

*dlr Mill Theatre presents  
Patricia Burke-Brogan's*

# ECLIPSED



## PROGRAMME

4-8 FEBRUARY 2020

DLR MILL THEATRE DUNDRUM TOWN CENTRE DUBLIN 16 | [WWW.MILLTHEATRE.IE](http://WWW.MILLTHEATRE.IE)



*Photos: Ste Murray*

Presented by dlr Mill Theatre and directed by Kate Canning, *Eclipsed* by Patricia Burke-Brogan is an award winning play set in a Magdalene laundry during the 1960's. When *Eclipsed* was originally premiered by Punchbag Theatre 28 years ago, the scandal of Ireland's Magdalene laundries was only just beginning to emerge. In fact Burke-Brogan's tragic, funny and humane play did much to shed light on the day to day life behind the Magdalene walls and the treatment of the girls and women imprisoned in these places as witnessed by Burke-Brogan herself. What she saw shocked her and ultimately played a role in her decision to leave the order.

The play tells the story of a Magdalene Laundry and was inspired by Patricia's experience as a young novitiate. Her play highlights the plight of four women who struggled to bear the austerity of their existence and desire to break the shackles of this landmark era of societal repression. This is a poignant, funny, moving and sad play. Patricia Burke-Brogan's writing is a stark reminder of the brutal intolerance of 'female deviance' in our country's not so distant past, while also bringing us on a finely crafted journey of friendship, love, hope and survival.

*"I was given the key, so that transferred the authority to me, and I wondered if I should just open the place and let them out. But most of them had no place to go . . . when I asked the superior why they weren't let out, she said 'Oh, if you let them out they'd be back here in no time, pregnant again'."*

*"I was brought into this huge space with these machines – the noise of the machines, the deafening noise – and then out of the haze I saw these women, young women, old women, and they looked at me like I was another of the people who'd locked them up . . . it was like I was in Dante's inferno."*



# CAST

Sister Virginia	Laoise Sweeney
Brigit	Rachel O'Connell
Mandy	Éilish McLaughlin
Cathy	Martha Dunlea
Nellie-Nora	Niamh McGrath
Juliet	Niamh McCann
Mother Victoria	Muriel Caslin O'Hagan
Rosa	Hilary Madigan

# PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Kate Canning
Producer	Shona Ashmore
Set & Costume Design	Florentina Burcea
Sound Design	Ciaran Gallagher
Stage Manager	Sinead Heavin
Lighting Design	Barry Donaldson
Set Builders	Tom Ronayne, Rob Coventry
Dramaturg	Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley
PR	Tracy Kelly
Marketing & Programme	Aoife O'Toole



## LAOISE SWEENEY

Laoise graduated from LAMDA's BA in Professional Acting in 2018. Recent credits include Ophelia in Hamlet directed Geoff O'Keeffe at the Mill Theatre and Eavesdropping Again directed by John Patterson for Angel Theatre Company. Stage productions whilst in training include Welcome To Thebes directed by Ria Parry, We Are Three Sisters directed by Amelia Sears, The Taming Of The Shrew directed by Rebecca Frecknall, The Children's Hour directed by Mary Papadima, Twelfth Night directed by Clarence Smith, A New Brain directed Joanna Read. Screen work includes the role of Katrin in Angel directed by Alex Warren for LAMDA Productions.



## RACHEL O'CONNELL

Rachel has just wrapped on BBC's new Series of "The Young Offenders". She starred in the Irish premiere of the one woman show "Iphegenia in Splott" by Gary Owen (Smock Alley Theatre) Which will return next year. Most recently she played Lucelita in "Copperface Jacks The musical" by Paul Howard (Olympia theatre) which returned for another summer. Other theatre credits include Girlplay in Smock Alley as part of the Fringe festival, Tinder the musical -Olympia Theatre, Mercutio in "Romeo and Juliet", Guildenstern in "Hamlet", Pegeen Mike in "Playboy of the Western World" and Madeline in "Albertine in five times". Sarah Brown in Auckland Theatre Company's "Guys and Dolls", five different roles in The Good Doctor, Ladies of Jane and under Milk wood and in the past few years alone has performed roles in Same Old Moon; One For The Road, Big Maggie, The Sunshine Boys, Grease, Bar and Ger, Beauty in a Broken Place, Calendar Girls, Sit on it and Death of a Salesman. Rachel co wrote the original Sunbeam Girls for Cork Opera House in which she also played Rose and Stella and most recently co wrote the new Cork play Shawlies (Everyman Palace Theatre).



## ÉILISH MCLAUGHLIN

Éilish McLaughlin is a recent graduate of the Lir Academy of Dramatic Art. (2019) At The Lir she played Kathy/Mrs.Carruthers in SERIOUS MONEY dir. by Oonagh Murphy, Gretta Conroy/ Eveline 2 in DUBLINERS dir. by Annie Ryan, Antiochus' Daughter/Marina in PERICLES dir. by Conall Morrison, Emily in BRONTE directed by David Horan and Matilde's mother/Ana in THE CLEAN HOUSE directed by Sean Walsh. She also played Niamh in the short film POWER OUT directed by Natasha Waugh.



## MARTHA DUNLEA

Martha is a graduate of the Gaiety School of Acting. Her most recent theatre credit is Mac an Beatha, an Irish language version of Macbeth, with Fíbín. Other theatre credits include GirlPlay at the Dublin Fringe Festival 2019, The Shaughraun at Smock Alley Theatre, Dancing at Lughnasa at the Everyman Palace and Irish Times Theatre award winning play Whitby which was part of the Bram Stoker festival in 2017. In 2016, she made her professional debut with Fishamble The New Play Company, in Inside the GPO.



