



Ros Kavanagh

# THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS

## Abbey Theatre

### Cast (in alphabetical order):

Jack Clitheroe **Ian-Lloyd Anderson**  
Nora Clitheroe **Kate Stanley Brennan**  
Sergeant Tinley **Tony Clay**  
Lieut. Langon **Lloyd Cooney**  
Fluther Good **David Ganly**  
Mollser **Rachel Gleeson**  
Peter Flynn **James Hayes**  
Capt. Brennan **Liam Heslin**  
A Bar-tender **Ger Kelly**  
Mrs. Gogan **Janet Moran**  
The Young Covey **Ciarán O'Brien**  
Corporal Stoddart **Nima Taleghani**  
Bessie Burgess **Eileen Walsh**  
Rosie Redmond **Nyree Yergainharsian**

### Production Team:

Director **Sean Holmes**  
Production Associate Director **Ronan Phelan**  
Set Designer **Jon Bausor**  
Assistant Set Designer **Rebecca Brower**  
Costume Designer **Catherine Fay**  
Lighting Designer **Paul Keogan**  
Music & Sound Designer **Philip Stewart**  
Relight Designer **David Sexton**  
Stage Manager **Diarmuid O'Quigley**  
Deputy Stage Manager **Orla Burke**  
Assistant Stage Manager **Audrey Rooney**  
Tour Production Manager **Peter Jordan**  
Voice Director **Andrea Ainsworth**  
Casting Director **Kelly Phelan**  
Hair and Make-up **Val Sherlock**  
Photography **Ros Kavanagh / Sarah Doyle**  
Set Construction **TPS Ltd.**  
Scenic finishing **Liz Barker**  
Tower construction **Capital Scenery Ltd.**

### PROGRAM

*There will be an intermission.*

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**Thursday, October 13 @ 7 PM**  
**Friday, October 14 @ 8 PM**  
**Saturday, October 15 @ 2 PM**  
**Saturday, October 15 @ 8 PM**  
**Sunday, October 16 @ 3 PM**

Zellerbach Theatre

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16/17 SEASON ■ 7

# PROGRAM NOTES

**Act 1** The living room of the Clitheroe flat in a Dublin tenement

**Act 2** A public house, outside of which a meeting is being held

## **Intermission**

**Act 3** The street outside the Clitheroe tenement

**Act 4** The attic room of Bessie Burgess

Acts 1 and 2, November 1915

Acts 3 and 4, Easter Week, 1916

A few days elapse between Acts 3 and 4

## **Complicating the 1916 Narrative**

Diarmaid Ferriter, Professor of Modern Irish History, University College Dublin

During this centenary year of the 1916 Easter Rising we are being showered with what are often referred to as “new perspectives”. An abundance of archival material has been released in recent years, much of it digitized and freely accessible, the cumulative effect of which has been to transform the parameters of our interpretation of 1916, with a strong emphasis on social history and the primacy of personal testimony. What this process has amounted to is an invitation to complicate the narrative of 1916; indeed, such a complicated narrative is demanded by these sources. Doubtless, a heroic narrative will also persist, as alongside revision, much pride exists in relation to an extraordinary revolutionary generation. They were guided by the lights of their time and need to be assessed through the lens of their Ireland 100 years ago. What we do not need is a reductive, cartoon history that simplifies the 1916 generation and their hinterland.

We also need to recognize that the “new perspectives” are not all new, and this is why Seán O’Casey’s courageous and subversive excavation of 1916 in *The Plough and the Stars* was so important in 1926 and continues to resonate to this day. What O’Casey showcased in 1926, and what we have come back to 90 years later, is a concentration on ordinary lives as they were lived and lost in 1916 due to a variety of different allegiances or none.

O’Casey was well placed to offer an alternative to the heroic narrative; what he crafted was a caustic but also humane perspective on the 1916 Rising. When he looked back in 1957 at the events of the revolutionary period he was adamant “we should be careful of personal idealism; good as it may be and well meaning, its flame in a few hearts may not give new life and new hope to the many, but dwindle into ghastly and futile funeral pyres.” At a time when the politics and state building of the 1920s demanded a stained glass approach to 1916, O’Casey refused to indulge in such piety. The play provoked a riot in the theatre on 11 February 1926, but the Abbey Theatre directors resisted censorship and defended its playwright.

By 1926, O’Casey was 46 years old. During his formative years he had experienced many causes and organizations as an activist in the Gaelic League, the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the socialist Irish Citizen Army. As a member of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union in December 1911, he was dismissed from his job on the Great Northern Railway of Ireland. He became disillusioned with nationalism as the years progressed and considered the 1916 Rising “a great mistake”, but as has been noted by his biographer Christopher Murray, one of the ironies of his attitude to Irish republicanism was that before he resigned from the Irish Citizen Army in October 1914, he had drafted its constitution, some of which was incorporated into the 1916 Proclamation. But he was not going to overlook the tensions between the labor and nationalist movements or what he described in 1919 as a labor movement that he believed had “laid its precious gift of independence on the altar of Irish nationalism”. In the play, The Covey speaks for O’Casey

in mocking Peter Flynn: *"When I think of all th' problems in front o' th' workers, it makes me sick to be lookin' at oul' codgers goin' about dressed up like green accoutred figures gone asthroy out of a toyshop!"* Similar sentiments might be expressed this year about those who seek to concentrate solely on costume or commemorate without reflection.

