

ACROSS THE WAVES: A CELEBRATION OF 100 YEARS OF IRISH RADIO

We will celebrate 100 years Irish radio through history, comic sketches, personal stories and song. We are looking for performers who can help us with this.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This production is sponsored by the Department for Foreign Affairs from the Irish government. As such it has a community focus, which in practical terms means that at least three of the performances will be in the afternoon and at least one will be on a weekday afternoon. This is to allow us to perform to Irish elders who prefer afternoon to evening performances.

Please only apply if your working arrangements can accommodate this. The grant covers five performances but there could be more. The agreed dates so far are:

3pm on Friday 13th, Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th November. Future dates will be discussed with the cast before they are confirmed. The production lasts for 90 minutes. **Auditions are through self-tapes. Instructions for these are on the next page.**

REHEARSALS

These will be a mixture of Zoom and in person rehearsal. The in-person rehearsals will be for whole days and will be scheduled at a weekend. We do not know whether we will need one or two full days as yet. The rehearsals will take place in London in mid to late October and early November and we are looking for people who are free on these weekends 25/25th October, 31st October/1st November and 7th/8th November.

REMUNERATION

As our grant from the Irish government only covers the cost of room and venue hire, we are only able to offer a modest remuneration. This will be £90 per performance. Sadly, we cannot commit to pay for rehearsals at the moment, but we will cover travelling expenses for the Great London area for rehearsals.

Hope that the above makes sense.

Please get in touch with me if you have any questions: anne@greencurtaintheatre.co.uk

Kind regards

Anne Curtis

Green Curtain Theatre

www.greencurtaintheatre.co.uk

AUDITIONS

Anyone wishing to be considered **must** submit a self-tape. The good news is that there's no need to learn anything for the self-tapes as we only require audio tapes of the sort which can be recorded on a Smartphone.

We are looking for versatility so please record **two** or **three** pieces from the selection below to show us what you can do.

Please also record one of the songs. If you do not know the tune of 'The Parting Glass' or 'The Mountains of Mourne' then please record yourself singing another Irish song.

It would also be helpful if you could let us know if you play a musical instrument.

All tapes must be received by midnight on 3/10/2026. Please get in touch if this is a problem for you and we will see if we can do anything to accommodate you.

"Ireland Shall Speak" – WELL SPOKEN - IRISH ACCENT

Douglas Hyde, President of Ireland

People of Ireland, I call upon you to listen not merely with your ears, but with your history, your pride, your very sense of who we are.

For generations, our voice was stifled. Our language pushed to the margins.

Our stories carried only in whispers, in songs sung behind closed doors, in memories guarded like embers in the dark.

But today, in this new era, we possess a power our ancestors could scarcely imagine.

A power that leaps across mountains, crosses bog and sea, and enters every home in this nation. A power that can carry Ireland's soul to her children scattered across the world. The power of broadcasting.

And I say to you now, with the full authority of the office I hold: Ireland shall not be silent. Ireland shall not be overshadowed. Ireland shall not tune its ear to foreign voices while its own lies faint and forgotten. No Ireland shall speak.

WEST OF IRELAND ACCENT

Sir, In my district a very considerable number of labourers have radio sets in their houses, and the amount of enjoyment and pleasure it gives to them is beyond description.

Yet a great many of them think that there is too much music that is above their comprehension and that these might be replaced with lectures on subjects that would be useful to them, dealing with matters of agriculture, with which they are in daily contact ... Another question which is very important to country people is this. At present the time signal and the weather forecast is given very late, at about 10.30. In the country districts it is the custom for the labouring classes to go to bed at about eight-thirty or nine, because they have to get up early. It would be a great advantage to them to have the weather forecast, the time signal, and all that kind of thing, given before the ordinary programme commences, instead of at 10.30 or later.'

BRIDIE_ A Maid at the Big House. IRISH ACCENT

(Imitating Mrs Hamilton.) Mind you set the things down properly now Bridie. I don't want to see any of your fingerprints on my new linen napkins. And I expect those teaspoons to have been polished to a high standard. I don't want people to be spreading gossip around the town that Leonora Hamilton doesn't know how to treat her guests. *(Own voice)*. Yes Mrs Hamilton. No Mrs Hamilton. Three bags full Mrs Hamilton. *(Blows a Raspberry in the direction of the kitchen)*. Do you think I'm a complete eejit Mrs Hamilton?

(Off stage. Mrs Hamilton. 'What's that Bridie?)

Nothing. *(Sees the radio)*. What's this mad looking yoke? Something she's bought to impress her friends. Her and her notions. Haven't I enough to dust without her ladyship giving me more to do? *(She twiddles the tuning knob. Click. A warm light glows.)* Must be a new lamp. That auld one has got more money than sense. Sure, that light wouldn't be of any use in a dark room. *(She tries to adjust it but just gets loud static crackles. She jumps back.)*

Mother of Divine Mercy. *(Puts her hands together and looks heavenwards. Regains courage and slaps the radio, but the static intensifies. She slaps the radio again. The static changes pitch)*. It's breathing, Holy Mother of God the lamp is breathing. *(The radio admits a tuning noise. Bridie picks up a knife from the tray and points it at the radio)*. Back to hell with you, ye wooden, wooden divil ye. Oh, what am I going to do to make it go away? Where's the Holy Water *(Looks around and sees that there is none)* Jaysus, look at me. Stuck in the house of a Protestant woman with a monster in a box, about to attack me and not even a drop to bless meself before I depart this earth.

