

# Chairman's Address



## **Rathfarnham Theatre Group 21 Years of Drama - 1991 - 2012**

A big welcome to  
Rathfarnham Theatre Group's 21st Birthday Production,

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**

We are celebrating 21 years of being on the boards and what better way to celebrate than by producing Oscar Wilde's deliciously, funny and witty play. The group is very proud of all that it has achieved in the past 21 years, 46 productions to date. I have been a part of the group for all of those years and I feel very privileged to be at the helm on this our coming of age year.

This is our 11th visit to The Mill Theatre and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at The Mill Theatre for all their help. I would also like to thank Mr. Tom Mullins, The Board of Management and staff of St. Mary's BNS and The Yellow House, for without their support we would not have been able to achieve all that we have. A heartfelt thanks also to our Patrons who have been with us for many years.

We are a community based group and our aim has been to provide good quality theatre. We are always on the lookout for new talent whether it be on the stage or backstage, I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to have a look at our website, [www.rathfarnhamtheatregroup.com](http://www.rathfarnhamtheatregroup.com). Finally, I would like to thank the cast for their hard work and to thank the other members of the group for all their help in making this production possible.

Please tell your friends about it.

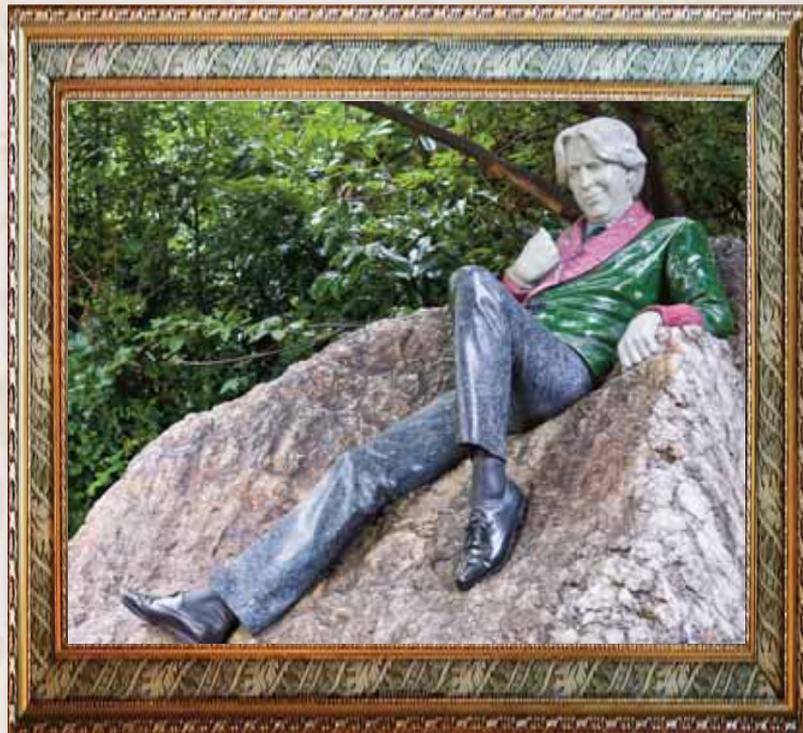
*Anne O'Connell,*

Chairperson

# Oscar Wilde

It was perhaps almost inevitable that a man who began life, in 1854, with a name as flamboyant as Oscar Fingal O’Fahertie Wills, Wilde should have quite consciously decided to live and work, both privately and publicly, with a certain air of flamboyance. From his father, Sir William Wilde, a distinguished surgeon and socialite (and an acknowledged womanizer) and his mother, a brilliant linguist and (as "Speranza") a noted author of trenchant patriotic verse, Oscar Wilde was brought up in an elite affluent cultured society in Dublin. His scholastic career in Royal Portola School (scholarship), Trinity College (a scholar and Greek medalist) and Magdalen College Oxford (a double first), gave ample evidence of quite exceptional intellectual ability.

And yet the rest of his adult life was so marked by episodes of perceived failure, even pain, that there was more than a little truth in his prophetic epigram “I’d be famous and if not famous, then notorious” and later his acknowledgement “I became the spendthrift of my own genius”.



In his late twenties, he wrote two serious historical dramas, neither of which were accepted by London theatre managements of the day. During the same period, he went on a successful Lecture Tour in North America, speaking on a variety of subjects, but always in the express role of a “Renaissance Man”, complete with costume of black stockings, knee breeches and velvet coat. Nothing if not flamboyant!