## **NIAMH MCGRATH**

Niamh's recent work *Living With A Fairy* can be seen on RTÉ Junior. (GMTV productions) in which she was also a co-writer. In 2017 and 2018 Niamh performed in *Two in the Viking Sheds* with Loose Tea Theatre Company and also performed in *Dummy for Dublin Fringe* which premiered in The Peacock Theatre. In 2016 Niamh co-wrote and performed *Looking Deadly* which premiered at Dublin Tiger Fringe. *Looking Deadly* was a Show in a Bag initiative which toured extensively including a 2 week run in Bewley's Cafe Theatre. Niamh was an original cast member of *Alone it Stands* notching up over 500 shows over a three year national and international tour, including a 9 month tour of Ireland, The Traverse Theatre as part of The Edinburgh Theatre Festival, 10 Days on The Island, Tasmania and culminating in a two month West End run in The Duchess Theatre, London.



## **NIAMH MCCANN**

Eighteen year old Niamh McCann is a member of the Mill Theatre's Youth Company. She portrayed Emily Webb in their 2019 production of 'Our Town' and has appeared in all their showcases, most recently, 'The Art of Brexit'. Previous roles include Elle Woods in 'Legally Blonde Jr', Lina Lamont in 'Singin' in the Rain Jr', Annette in 'Annie' and Peasant Girl in 'The Playboy of the Western World' for Sunflower Productions. Niamh recently directed a 30-minute production of 'Hamlet' which was performed during the annual Shakespeare Schools Festival held in the Mill Theatre. Niamh is delighted to be given this opportunity to perform on a professional platform with such a talented cast and crew.



## **MURIEL CASLIN O'HAGAN**

Muriel has played a variety of roles ranging through comedy, tragedy & musicals. From her successful experience on the Drama Festival Circuit she has a collection of awards, including All-Ireland Best Actress. While having graced the stages of the Project Theatre, Andrews Lane, the New Theatre, the Gaiety and the National Concert Hall she always feels at home in the Mill, ever since she played Mrs Webb in its Inaugural Production of 'Our Town'. She followed up with various roles such as Mrs Kilbride 'By the Bog of Cats'; Kitty Curley 'Many Young Men of Twenty'; Kate Keller 'All My Sons'; Chorus Leader 'A Christmas Carol'; Witch + Nurse 'Macbeth'; Annie 'Calendar Girls'; Frances Nurse 'The Crucible'; Madame Arcati 'Blithe Spirit'; Nurse 'Romeo & Juliet', Lady Catherine deBourg 'Pride & Prejudice' and most recently Lady Bracknell in 'The Importance of Being Earnest'.



## **HILARY MADIGAN**

Hilary has worked with dlr Mill Theatre on several occasions the most recent was The Widow Quinn in *The Playboy of the Western World*. Recently she has been on the One Act Drama Festival Circuit with *Waiting for You* with Balally Players and has won numerous acting awards over the years as well as representing Ireland in Drama in Florida and Monaco. Hilary also toured with Bow's Production of *The Vagina Monologues*. TV work includes *Evidence of Evil*.



## KATE CANNING

Kate was appointed Manager of dlr Mill Theatre in June 2016. Previously she worked as a freelance Director, Actor and Singer. She founded and facilitated the Shakespeare Schools Programme at the Gaiety School of Acting. During this time Kate directed Othello, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth and The Importance of Being Earnest at Smock Alley Theatre. Kate now directs here at the Mill, most recent productions include The Importance of Being Earnest and The Playboy of The Western World. She has a particular interest in Arts Education and thoroughly enjoys her work with Mill Youth Theatre and Shakespeare Schools Festival.



## FLORENTINA BURCEA

Florentina graduated from The Lir Academy with an MFA in Set and Costume design. Some of her latest work includes costume design for Madhouse, directed and written by Una McKeivitt with PJ Gallagher, Fetch, written by Lauren-Shannon Jones and directed by Samantha Cade, set and costume design for Playmaking, directed by Maisie Lee. She also worked as design assistant within companies like Dead Centre and Rough Magic.



## PATRICIA BURKE-BROGAN

Patricia Burke-Brogan was born in Kildysart, Co. Clare, in 1932, the youngest of five children of Mary (née O'Beirne) and Joseph Phelim Burke. She considers herself to be an artist first, with her work as a playwright, a poet, an educationalist and a musician very much ancillary to that. It was as a playwright however that she has achieved greatest renown.

In 1955, Patricia joined the Sisters of Mercy in Galway. Of her choice of order she wrote, '*I wanted to work for the poor*'. In the early 1960s, she was sent to oversee the work in Galway's Magdalene Laundry on Forster Street. She describes the physical and emotional condition of the women: 'under double lock, within this pious cage these women live a penitential life'.

On confronting her superior, she was told 'this weakness for sins of the flesh stays in the blood for seven generations'. By her own account, Patricia 'threw up' outside but had to wait six months to be allowed to leave the order. She would stay in Galway, meeting her husband Eamon Brogan in Seapoint Ballroom. They remained partners until his death in 2011. The experience in Galway's Magdalene Laundry would not only lead her to leave the Mercy Sisters but would later be the basis for her play Eclipsed. She took up work in a school for children from the travelling community on the outskirts of Galway City. A progressive educationalist, she would also play a central part in Galway's artistic community.

After the 1992 premiere of Eclipsed, Michael D. Higgins told the author that if she never did anything else with her life, she had done enough by shining a light on the world of the Magdalene laundries. Since then, the play has had an enormous effect on opening the conversation on Ireland's abusive institutional past. It has won numerous awards and was performed widely in Ireland and abroad. A later work, Stained Glass at Samhain, which premiered in Galway's Town Hall Theatre in 2002, dealt with the same subject but from the point of view of an elderly, compassionate nun.