The president of the republic proclaimed in 1916, Patrick Pearse, is represented in the play through his rhetoric- *"Bloodshed is a cleansing and sanctifying thing"*- his words relayed through a pub window. By using extracts from various of Pearse's speeches, O'Casey was not only seeking to probe the implications of such language for Irish nationalists but also engaging with a theme that went way beyond Ireland; the industrial-scale slaughter of the First World War and the abstract assumption that the sacrifice of countless working class soldiers was necessary to save civilization. During the war, 30,000 Dubliners enlisted for service in the British army and 19% of them were killed. Where was the line to be drawn between nobility and futility? O'Casey engages with the gulf between expectation and disappointment; between rhetoric and real lives, and the lofty oratory of redemption through bloodshed lies alongside the squabbling of the pub's occupants, including a prostitute, a risky and provocative presence on a 1926 stage.

There were roughly 25,000 families living in one-room tenements in Dublin at the time of the Rising. While Pearse had acknowledged in October 1913 that "one third of the people of Dublin are underfed; that half the children attending primary schools are ill-nourished", O'Casey felt such social awareness had been drowned by preoccupation with martyrdom. In a letter he wrote in 1926, he maintained "It isn't a question of English or Irish culture with the inanimate patsies of the tenements but a question of life for the few and death for the many. Irish-speaking or English-speaking, they are all what they are; convalescent homes of plague, pestilence or death".

But for all the relevant political issues about which he felt so deeply, O'Casey also had his artistic priorities. His unique talent for characterization and language, suffused with a vibrant credibility, still shines today. O'Casey's writing thrived on the slang, phrases and rhythms of Dublin city; the wit, rage, satire and spontaneity and the peoples' survival by living communally. Fighting was a form of bonding, as was gossiping, reminding us that for all their political differences, the tenement dwellers shared so much, including poverty. O'Casey was crystal clear in his view that "every art is rooted in the life of the people- their love, joy, hatred, malice, envy, generosity, passion, courage and fear".

His women were, as Bessie Burgess reminds us in this play, spiky and resilient in what O'Casey described as their "fearless and cheery battle with a hard and often brutal life". We hear more about these women today; the phrase "the men of 1916" rings too hollow in the centenary year, as it did for O'Casey 90 years ago. So too, does the idea, manufactured after the Rising, that it was solely a Catholic affair. Dublin's population was 13% Protestant a century ago and Burgess, like O'Casey, was a working class Protestant. But he was hostile to sectarian grandstanding, as he makes clear in one of Fluther's lines: *"We ought to have as great a regard for religion as we can, so as to keep it out of as many things as possible"*, another line that will still resonate for many today.

The looting that occurred during the Rising is a reminder of what revolution can amount to; for Fluther in this play it is a free jar of whiskey. In the midst of the mayhem, class prejudice abounded; Clitheroe can only bring himself to fire over the looters' heads, while Captain Brennan savagely demands that *"if them slum lice gather at our heels again, plug one o'them"*. The civilian experience of the Rising was not only relevant because of the temporary loss of law and order, but because they bore the brunt of the violence; 485 people were killed during the Rising and more than half of them were innocent civilians.

We do not need to elevate O'Casey as a supremely objective witness to history; his own ego and interactions with various of the revolutionary era's personalities, organizations and

themes made him at times an angry, jaundiced observer. As pointed out by Declan Kiberd, “the natural aggression that remained unpurged in his personality was finally vented on the rebels in his play.” He was not keen to allow the nationalists to make their case effectively in the play and its content also offended many socialists in 1926. O’Casey was capable of his own distortions. In the play, Sergeant Tinley, speaking of the damage inflicted by the rebels, refers to the “*Dum Dum bullets they’re using*”. As Charles Townshend, one of the authoritative historians of 1916 has noted in relation to this, “such evidence as there is remains in the nature of hearsay.”

But O’Casey excelled in juxtaposing comedy alongside the venerated objects of Irish nationalism, including the tricolor flag of Irish republicans. What did all the dreaming, symbolism and idealism amount to in practice? What is our answer, 100 years on, to the question asked at the end of the play: “*Is there anybody goin’, Mrs Clitheroe, with a tither o’sense?*” What was the difference between vanity and heroism? How wide was the gulf between political rhetoric and human emotion? There were, and are, no simple answers to those questions. O’Casey was later to be kinder to Pearse, writing in his autobiography in the 1940s “Pearse, while filled with the vision of a romantic Ireland was also fairly full of an Ireland sensitive, knowledgeable and graceful.”

When O’Casey died in 1964 an obituary pointed out that even at the end of his life he was calling out for younger writers not to be “afraid of life’s full-throated shouting, afraid of its venom, suspicious of its gentleness, its valour, its pain and its rowdiness.” The same call can be made in relation to how we look at and commemorate 1916 today. In this centenary year, we need to embrace a complicated narrative, and no better place to start than with *The Plough and the Stars*.