Perhaps his marriage, when he was just 30, to Constance Lloyd, with whom he shared early years of happiness with her and their two sons, Cyril and Vyvyan, was responsible for his writing, then his immensely popular, with children of all ages, “The Happy Prince and Other Tales”, And yet we find that, at the same period he was writing the strange, dark, almost satanic story “The Picture of Dorian Gray”. The recurring paradox in the work and life of Oscar Wilde!

However, his restless mind and his irrepressible wit prompted him to forsake historical dramas such as “The Duchess of Padua” and launched him into the years of his most successful and sustained period of writing, the years which gave us the sequence of comedies. It is probable that, even in his vanity, he did not expect the tremendous success of “Lady Windermere’s Fan” followed quickly by “A Woman Of No Importance”, “An Ideal Husband” and of course, “The Importance of Being Earnest”. Again by way of stark contrast, the disturbing and deeply serious “Salome”. These years (1890 – 1895) also saw Wilde enjoying a time of huge financial income from royalties and unfortunately, considerable extravagance on his part.

This also was the period in his life during which his friendship, and later fateful, relationship with young Lord Alfred Douglas developed. Once again his innate vanity - “if not famous, notorious”- led him, against the best advice, to challenge Douglas’s father, Lord Queensberry, in the Courts of Law. The evidence and the cross examination by the relentless Edward Carson brought him to humiliation. All his well deserved success and fame only served to make him more pitiful the last years of his life – criminal conviction, imprisonment with hard labour, bankruptcy, separation from wife and sons, exile, death of his mother (1896), separation from “Bosie” death of his wife Constance (1898), illness and lonely death in Paris. Hopefully, all of this cycle of pain was salved, at least at times, by the unfailing friendship and abiding loyalty of one of his oldest friends, Robert Ross. It was he, who over the years, understood more and cared more for the real Oscar Wilde.

It seems oddly fitting that in 1900, as the curtain was finally coming down on the author of so many brilliant and entertaining plays, his last two works to be published “De Profundis” and “The Ballad of Reading Gaol” were faithful to the essential paradox of Wilde’s life and allowed us to read for ourselves and understand the depth of his final loneliness and pain.

Despite earlier quips about God and religion, before he died Wilde requested to be and was received into The Roman Catholic church.

Also, despite the anguish and pain, his reputed last epigram - about the dreadful wallpaper – might very well be fittingly true.

# Rehearsal Photos



# Cast



*Darach Connolly*

Darach has been a member of RTG since it began in 1991. He has been active both on and off stage (mostly on) for more than sixty years. He has acted in nine of our major productions and has directed six of the others. He describes his involvement in theatre as a disease for which there is no antidote.



*Brendan O'Sullivan*

This is Brendan's second play with Rathfarnham Theatre Group. His first was in Marc Camoletti's 'Don't Dress for Dinner' in 2011 starring in the lead role of Bernard. Brendan has also been in several productions for the Balally players including the 2011 production of "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" where he played the role of Rosencrantz. Over the past couple of years, Brendan has also appeared in various TV shows including the "Republic of Telly", "Raw" and "Saving the Titanic" and has also appeared in various advertising campaigns.



*Brian O'Connor*

Brian's acting credits with RTG include Commandant Frank Butler in 'Living Quarters' (2009), Dr. Feldman in 'A Different Way To Die' (Best Supporting Actor Award-Bray One-Act Drama Festival 2007), The Bird O'Donnell in 'The Field' (2005), and Smirnov in 'The Bear' (2004). He also represented RTG in the inaugural production at The Mill Theatre, Dundrum in May 2005, playing Mr. Webb in 'Our Town'. Before that with Stillorgan Players parts included Anthony Blair-Booth in 'Beyond Reasonable Doubt', Stewart in 'A Pack of Lies' and Michael Angkatell in 'The Hollow'. In 1995 Brian completed the two-year acting course at The Poor School, London, where, in public showings, he played Michael in 'Dancing at Lughnasa', Angelo in 'Measure for Measure' and Jabe in 'Orpheus Descending'.

# Cast



*Carmel Cullen*

Carmel's theatre work with RTG includes title roles in: Big Maggie; Juno and the Paycock; The Loves of Cass Maguire and The Gingerbread Lady. Carmel has also appeared in: The Odd Couple; The Plough and the Stars; Drama at Inish; Chapter Two; The House of Barnarda Alba; The Plough and the Stars; Sive; Dancing at Lughnasa; The Beauty Queen of Leenane; All my Sons; Ghost Writer; Death of a Sales Man; Blithe Spirit; Philadelphia Here I Come and The Way you Look Tonight in which she received an award for Best Actress in the All Ireland Drama Festival. Her directorial work includes: Ill Met by Moonlight; The Field; Playboy of the Western World, Living Quarters, Translations and most recently 'A Skull in Conemara'



*Jessica Stone*

This is Jessica's first appearance on The Mill stage. Having moved to Dublin in 2007 from South Carolina, she joined the Rathfarnham Theatre Group last autumn and played the part of Gwendolen in the first act of The Importance of Being Earnest for RTG's 21st Birthday Celebration in February. Previous roles include Cassius in a street performance of Julius Caesar as part of the Dublin Shakespeare Festival (2009), Antonia in The Tempest (2006), and Shelby in Steel Magnolias (2001). For Jessica, acting is one way to, in Gwendolen's words, 'become someone else' for a time.



