



Image Credit: Conor McPherson

# PROGRAMME NOTE

*Conor McPherson, November 2022*

In the 1980s, when I reached my mid teens, I found myself going to visit my grandfather, Jack McPherson, regularly.

The Sligo train from Connolly swept me from my life in Dublin to an entirely different world where my grandfather lived alone, near Jamestown in Co. Leitrim.

His little house was tucked away, down a dark winding boreen that ran alongside the river Shannon. And beside his house was a fairy fort no one dared disturb.

In the evenings, we would sit by the fire while my grandfather told me stories from his living memory: how a stooped man named McFadden had been cured of his ailment by the fairies; but when he returned again, asking for more favours, the fairies sent him away, twice as stooped over as he had been before.

He told me how the house he grew up in had been built on a fairy road. And how knocking could sometimes be heard at the door in the dead of night. And how, as a boy, when the Civil War raged, he remembered a desperate man came to the door seeking refuge, but he was chased round the back of the house by other men who shot him out there.

Fact, fiction, history, ghosts, religion, and hearsay all woven together and I soaked it all up.

By 1996 I had started working in London at the Bush Theatre. I put on two plays for them, *This Lime Tree Bower* and *St. Nicholas*. These plays attracted the attention of The Royal Court Theatre who invited me for a meeting. I told them I had an idea for a play where people told each other ghost stories. They asked me to write it for them.

I wrote the play that summer on A4 lined paper in a variety of ballpoint pens.

Then I asked my younger sister Margaret to type the play up for me on an electric typewriter in her bedroom at home in Raheny - for the princely sum of IR£100.

The Royal Court expressed their satisfaction with the script and teamed me up with a brilliant young director, Ian Rickson, who arranged to meet me in Soho at a café called Patisserie Valerie. We packed into a smoky, crowded room upstairs and read through the play together. Ian made some notes with a pencil and within a few months the play was in rehearsals.

At that time the Royal Court was being rebuilt. They had no actual theatre in which to perform the play. So they rented the Ambassadors Theatre, right next door to Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*.

*The Weir* opened there on July 4th 1997. It was supposed to run for four weeks but, due to demand, they decided to extend it to five weeks, then eight weeks, then nine weeks and then finally they phoned me to say they were moving the show into a larger theatre, the Duke of York's, in St Martin's Lane. And it continued to play there for the next two years.

Besides the exquisite first production the play received from Ian Rickson and the cast (including Brendan Coyle who plays Jack here at the Abbey), much of its appeal seemed to be hidden in the kind of stories told to me by my grandfather and the stories told to him.

My grandad never saw any of my plays. He passed away before I managed to get going as a writer, but something of those times I spent with him had lodged somewhere in my work. In this way, it may be that a play like *The Weir* comes through a writer rather than being intentionally composed. I feel like I heard it and wrote it down.

And I'm very happy we get to hear it again now.

# ABBAY THEATRE SUPPORTERS



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Behaviour and Attitudes

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Patrons who wish to remain anonymous.  
**We thank all our generous supporters for their ongoing support.**

Our mission is to nurture a love for the art form for the generations to come, mentoring new talent and giving voice to all of Ireland's citizens. If you'd like to support us in our work, please contact: [marie.lawlor@abbeytheatre.ie](mailto:marie.lawlor@abbeytheatre.ie)

## CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

To accompany the production of *The Weir*, the Abbey is inaugurating **Changing the Conversation**, a series of four post-show discussions reflecting on themes from the play, their meanings in the past and their implications now.

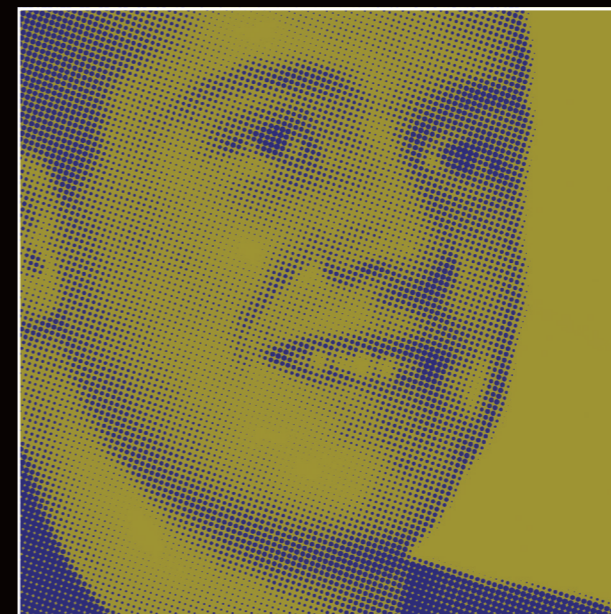
The themes for the discussions are: Death, Grief and the Supernatural; Courtship; Land Use; and Loneliness. **Changing the Conversation** is curated by Catriona Crowe, also Curator of First Thought Talks at the Galway International Arts Festival.

Please see [abbeytheatre.ie](http://abbeytheatre.ie) for discussion dates, participants and further details.

*Coming Soon...*

## TALES FROM THE HOLYWELL

AN ABBEY THEATRE PRODUCTION

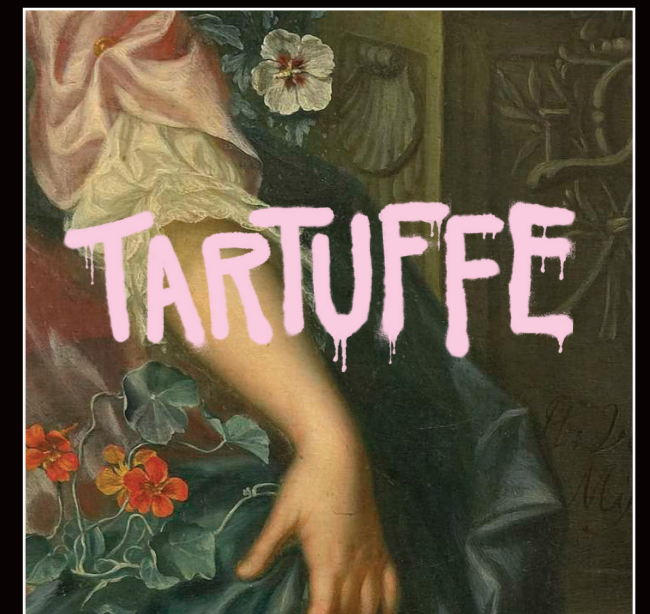


WRITTEN BY **DAMIEN DEMPSEY**  
DIRECTED BY **CONOR MCPHERSON**

**30 JAN—18 FEB 2023**  
**ON THE ABBEY STAGE**

## TARTUFFE

AN ABBEY THEATRE PRODUCTION



WRITTEN BY **MOLIÈRE**  
IN A NEW VERSION BY **FRANK MCGUINNESS**  
DIRECTED BY **CAITRÍONA MCLAUGHLIN**

**03 MAR—08 APR 2023**  
**ON THE ABBEY STAGE**

Book now on **(01) 87 87 222** or at [abbeytheatre.ie](http://abbeytheatre.ie)

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WELL ENOUGH,  
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EVEN WHEN IT’S  
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*The New York Times on **The Weir***



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