### ***The Plough and the Women; anger and protest***

Dr. Mary McAuliffe, Teaching and Research Fellow, University College Dublin

When, in 1926, *The Plough and the Stars* began its run on the Abbey stage it caused some of the most voracious protests since the 1907 protests at Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World*. Among the 1926 protestors were many women of Cumann na mBan and the Irish Citizen Army. As historian Margaret Ward related, relatives of some of the men of 1916—Mrs Barrett, sister of Sean Connolly, . . . Fiona Plunkett, Sheila Humphreys, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Maud Gonne—together with members of Cumann na mBan and the ICA all turned up to protest that ‘their men didn’t drink’. Sean Connolly had been an Abbey actor and Citizen Army commandant at City Hall, killed by a sniper’s bullet in the first hours of the fighting. Fiona Plunkett was the sister of executed leader and signatory to the Proclamation, Joseph Plunkett. Maud Gonne was famous in her own right as a feminist, separatist, founder of Inghinidhne na hÉireann and, of course, widow of the executed rebel, John McBride, while Sheila or Sighle Humphreys was the niece of The O’Rahilly, who was killed in the charge up Moore Street as the rebels evacuated the GPO on the Friday of Easter week, 1916.

One of the most vocal and articulate of the female protestors was the veteran feminist Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, widow of the murdered pacifist, socialist and feminist activist Francis Sheehy Skeffington. Her husband had been arrested as he tried to prevent looting and the breakdown of law and order during the Rising. Taken to Portobello Barracks by troops under the command of Captain J.C. Bowen-Colthurst, he and two journalists were summarily executed by an ad-hoc firing squad on the Wednesday morning of Easter week. However, in 1926, for Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and the other Cumann na mBan women, the protests centred not so much on any perceived immorality on the part of the characters, but on what they saw as the denigration of the character and bravery of the men of 1916. Sheehy Skeffington, who had found that O’Casey’s previous two plays in his Dublin trilogy, *The Shadow of a Gunman* and *Juno and the Paycock* were ‘not without

power, with a grim and sinister humour of their own', hated the *Plough*; and she was not slow to let her anger be known.

There was, she wrote in the *Irish World* newspaper, in the play 'not a single character [that] has a gleam of nobility or idealism; the men are all poltroons, drunkards, slackers and criminals, inspired by no motives save that of vanity, greed ... while the women are backbiting, harridans ... neurotics or prostitutes ... the moral of the piece appeared to be the foolishness of it all'. Sheehy Skeffington was not at all concerned, unlike others, about the morality of the play, or the appearance of a prostitute on the Abbey stage, for her this was a traducing of memory of 1916; 'the Ireland' she wrote 'that remembers with dimmed eyes all that Easter Week stands for, will not, and cannot, be silent in face of such a challenge'.

It was on national grounds that the women sought to voice their protest to the play. It was no accident that the women who gathered in the theatre for the show on Thursday 11th February were the mothers, widows, sisters and relatives of executed and murdered men of 1916 – and that they were also, for the most part, women who had also played an active role in revolutionary politics. Very soon after the Rising the contribution of women to the development of republican propaganda was immense. Several republican women also toured America to raise awareness of what had happened during the Rising and to fundraise among the large Irish American communities. Min Ryan, Nellie Gifford, Nora Connolly and Margaret Skinnider all went to the US soon after the Rising and all engaged in propaganda work. Perhaps the biggest impact came from the American tour undertaken in October 1916 by Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, widow of the murdered Francis Sheehy Skeffington. Although not a member of Cumann na mBan, she agreed to 'deliver a message from the organization to the American president when she became the first Sinn Féiner to meet him in January 1918'. Her talks, focused on the injustices done to herself, her husband and Ireland generally, had a huge impact on the Irish-American audiences.

Cumann na mBan and the women of the Irish Citizen Army organized effective propaganda campaigns in the months following the Rising. They produced Easter week memorabilia, postcards, posters and flags which commemorated the executed and imprisoned leaders of 1916. The widows and mothers of 1916, especially the widows of the executed signatories, became very effective emblems of the sacrifice of the men. Such was the effectiveness of the Cumann na mBan propaganda campaign that, 'by the time the first batch of prisoners were allowed home in December 1916 they had, to their great amazement, become heroes, their release being marked by burning of bonfires on the hillsides and general celebration'.

This propaganda contribution of the women continued on into the War of Independence and the Treaty Debates. During the treaty debates the majority of Cumann na mBan, and indeed the widows of 1916 heroes, were anti-treaty. This powerful participation of women in large numbers on the anti-treaty side led to a growing anxiety that these ungovernable women had become a threat to the very fabric of society. Militant women, this 'army of women', whose activities once were necessary to fight and win a war were now dangerous, evil, unmanageable subversives. W.T. Cosgrave, President of the Executive, in a speech said that, unhappily for Ireland, 'die-hards are women whose ecstasies at their extremist can find no outlet so satisfying as destruction'.

In the character of Nora Clitheroe, defined by her obsession with respectability and the attempts to keep her husband, Jack, at home from the fight, O'Casey is seen as demeaning the role women (and men) had played in the fight for Irish Independence. Articulating the protest against *The Plough and the Stars* Sheehy Skeffington wrote that it 'was a travesty of Easter Week... it concentrated on pettiness and squalor, unrelieved by a gleam of heroism'. The female protestors were as, academic Mary Trotter noted 'frustrated by the representations of women in the play, as they were reduced to sexual beings designed to

shock the pious sensibilities of Catholic conservatives, or stereotypes that essentialized women as wives and mothers’.

Here O’Casey’s portrayal of women is as symbols of domesticity and passivity, underplaying their role in the armed struggle and in revolutionary politics. He is reflecting, for the protesting women, the domestic, passive role in which the new Irish State felt the contribution of women would be most acceptable. The ideal Irishwoman in the new Free State was *not* these militant women, but the respectable, pure, moral wife and mother – not the militant, demented, grieving, vocal widows, and active, militant Cumann na mBan women. The sublimation of feminism to nationalism and the betrayal of the promises of equality contained in the Proclamation of 1916 meant that the position of women remained second class, domestic and subservient in an increasing conservative and Catholic State.