*Deirdre Dunleavy*

Deirdre has been involved in theatre and performance from a young age. She has been involved in numerous stage and tv productions, and has completed the Guildhall exams in Drama. After a few years living and working in Spain, she moved to Dublin and joined RTG. Since joining, Deirdre has been involved in a number of workshop productions, as well as working backstage in Costume and Stage Management previously for RTG at the Mill. However, this is her first time treading the boards here. Deirdre has an avid interest in Anglo- Irish literature and is delighted to be playing the part of fun, romantic Cecily in one of her favourite plays.

# Cast

## CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Lane, manservant	Darrach Connolly
Algernon Moncrieff	Brendan O'Sullivan
John Worthing J.P.	Brian O'connor
Lady Bracknell	Carmel Cullen
Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax	Jessica Stone
Cecily Cardew	Deirdre Dunleavy
Miss Prism, governess	Helen O'Brien
Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D.	Eamon Cullen
Merriman, butler	Noel Young
Footman	Tom Foster

ACT ONE: Algernon Moncrieff's Flat in Half Moon Street, London

ACT TWO: The garden at the Manor House, Woolton

ACT THREE: Drawing-Room at the Manor House, Woolton

*There will be a 15 minute interval between Act One and Act Two  
and lights will be lowered between Act Two and Three.*

# Crew

Director	Anne O'Connell
Producer	Phil Fitzpatrick
Lighting and Sound	Barry Donaldson
Set Design	Anne O'Connell
Stage Director	Gerry McCann
Stage Crew	Columb Casey Mark Shinnick Tom Foster Phil Fitzpatrick
Properties	Carl Lusby
Costumes	Deirdre Dunlevy
Set Construction	Bobby White
Publicity	Columb Casey
Photography	Noel Young Pat Hanratty
Piano	Michael Kelly

# Cast



*Helen O'Brien*

Helen began her acting career in The Tinkers Wedding winning best actress at The All Ireland Drama Festival. After playing a range of roles with Strand Players she worked with Barnstorm Theatre Company, Kilkenny in Agnes of God, Translations, She Stoops to Conquer, How the Other Half Loves, Separation, Crimes of the Heart in the Watergate Theatre; and Silly Bits of Sky, 123 O'Leary and When Moses Met Marconi in the Gaiety Theatre and on National tour. Other roles include, Jack Fell Down and Friends for Team Theatre Co. on National Tour, Machinal at Samuel Beckett Theatre, and 3am with Locust Theatre Co. Film credits include Moll Flanders and The Aristocrats. Helen is delighted to be appearing for RTG in their anniversary year.



*Eamonn Cullen*

Eamonn has been with RTG for more than a decade and has appeared in many of their productions including : Philadelphia Here I Come; Sive; The Importance of being Earnest; Dancing at Lughnasa; The Plough and the Stars; The Beauty Queen of Leenane; The Playboy of the Western World; The Field; Ghost Writer; Someone Who'll Watch Over Me; Death of a Salesman; Blithe Spirit; Living Quarters, Translations and The Way You Look Tonight in which he received " best actor" award at The All Ireland Drama Festival. We last saw him in 'A Skull in Conemara'



*Noel Young*

Noel Young The first RTG play that Noel saw was the 1996 production of The Importance of Being Earnest. He appeared in Philadelphia, Here I Come (twice), The Plough and the Stars, The Playboy of the Western World, Death of a Salesman, Hedda Gabler, Translations and Play On. He also helped in the sound and lighting area in other productions.

# Cast



*Tom Foster*

Tom joined Rathfarnham Theatre Group in 2010 and has since taken part in three workshops, playing Red Muffler in Seán O'Casey's "Hall of Healing", Gregory Smirnov in Anton Chekov's "The Bear" and Jerry Devine in Seán O'Casey's "Juno and the Paycock". Previous roles include Joe in Brian Friel's "Lovers: Winners and Losers" and Bernard in "Death of a Salesman". Recently Tom performed as the young boy in James Joyce's Dubliners short story "The Sisters". This is Tom's second appearance in The Mill Theatre having played George in last years production of Marc Camoletti's "Don't Dress for Dinner".