MR/MRS HAMILTON (the lady from the big house). WELL SPOKEN IRISH ACCENT

Honestly. Honestly. I have never in all my years witnessed such a display.

You would think — you would truly think — that I had invited the entire village to witness the Second Coming, not the switching-on of a perfectly respectable piece of modern equipment. *(Gestures at the radio)*

A wireless set. A marvel of engineering. A triumph of civilisation.

And what do they do? They scream. They hide behind chairs. They cross themselves so violently I feared someone would dislocate a shoulder.

I mean really, the Angelus bell comes on and half the parish dives for cover as though the Almighty Himself were about to burst out of the speaker demanding a fee.

And Bridie dear, loyal, catastrophically superstitious Bridie, throwing a tea cloth and a a Kimberley's biscuit at the radio, as if the wireless were a stray dog that had wandered in and needed to be shooed out with biscuits. Really.

NARRATOR- IRISH OR ENGLISH ACCENT

Radio programmes coming out of the water pipes! Tuning signals sizzling out of the saucepan! Cows listening to the latest livestock prices through the wired fencing. Hard to believe, isn't it? But it really did happen. In 1932, Ireland decided its national radio needed more attitude. So a gigantic transmitter was built in Moydrum. Athlone. Cranking the power up it from a shy 2 kW whisper to a full-throated 60 kW roar. The result was radio mayhem.

The Athlone mast was so powerful it turned the surrounding countryside into a giant accidental radio. People genuinely reported hearing faint voices coming from: bedsprings, kitchen sinks, hot water cylinders, barbed wire fencing and, in one heroic cases, their own tooth fillings

Imagine biting into a sandwich and hearing the Angelus. Locals called it "the Athlone pipes", but in reality their homes had become one enormous, unwilling, slightly haunted crystal radio set.

Some clergy in the newly independent Ireland weren't great fans of radio. They wanted to protect Irish identity. Foreign broadcasts were seen as undermining Gaelic culture, Irish music, and Catholic social norms. They viewed radio much like cinema a channel for outside values that could corrupt Irish listeners.

Stations from Britain and the U.S. played jazz, swing, and modern dances. To many priests, jazz wasn't just music it was a moral threat. A campaign 'Down With Jazz' was launched against foreign radio stations.

JACK -DANCING AT LUGHNASA _(Donegal Accent)

"And when I cast my mind back to that summer of 1936, these two memories – of our first wireless and of Father Jack's return – are always linked. So that when I recall my first shock at Jack's appearance, shrunk and jaundiced with malaria, at the same time I remember my first delight, indeed my awe, at the sheer magic of that radio. And when I remember the kitchen throbbing with the beat of Irish dance music beamed to us all the way from Athlone, and my mother and her sisters suddenly catching hands and dancing a spontaneous step-dance and laughing – screaming! – like excited schoolgirls, at the same time I see that forlorn figure of Father Jack shuffling from room to room as if he were searching for something but couldn't remember what. And even though I was only a child of seven at the time I know I had a sense of unease, some awareness of a widening breach between what seemed to be and what was, of things changing too quickly before my eyes, of becoming what they ought not to be.

That may have been because Uncle Jack hadn't turned out at all like the resplendent figure in my head. Or maybe because I had witnessed Marconi's voodoo derange those kind, sensible women and transform them into shrieking strangers. "

NARRATOR- IRISH OR ENGLISH ACCENTS

We've already mentioned how Brian Friel's famous play 'Dancing at Lughnasa', highlighted how modern technology disrupted, liberated, and unsettled rural life in 1930s Donegal.

The same could be said of Gay Byrne's weekday show ran which from 1973 -1988 and was listened to regularly by one million people nationally and internationally. Byrne aired issues that, at the time. no one else would have dared.

It has been said that Gay Byrne took the pressure off governments and major organisations in the country because he addressed those social issues: homosexuality, birth control, divorce, sexual and physical abuse and rural isolation that they were shying away from. Byrne shone a light into many dark corners and people say that Ireland is a better country for it.

In one of the most famous moments in Irish broadcasting history, the show received a massive influx of mail following the news coverage tragic death of 15-year-old schoolgirl Ann Lovett during childbirth in the small Midlands town of Granard, County Longford in 1984. The people of Ireland wrote in in their hundreds. Byrne and two actors spent days reading these deeply personal letters live on air.

SONGS

(To the tune of The Parting Glass)

Of all the gifts that Ireland gave,
The one that travelled far and wide,
Was Athlone's mighty voice of air,
A beacon by the Shannon's side.
It carried news and carried song,
Across the sea to England's shore,
And hearts that once felt far away
Felt safe again in Ireland's core.

SONG

“The Radio Across the Sea” *(To the tune of The Mountains of Mourne)*

Oh, the nights in this city can cut like a knife,
When you're far from the fields that were part of your life.
And when the silence grows heavy, too heavy to bear,
Radio Eireann reaches out and brings home to me here.
It carries the sound of voices I thought I had lost,
The friends and family that I loved the most
And though I was lonely, with no one to see,
It felt as if Ireland was here beside me.