The space that women had taken up in the public realm for the first two decades of the twentieth century was now closing to them. Their contribution to the new State was to be as respectable wives and mothers, and their contributions to the Easter Rising and the Revolutionary War began to enter the footnotes of history. The dominant discourses of Irish revolutionary history served to exclude women and women’s experience, activism and contributions. The protests, undertaken by Cumann na mBan women and widows of 1916, and articulated by Hanna Sheehy Skeffington in 1926, reflect the growing unease and concern these women felt about the diminishment of women’s public position within Irish society and their growing inequality as citizens within this new Irish State.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### **Abbey Theatre**

The Abbey Theatre is Ireland’s national theatre. It was founded by W.B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory. Since it first opened its doors in 1904, the theatre has played a vital and often controversial role in the literary, social and cultural life of Ireland. In 1905, the Abbey Theatre first toured internationally and continues to be an ambassador for Irish arts and culture worldwide.

The Abbey Theatre produces an annual program of diverse, engaging, innovative Irish and international theatre and invests in and promotes new Irish writers and artists. The Abbey Theatre places the writer and theatre-maker at the heart of all that they do, commissioning and producing exciting new work and creating discourse and debate on the political, cultural and social issues of the day. Their aim is to present great theatre in a national context so that the stories told on stage have a resonance with artists and audiences alike.

Over the years, the Abbey Theatre has nurtured and premiered the work of major playwrights such as J.M. Synge and Sean O’Casey as well as contemporary classics from Sebastian Barry, Marina Carr, Bernard Farrell, Brian Friel, Thomas Kilroy, Frank McGuinness, Tom MacIntyre, Tom Murphy, Owen McCafferty, Mark O’Rowe and Billy Roche.

The Abbey Theatre supports a new generation of Irish writers including Richard Dormer, Gary Duggan, Shaun Dunne, Stacey Gregg, David Ireland, Jimmy McAleavey, Owen McCafferty, Elaine Murphy, Nancy Harris, Michael West and Carmel Winters.

None of this can happen without their audiences and supporters. Annie Horniman provided crucial financial support to the Abbey in its first years. Many others have followed her lead by investing in and supporting their work. Special thanks to 2016 season partners and funders, and to Loretta Brennan Glucksman, Honorary Chair of the North American touring in 2016. The Abbey Theatre also gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Arts Council.



**Ian-Lloyd Anderson** (Jack Clitheroe)

Anderson's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *Our Few and Evil Days*, *Sive*, *The Risen People*, *Major Barbara*, *Shibari*, *Alice in Funderland*, *Macbeth*, *The Rivals* and *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui*. Other theatre work includes *Every Doris Has His Day*, *Big Ole Piece of Cake* and *The Bruising of the Clouds* (Fishamble: The New Play Company), *Richard III* (Fast and Loose Theatre Company), *Dublin Oldschool*, winner Best Performer at the Dublin Fringe Festival 2015 and *End Time* (Project Arts Centre), *Ride On* and *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* (Livin' Dred Theatre Company), *The Field* (Verdant Theatre Company), *Danti Dan* (Galloglass Theatre Company), *The Colleen Bawn* (Bedrock Productions and Project Arts Centre), *Bad Sunday* (TILT Theatre Company) and *Ferry Tales* and *50 Ways to Leave Dun Laoghaire* (BDNC and Carpet Theatre Company). Film and television credits include *The Clinic*, *Raw* and *Love/Hate* (RTÉ), *The Wild Colonial Boy* (TG4), *Dorothy Mills* (Mars Distribution), *Shadow Dancer* (BBC Films and Element Pictures), *Standby* (Black Sheep Productions), *Scratch* (Warrior Films), *Leave* (925 Productions), *Game of Thrones* (HBO) and *They Shoot People* (Mark Noonan).

**Kate Stanley Brennan** (Nora Clitheroe)

Brennan's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *Hedda Gabler*, *The Risen People*, *The Plough and the Stars*, *Terminus*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui* and *Saved*. Recent theatre work includes *The Night Alive* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast and the Gaiety Theatre). Other theatre work includes *Witness* (Project Arts Centre and The Everyman), *Wuthering Heights* and *Salome* (Gate Theatre), *A New Day* (Bewley's Café Theatre), *Best Man* (The Everyman / Project Arts Centre), *Tiny Plays For Ireland* (Fishamble: The New Play Company), *The Making Of 'Tis Pity She's A Whore* (Siren Productions), *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, Irish Times Theatre Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress 2010 (Making Strange Theatre Company), *Love and Money*, Irish Times Theatre Award nomination for Best Actress 2009 (Hatch Theatre Company), *Caligula* (CHRG), *Translations* (Ouroboros Theatre Ireland), *Macbeth* (Second Age Theatre Company), *Mother Goose* (Gaiety Theatre), *Foxfinder* (Theatre 503), *Feel Sad About Japan* (Southwark Playhouse and Nabakov), *Yerma* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *The Sanctuary Lamp* (Arcola Theatre London) and *Sonnets For An Old Century* (X-Bel-Air Theatre). Film and television credits include *Fading Away* (Filmbase), *Inspector Jury* (IJ Prods), *Thanks for Nothing* (Redomlette), *Chasing The Green* (Big Apple Productions), *Doll House* (Visit Films and Factory Productions), *Dublin In Pieces* (I-Wire Films), *Raw*, *Fair City* and *T.X* (RTÉ), *The Tudors* (HBO) and *Speed Dating* (System 48 Ltd). In 2014, Brennan released an EP called *Miss Kate & the Higher State*.