*Ann O'Connell*

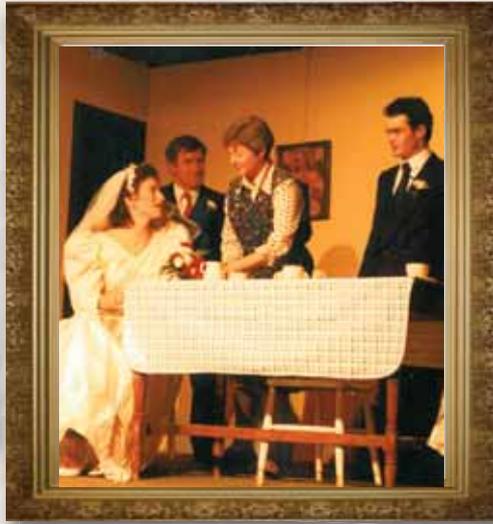
Anne has been a very active member of Rathfarnham Theatre Group since it formed. She has directed "The Plough and the Stars", "A Life", "The Mai", "Philadelphia Here I Come", "Dancing at Lughnasa", the comedy "Dont Dress for Dinner" and co-directed Blithe Spirit for the group. She has played many leading roles her most challenging being Mags in "The Beauty Queen of Linnane, Linda in "Death of a Salesman", Alice in "Happy Birthday Dear Alice and The Widow Quinn in "The Playboy of the Western World, among others.



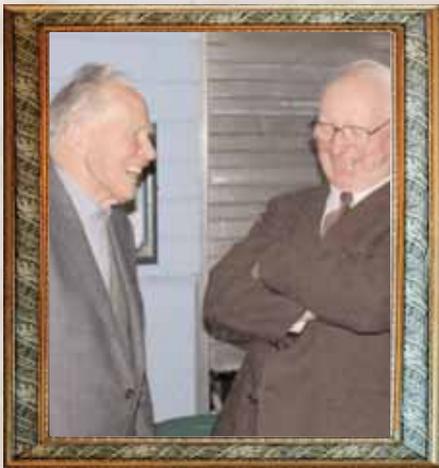
*Phil Fitzpatrick*

Phil joined Rathfarnham Theatre Group 14 years ago. During that time she acted in many of our Plays. She has been Producer for twelve of our Plays to date and says the nicest part of the job is eating the Cast's sweets on the last night! Phil has directed short workshop plays for the Group in St. Mary's School. She also directed and staged performances in Rathfarnham Castle. Her most recent undertaking was the adaptation and dramatisation of extracts from James Joyce's "Dubliners" which she directed and produced for performance in the Pearse Museum.

# Past Productions



# 21st Celebrations



## IN THE BEGINNING.....

Who would believe that three 'Ladies' meeting for a drink in the Yellow House could evolve into a successful Theatre Group. While all three had a love of theatre only one had any practical experience of amateur drama. Not at all daunted by this apparent drawback, they agreed that what Rathfarnham needed was an Amateur Drama Group. A swirl of activity pursued, a visit to Jim Molloy, then Principle of Saint Mary's Boys National School, for permission to use said school, choosing a play, "The Year of the Hiker" by John B. Kean, setting a date for auditions, pressing daughters into designing leaflets and the distribution of same, to say nothing of 'strong-arming' everyone who was unfortunate to cross our paths to 'Come along to the School on the 14th February (the significance of this date passed us by completely). What passed for normal life in three Rathfarnham households ceased to exist, along with things like sleep and dinners. Finally come the day, we were overwhelmed by an attendance of over eighty, ranging in age from sixteen to seventy, the play was cast, rehearsed and performed to packed houses. Twenty one years later and on certain occasions the three 'Ladies' are still to be seen in the 'Yella'.



# Our Valued Patrons

## Patrons

Betty & Peter Carroll  
Joan Connolly  
Joe Clancy  
Frank Gaynor  
Norma & Eugene Hiney  
Colm Jenkinson  
Kevin Kelly & Eva O'Carroll  
Paul A. McMullen  
Sean O'Byrne & Jill Davies  
Dermot & Renee O'Dwyer  
Peggy Sheehan  
Maureen Taylor

## Honorary Patrons

Jim Molloy  
George King  
Dr A. McGough

# THE STUDIO CAFÉ

54 Rathfarnham Village  
[www.thestudiocafe.ie](http://www.thestudiocafe.ie)

Open 7 days for Breakfast & Lunch

Sunday early bird 12pm - 7pm

Specializing in corporate & home catering

Talk to us on 01/4900611 0872358028



**FREE CAPPUCCINO WITH LUNCH WHEN YOU PRESENT THIS AD**