

AN ABBEY THEATRE PRODUCTION



TALES FROM THE HOLYWELL



By Damien Dempsey
Directed by Conor McPherson

30 JAN—18 FEB 2023
ON THE ABBEY STAGE

ABBETHEATRE.IE
#TALESFROMTHEHOLYWELL



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An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Éalaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
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PROGRAMME NOTE

By Director Conor McPherson
January 2023

*A man has the fields of heaven,
But soulless a fairy dies,
As a leaf that is old,
and withered, and cold,
When the wintry vapours rise.
Soon shall our wings be stilled,
And our laughter over and done:
So let us dance on where the yellow lance
Of the barley shoots in the sun.*

— William Butler Yeats

In *Tales from the Holywell*, Damien tells us that, like his grandmother and his mother before him, he shares an inherited gift for second sight. Indeed, Damien says he has had so many visions and premonitions he can't remember them all.

It strikes me that one of the co-founders of the Abbey Theatre, William Butler Yeats, would have given anything for just one of these experiences. Yeats had a lifelong yearning to commune with the mystical truths he believed lay beyond the ordinary world we experience.

Just as Yeats's childhood home in Sligo was steeped in the fairy lore that would inspire so much of his work, Damien's childhood road, Holywell Crescent is named for the nearby St Donagh's Well, one of thousands of healing wells found in ancient Ireland.

We no longer know what pre-Christian rituals were performed at these sites, but the gods of this older religion still haunt our folklore. And as William Butler Yeats understood, some people are still in tune with this energy, so I have no doubt he would be especially delighted to see Damien performing on the Abbey stage tonight.

But apart from this uncanny ability to commune with something ancient and enduring, the time I've spent working with Damien has shown me something equally impressive — Damien's singular integrity. Like William Butler Yeats, Damien isn't trying to be anyone else or chase someone else's dream.

Like Yeats, Damien arrived into this world with his incredible talents as a musician, writer and singer intact, but in person, Damien wears his abilities lightly. His humility belies the emotional intensity that's unleashed as soon as he starts to sing. The cathartic energy Damien generates in the crowds of fans who flock to his concerts is a testament to his power.

In this sense, someone like Damien is the holy well we have gathered at tonight. As his director I can only hope to assist Damien as he guides his show towards the ritual he aspires it to be. The magic is all his own.

Image: Damien Dempsey (left) with Director Conor McPherson (right). Image by Rich Gilligan.



The performance on Thursday 9th February 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.

**THE STORY OF
A YOUNG BOY
FROM DUBLIN'S
NORTHSIDE
FINDING HIS
VOICE, HIS MUSIC
AND HIS TRIBE**

CREATIVES

Writer and Performer	Damien Dempsey	Fiddle, Vocals	Lucia McPartlin
Director	Conor McPherson	Double Bass	Aura Stone
Set and Lighting Designer	Paul Keogan	Drums, Percussion, Vocals	Rod Quinn
Sound Designer	Sinéad Diskin	Deputy Musician	Courtney Cullen
Costume Designer	Saileóg O'Halloran	Hair and Makeup	Leonard Daly
Band Leader and Musician	Eamonn De Barra	Voice Director	Andrea Ainsworth

COMPANY

Producer	Craig Flaherty	Guitar Techs	Mic Geraghty
Production Manager	Rob Furey		Terry McGuinness
Company Manager	Danny Erskine	AV Technician	Mags Mulvey
Company Stage Manager	Bronagh Doherty	Autocue Programmer & Operator	Amélie Bates
Deputy Stage Manager	Roxzan Bowes	Set Construction	TPS Ltd.
Assistant Stage Manager	Amélie Bates	Scenic Artist	Sandra Butler
Costume Supervisor	Eimear Farrell	Props Master	Eimer Murphy
Costume Tailor	Gillian Carew	Props Assistant	Dylan Farrell
Costume Art Work	Sandra Gibney	Graphic Design	AAD/Wove
Costume Assistants	Vicky Miller	Marketing	Saibh Hooper
	Yvonne Kelly		Heather Maher
Producing Assistant	Clara Purcell	PR	Christine Monk
Production Coordinator	Justin Murphy		Róisín McGann
Chief Electrician	Dave Carpenter	Publicity & Production Images	Rich Gilligan
LX Programmer	Eoin Byrne	Irish Sign Language Interpreter	Amanda Coogan
LX Technician	Simon Burke	Captions	Jen Sinnamon
Chief Sound Engineer	Morgan Dunne	Audio description	Bríd Ní Ghruagáin
Sound Mixer	Sean McKeown	Artistic Director	Caitríona McLaughlin
Sound Engineer	Derek Conaghy	Executive Director	Mark O'Brien
Sound Engineer	Aidah Sama		

Running time
Approx. 2 hours and 15 minutes, including an interval.

THANK YOU

Special Thanks to Graham McLaren, Neil Murray, Louise Stephens, John Reynolds and David Rowell.
Thanks to Mick Kelly of Spiderfish, Zildjian cymbals, Pearl drums, Evans drumheads and Promark drumsticks and everyone at Del Rio's.

ABBAY THEATRE SUPPORTERS



OILSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
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Department of Tourism, Culture,
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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
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