**Tony Clay** (Sergeant Tinley)

This is Clay's debut at the Abbey Theatre. Other theatre work includes *Lines* (The Yard Theatre), *Albion* (Bush Theatre), *Fifteen Minutes with You* (Wimbledon College of Art), *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Earthquakes in London*, *Promise*, *All My Sons*, *Ivanov* and *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* (Arts Ed) and *The Machine Wreckers* (Miskin Theatre). Film and television work includes *The Second Coming* (Film 4), *An Ordinary Life* (Good Guy Productions) and *Foyles War* (ITV).

**Lloyd Cooney** (Lieut. Langon)

Cooney's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *The Waste Ground Party*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Risen People*. Other theatre work includes *The Windstealers* (Eccles Theatre Group), *Angel Meadow*, *Thirteen*, *Living the Lockout* and *The Boys of Foley Street* (ANU Productions), *Romeo and Juliet* (Devise and Conquer) and *Delta Phase* (Polish Theatre Ireland). Radio and television work includes *The Commitments* and *The Guts* (BBC Radio) and *Charlie* (Touchpaper TV/ Element Films).

**David Ganly** (Fluther Good)

Ganly's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Drum Belly*, *The Cavaliers*, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* and *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*. Other theatre work includes *The Merchant of Venice* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast), *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Weir* (Gate Theatre), *The Risen People* and *The Snow Queen* (Gaiety Theatre), *Grease*, *The Sound of Music* and *The Wizard of Oz* (Olympia Theatre), *The Plough and the Stars* (Second Age Theatre Company), *Extremities* (Andrew's Lane Theatre), *Carousel* (Tivoli Theatre), *Shoot the Crow* and *Summerhouse* (Druid), *F!* (Dublin Theatre Festival), *Amphibians* (YMCA, Wexford), *Uncle Vanya* and *The Wizard of Oz* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Shakespeare in Love* (Noel Coward Theatre, London), *Cinderella* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Macbeth* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), *Of Mice and Men* (The Watermill, Newbury), *The Wizard Of Oz* (London Palladium), *Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Off West End Best Actor nomination), *Bedtime Story* and *The End of the Beginning* (Young Vic), *Chicago* (Cambridge Theatre and Istanbul and China), *The Field*, *The Cavaliers* and *John Bull's Other Island* (Tricycle Theatre), *Translations* (National Theatre), *Hamlet*, *The Weir* and *Waiting for Godot* (Theatre Royal, Northampton), *Americans*, *The Contractor* and *The Quare Fellow* (Oxford Stage Company), *The Full Monty* (Prince of Wales Theatre), *The Lonesome West* (Druid, Royal Court, Sydney and Broadway), *Russian Tales* and *The Cavaliers* (Meridian Theatre Company), *The Talented Mr Ripley* (Watford Theatre) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Salisbury Playhouse). Film and television work includes *Charlie* (RTÉ), *Sunset Song* (Sell-Out Pictures), *Body of Lies* (Warner Bros. Pictures), *Hippie Hippie Shake* (Studio Canal), *Dorothy Mills* (Fidélité Productions), *Widow's Peak* (British Screen Productions) and *Holby City* and *Doctors* (BBC).

**Rachel Gleeson** (Mollser)

Gleeson previously appeared in *Oedipus* at the Abbey Theatre. Other theatre work includes *Pride and Prejudice*, *My Cousin Rachel*, *The Threepenny Opera* and *A Christmas Carol* (Gate Theatre), *Anna Bella Eema* (Project Arts Centre), *ShellShock* (Cavan Town Hall Theatre), *The Life and Sort of Death of Eric Argyle* (Soho Theatre), *This Is It*, *This Is The Day* and *Heroin(e) for Breakfast* (Smock Alley Theatre), *Moment* (Tall Tales Theatre Company, Irish Tour), *Fiddler on the Roof* and *West Side Story* (Gaiety Theatre) and *The Wizard of Oz*, *Oliver*, *Annie* and *The King and I* (The National Concert Hall). Film and television work include *What Richard Did* (Element Pictures) and *Stardust* (RTÉ). She studied at the Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College Dublin.

**James Hayes** (Peter Flynn)

Hayes' previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *An Ideal Husband* and *Hinterland* (co-produced with Out of Joint and the National Theatre, London). Other theatre credits include *Kiss Me Kate* (Opera North), *Antony and Cleopatra* (The Globe), *All That Fall* (The Arts Theatre/ Jermyn Street Theatre and 59e59 Street Theatre, New York), *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *The Price* (Lyceum, Edinburgh), *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* (Hampstead Theatre), *Loot* (Tricycle Theatre), *Written on the Heart* (Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford and Duchess Theatre), *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Tempest*, *A New Way to Please You*, *Thomas More*, *Sejanus*, *Richard III*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Woyzeck*, *Faust*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Hostage*, *The Venetian Twins*, *Elgar's Rondo* and *The Tempest* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* and *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (Donmar Warehouse), *Of Mice and Men*, *The Crucible* and *Belonging* (Birmingham Rep), *The Rivals* (Bristol Old Vic), *Hamlet* and *The Antipodes* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Tear from a Glass Eye* (Gate Theatre), *Lenny* (Queen's Theatre), *The Winter's Tale* and *Macbeth* (English Shakespeare Company), and *The Captain of Kopenick*, *Liola*, *Women Beware Women*, *Saint Joan*, *The Relapse*, *Mappa Mundi*, *Othello*, *A View from the Bridge*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *The Oresteia*, *The Fawn*, *Coriolanus*,



*Electra, As I Lay Dying, The Spanish Tragedy, Amadeus, Strider, The Romans in Britain, Galileo, Grand Manoeuvres, The Misanthrope, The Front Page, Macbeth and The Good Natured Man* (National Theatre, London). Film work includes *Give or Take and The Eagle*. Television work includes *Hunted, The Café, Moving Wallpaper, Charles I, Promoted to Glory, Playing the Field, The Jury, Waking the Dead, A Question of Guilt, The Winter's Tale, Jacob, The Oresteia, Leprechauns, Parnell, A Touch of Frost, The Bill, The Piglet Files, The March, Wild Justice, Bergerac, Howard's Way, Emmerdale, The Professionals, Colditz, A Bunch of Fives, On the Shelf, Hold the Dream, You're on Your Own, Red Roses for Me and Tiptoe Through the Tulips*.

**Liam Heslin** (Capt. Brennan)

This is Heslin's debut at the Abbey Theatre. Other theatre work includes *East of Berlin* (Project Arts Centre), *King Lear* (Second Age Theatre Company), *A Boy Called Nedd* (Bitter Like a Lemon and Theatre Upstairs), *PALS: The Irish at Gallipoli* (Anu Productions), *Borstal Boy, Rigoletto and Samson et Delila* (Gaiety Theatre), *The Clearing, Into the Woods, The Night Season, Mary Stuart, Scenes from the Big Picture, Poor Little Boy With No Arms, The Rover, The Suppliants and Love's Labour's Lost* (The Lir Academy), *Iphigenia in Aulis* (Classic Stage Ireland) and *Doughnuts and Light Signals* (Team Theatre). Film and television work includes *Kaleidoscope* (The Lir Academy) and *Fair City* (RTÉ). Heslin trained at the Lir Academy.

**Ger Kelly** (A Bar-tender)

Kelly's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *Oedipus, Twelfth Night, The Comedy of Errors, The Playboy of the Western World and The Big House*. Other theatre work includes *Confusion Boats, Wedding Day at Cro-Magnons* (Bedrock Productions), *Alone it Stands* (Verdent Productions), *The Last Days of Judas Escariot* (Dublin Fringe Festival), *A Midsummer Night's Dream and Phaedra's Love* (Loose Canon), *History, Heroin and The Family* (THEATREclub), *Richard III* (Chapel Royal and Dublin Castle), *The Silver Tassie* (Druid), *Twelfth Night* (Grand Pavilion Bray), *The Government Inspector* (Bruiser tour) and 1984, *Love's Labour's Lost, Black Snow, The Hostage, The Tempest and Summerfolk* (Samuel Beckett Theatre). Film and television work includes *Love/Hate, Trivia, Sin é* and *Redline*.

**Janet Moran** (Mrs. Gogan)

Moran's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *She Stoops to Conquer, Shibari, Juno and the Paycock* (co-production with National Theatre, UK), *Translations, No Romance, The Recruiting Officer, The Cherry Orchard, She Stoops to Conquer, Communion* (Irish Times/ESB Theatre Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress), *Barbaric Comedies, The Well of the Saints and The Hostage*. Other theatre work includes *Spinning and Swing*, which she co-wrote (Fishamble: The New Play Company), *Desire Under the Elms, Freefall, Everyday, Dublin by Lamplight and Car Show* (The Corn Exchange), *The Bridge Below the Town* (Livin' Dred), *Pineapple and Xaviers* (Calipo Theatre Company), *Unravelling the Ribbon* (Gúna Nua), *Translations* (Ouroboros Theatre Company), *Metamorphosis/Platanov* (The Rep Experiment), *Submarine Man* (Upstate), *King Ubu* (Galway Arts Festival/Fineswine), *The Crock of Gold and Emma* (Storytellers), *All's Well That Ends Well* (Classic Stage Ireland), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (An Griánán Theatre), *Royal Supreme* (Theatre Royal Plymouth), *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (Calypso), *Dead Funny* (Rough Magic Theatre Company), *Playing From the Heart* (The Ark), *Her Big Chance* (Bewley's Café Theatre), *Stella by Starlight* (Gate Theatre), *Othello and Romeo and Juliet* (Second Age) and *The Stomping Ground* (Red Kettle). Film and television credits include *Volkswagen Joe* (Ripple world), *Minim Rest* (No Return Films), *Breakfast on Pluto* (Pluto Films), *The Butcher Boy* (Butcher Boy Productions), *Moll Flanders* (Moll Flanders Productions), *Nothing Personal* (Little Bird), *Quirke* (BBC), *Love/Hate* (Octagon Films), *Love is the Drug* (West St Television), *Brigid and Eamon, The Clinic* (RTÉ), *Career Opportunities* (RTÉ/BBC) and *Trivia* (Outstanding Actress in a TV Comedy Series nomination, Monte Carlo Television Awards).

**Ciarán O'Brien** (The Young Covey)

O'Brien's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *Drum Belly*, *The Government Inspector*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Perve*, *Arrah-na-Pogue*, *The Plough and the Stars*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Saved*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Other theatre work includes *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Orson's Shadow* (Southwark Playhouse), *Of Mice and Men* (Birmingham Rep), *Translations* (UK Tour), *Elevator* (THISISPOPBABY), *The Great Goat Bubble* (Fishamble: The New Play Company), *Travesties* (Rough Magic), *Durang Durang* (Project Arts Centre), *Between Foxrock and a Hard Place* (Landmark Productions), *The Shawshank Redemption* (Gaiety Theatre, Cork Opera House and Derry Millennium Forum), *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (Gaiety Theatre), *Observe The Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* (Livin' Dred and Nomad), *This is Our Youth* (Bedrock Productions), *Peter Pan* (Pavilion Theatre), *The Magic Tee* (Granary Theatre, Edinburgh Fringe, Belltable Theatre, Dublin Fringe), *Lil' Red and Sk8er Jack* (Civic Theatre), *Fewer Emergencies* (Randolph SD | The Company), *How Many Miles to Babylon?* (Second Age), *Myrmidons* (Ouroboros), *Seven Deadly Teens* (Dublin Fringe Festival) and *Oliver Twist* (Gate Theatre). Film and television work includes *Pursuit* (AGM Prods), *Misfits* (Channel 4), *Ripper Street* (BBC), *The Last Security Man* (RTÉ Storyland), *The Tudors* (Showtime Networks), *Fair City* and *Custer's Last Stand Up* (RTÉ), *Detained* (Monster Animations), *Prince William* (Fox Television Studios), *Incredible Story Studio* (Minds Eye Entertainment) and *The Boy from Mercury* (Blue Rose Films). O'Brien is a graduate of Bachelor of acting studies, Samuel Beckett Centre Trinity College.

**Nima Taleghani** (Corporal Stoddart)

This is Taleghani's debut at the Abbey Theatre. Other theatre work includes *Mercury Fur* (Middle Child/ Hull Truck Theatre Company), *The White Whale* (Slung Low), *Dangerous Liaisons* (Whole Hog Theatre), *A Clockwork Orange* (Fourth Monkey Theatre), *Road and Pornography* (Warwick University Drama Society) and the rehearsed readings *North Country* (Arcola Theatre) and *360 Degrees of Hope* (Dep Arts/Slung Low). Film and television work includes *90 Minutes* (El Capitan) and *Casualty* (BBC).

**Eileen Walsh** (Bessie Burgess)

Walsh's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Terminus* (also at the Edinburgh Festival and in New York; Winner Best Actress Irish Times Award), *Lippy* (Dead Centre also at the Young Vic), *Saved*, *Portia Coughlan*, *Ariel* and *Macbeth*. Other theatre work includes *Little Eyolf* (Almeida), *The Tempest* (Improbable Theatre Company), *Image of an Unknown Woman* (Gate, London), *The Believers* (Tricycle Theatre), *The Internet is Serious Business* (Royal Court), *Liola* (National Theatre, London), *Request Programme*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Phaedra's Love* (Corcadorca), *Conversations*, *Whistle in the Dark*, *Famine* and *The Gigli Concert* (Druid), *Medea* (Siren Productions), *Mary Stuart* (National Theatre Scotland/Royal Lyceum), *The Drowned World and Splendour* (Paines Plough at the Traverse), *Troilus and Cressida* (Oxford Stage Company), *Boomtown* and *Danti Dan* (Rough Magic), *The Entertainer* (Liverpool Playhouse), *Sand and Crave* (Royal Court), *Crestfall* (Gate Theatre), *Hamlet* (Young Vic) and *Disco Pigs* (Bush Theatre and the West End). Television work includes *Castastrophe* (Channel 4) and *Pure Mule* (RTÉ). Film work includes *Gold*, *Snap*, *The Ballad of Kid Kanturk*, *Triage*, *The Maid of Farce*, *Eden*, Winner IFTA Award for Best Actress (Tribeca Film Festival), *33X Around the Sun*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Magdalene Sisters*, *Miss Julie* and *Janice Beard*.

**Nyree Yergainharsian** (Rosie Redmond)

Yergainharsian's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *The Government Inspector* and *As You Are Now So Once Were We* (The Company Theatre Company). Other theatre work includes *The Good Father* (Axis Theatre), *The Rest is Action* (Fringe Fest at Project Arts Centre), *Politik* (Dublin Theatre Festival at Samuel Beckett Theatre), *Hipsters We Met* and

*Liked* (Fringe Fest at Samuel Beckett Theatre), *Who is Fergus Kilpatrick?* (The Company), *Phaedra's Love* (Loose Canon Theatre Company), *Wedding Day at Cro Magnon's* (Bedrock Productions), *Top Girls* (Galloglass Theatre Company), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Public Shakespeare Company), *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (The Sugar Club) and *Almost Legal* (The New Theatre). Film and television work includes *Dublin in Pieces* (i-wire Films) and *Fair City* and *Pure Mule* (RTÉ). Yergainharsian trained at The Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College Dublin and Goldsmiths University London. She is a founding member of The Company Theatre Company, with whom she regularly performs, and also produces their work.

### **Sean Holmes** (Director)

Holmes directed *Drum Belly* at the Abbey Theatre in 2013. He is Artistic Director of the Lyric Hammersmith where he has worked on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Herons*, *Bugsy Malone*, *Secret Theatre Shows 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7*, *Cinderella*, *Desire Under the Elms*, *Morning*, *Have I None*, *Saved*, *Blasted* (Olivier Award 2011, Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre), *A Thousand Stars Explode in the Sky*, *Ghost Stories* (also Duke of York's/Liverpool Playhouse/Panasonic Theatre, Toronto/Arts Theatre), *Three Sisters* and *Comedians*. Holmes was an Associate Director of the Oxford Stage Company from 2001 to 2006 and has worked for the National Theatre, London and Royal Shakespeare Company as well as the Royal Court, Donmar Warehouse, Tricycle and Chichester Festival Theatre.

### **Jon Bausor** (Set Designer)

Bausor's previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *Big Love*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Terminus* and *Julius Caesar*. He has designed extensively in dance, opera and theatre for companies worldwide including The Royal Opera House, National Theatre, London, National Theatre of Scotland, Young Vic, Theatre de Complicité, and both Finnish and Norwegian National Ballets. He is an associate artist of the RSC where he has designed productions including *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *The Winter's Tale*, Harold Pinter's *the Homecoming* and the entire 2012 *What Country Friends Is This?* season. Other theatre designs include *The James Plays* (National Theatre/National Theatre of Scotland/World tour), *Bugsy Malone* (Lyric, Hammersmith), *KURSK* (Sound and Fury/Young Vic/Sydney), *Ghost Stories* (West End/Toronto/Moscow), *Lord of the Flies* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *MAMETZ* (National Theatre of Wales, winner best design National Theatre awards and Wales Theatre awards), *The Believers* (Frantic Assembly) *hang*, *You for me for you* (Royal Court), *I am Yusuf* (Shebbahur, Palestine/ Young Vic), *Water* (Filter/ Lyric/ BAM) and *Lionboy* (Complicité). Bausor studied at Oxford University before training on the Motley theatre design course. He designed the opening ceremony of the 2012 Paralympic Games in London and the kinetic sculpture to light the flame for the 2014 Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi.

### **Catherine Fay** (Costume Designer)

Fay's previous work with the Abbey Theatre includes *Oedipus*, *Bastard Amber* (A joint production with Liz Roche Dance Company), *Our Few and Evil Days* (Irish Times Theatre Award nomination), *Aristocrats*, *Quietly*, *The Government Inspector*, *Macbeth*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Saved*, *Doubt*, *Doldrum Bay*, *Henry IV Part I* (Irish Times/ESB Theatre Award nomination) and *On Such As We and Chair* (Operating Theatre). Recent work includes *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Threepenny Opera* (Gate Theatre), *Neither Either*, *Body and Forgetting* and *Fast Portraits* (Liz Roche Company), *Breaking Dad* (Landmark Productions) (Irish Times Theatre Award nomination), *O Go My Man* and *Buddleia* (Lir Academy), *Sour Angelica* (R.I.A.M), *Tundra* and *DOGS* (Emma Martin Dance) (Winner Best Production and Best Design for ABSOLUT Fringe Festival 2012), *Ice Child* (Barnstorm Theatre Company) and *Carmen* (Opera Theatre Company). Other work includes *Romeo and Juliet* (joint production with Corcadorca and Cork Opera House) and much of Bedrock's

back catalogue including *Wedding Day at the Cro Magnon's*, *Roberto Zucco*, *Quay West*, *Night Just before the Forest*, *Wideboy Gospel* and *Massacre @ Paris*. Fay is a graduate of the National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

**Paul Keogan** (Lighting Designer)

Previous work at the Abbey Theatre includes *Cyprus Avenue*, *Shibboleth*, *Our Few and Evil Days*, *Heartbreak House*, *The Risen People*, *Drum Belly* and *No Escape*. Keogan studied drama at Trinity College Dublin and Glasgow University.

**Philip Stewart** (Music & Sound Designer)

Stewart's previous work at Abbey Theatre includes *Hedda Gabler*, *Our Few and Evil Days*, *Heartbreak House*, *The Risen People*, *Major Barbara*, *Quietly* (also toured to Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2013), *The House*, *Pygmalion*, *Macbeth*, *Ages of the Moon*, *Lay Me Down Softly*, *Terminus*, *A Number* and *The Big House*. He has contributed music to a broad spectrum of genres including theatre, dance, documentaries and short films. He has been nominated twice for an *Irish Times* Theatre Award. Stewart studied composition at Trinity College Dublin under Donnacha Dennehy and Roger Doyle.

**Ronan Phelan** (Production Associate Director)

Phelan is a freelance theatre director and an Associate Director with Rough Magic Theatre Company. He is a former Resident Assistant Director at the Abbey Theatre, during which time, he assisted Wayne Jordan, Annabelle Comyn, Conall Morrison, Caitriona McLaughlin, Selina Cartmell and Gavin Quinn. Previous directing credits include *Assassins* (Rough Magic SEEDS), *LAMBO* and *Clear\_the\_Air* (Underscore Productions), *To SPACE* (Niamh Shaw), *BROADENING* (Glassdoll Productions), *Pocket Music*, Winner Little Gem Award (Show in a Bag, Dublin Fringe 2011) and *Durang Durang* (Brazen Tales Theatre Company). Radio productions include *LAMBO* (RTÉ Drama On One, Winner PPI Radio Awards Best Drama 2014). Phelan is a former participant of the Rough Magic SEEDS program and is a graduate of the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama.