

# PLAYGROUND

2023

Presented by dlr Mill Theatre in association with MAM Ireland - **PLAYGROUND** is a career development scheme for theatre artists with caring responsibilities. The 4 session programme will offer time and space for creatives who may have found themselves distanced from their practice due to the responsibilities of childcare and are taking steps to navigate a return to their creative practice.

Facilitated by Lesley Conroy (performer & writer, and MAM Ireland member). Established creatives Michelle Cahill, Veronica Coburn, Clare Monnelly and Johanne Webb will lead workshops and share their career trajectories as parenting artists.

## PROGRAMME

**13TH SEPT - 11TH OCT**

**WED 13TH  
SEPTEMBER**

**10 - 12.30**  
Clare Monnelly

**WED 27TH  
SEPTEMBER**

**10 -12.30**  
Johanne Webb

**WED 3TH  
OCTOBER**

**10 - 12.30**  
Michelle Cahill

**WED 11TH  
OCTOBER**

**10 - 12.30**  
Veronica Coburn

The programme is designed around school hours, facilitating full participation for parents of school going children. Children (of all ages and energies) are welcome under the close supervision of the carers.

There is a small stipend for travel expenses/ parking should cost be a barrier.



## OPEN CALL/RECRUITMENT

Theatre artists with caring responsibilities who have an interest in developing work for the stage are invited to apply by confirming full availability for the 4 workshops and a short paragraph detailing their career in theatre to date (it is, of course understood that gaps in CVs often go hand in hand with caring responsibilities), and why this opportunity would benefit them at this stage of their creative practice.

Please send to [lesleyconroy@gmail.com](mailto:lesleyconroy@gmail.com) with 'PLAYGROUND' in the subject line. **Deadline for submission: Wednesday 30th August at 5pm.** Places are limited and successful participants will be notified by Wednesday 6th September 2023.

*“All in all a fantastic week for awakening the muse, stretching the creative muscles and seeing the possibilities. Even though the workshops offered a diverse range of skills and processes, there was a real cohesion running throughout the work. Perhaps this is because of the common experience we share as mothers, and because we are collectively drawn to the themes that were real and unifying for us.”*

Fiona Browne (Founding Member – PLAYGROUND 2017).

## CURATOR

**Lesley Conroy** is a proud steering member of MAM Ireland. She is an IFTA award nominated actor who turned to writing during lockdown and writes for both theatre and screen. Her monologue Cleaner was the 2020 Scripts Ireland Competition winner. Adapted for screen under Screen Ireland/ Bow Street Academy's Actor as Creator scheme it has won multiple awards including Best Cork Short at the 66th Cork International Film Festival and Jury Special Mention at Catalyst International Film Festival. She was the 2021 Cork Midsummer Festival Jane Anne Rothwell award recipient. She was commissioned by dlr Mill Theatre to write for their Youth Theatre, 'Bunker' (April 2023), and for The New Theatre's Push Forward Festival, 'Yule-ogy' (December 2022). She is grateful for recent professional development programmes: Arts Council (Professional Development award & Agility Awards in 2021, dlr Mill Theatre (Mavens), Abbey Theatre (Inua Ellams) Irish Theatre Institute (Javier Daulte), Film in Limerick (Writers Factory), Screen Skills Ireland (Writers Room) and BAI & Writers Guild of Ireland (Writers Toolbox).

## GUEST SPEAKERS

**Clare Monnelly** is a writer and actor. Her debut short film *Departure* - produced as part of Bow Street and Screen Ireland's Actor as Creator programme - premiered at Galway Film Fleadh 2022. Her first play *Charlie's a Clepto* was nominated for two Irish Times Theatre Awards (Best New Play, Best Actress) and the Stewart Parker New Playwright Bursary. Her second play *minefield* premiered at the Dublin Fringe Festival 2019 and was nominated for three Fringe Awards (Best Design, Fishamble New Writing Award, First Fortnight Award). She is an alumnus of Irish Theatre Institute's Six in the Attic programme. She has two comedy drama series in development with Deadpan Pictures. She is currently being mentored by Lauren Mackenzie as part of Screen Ireland's mentorship programme. This year she will premiere three new plays with Once Off Productions, Asylum Productions and Livin Dred Theatre Company.

**Johanne Webb** is a mother, actor, director, Family Constellations facilitator and proud member of MAM WEST. She studied acting at MMU (Capitol Theatre) and holds a BA and an MA in Theatre and Media for Development (University of Winchester). Recent credits include *Woman in Where Mountain Kisses Sea* (Twisted Lane), *Jo in Also For Roaring* (Róisín Stack), *Performer 9 Stories About Love* (Little Door). Johanne a Performance Director for Macnas, and is currently developing a 5-year project called *This Is A Post About Love*. She is a Druid FUEL and Axis Assemble recipient.

**Michelle Cahill** is a freelance producer, arts professional & coach based in Dublin. Her work is driven by a strong interest in supporting and nurturing creative and physical expression. She produced her solo show 'Thirteen Steps to the Attic' in 2018 that has toured widely. Previously she lectured in performance studies at 3rd level and designed, curated, led, and facilitated many mid to large scale community dance and Dance Education projects for all ages in partnership with local and national organisations. As a producer, she creatively supports artists to produce works across a variety of contexts: theatre, non-theatre, film, online, outdoors & in gallery spaces. Artists/companies in her portfolio include Róisín Whelan Dance; Deirdre Griffin/Headonbody, Monica Muñoz Dance, Regan O'Brien, and Rowan Tolley Company (UK). Since 2017 she's worked as company line producer with the award-winning Junk Ensemble. She was assistant producer, and then producer with Tipperary Dance (2019- 2021), Participant Producer for Dance Ireland's Cruinniú na nÓg programme Let's Dance (2021) & Programme Co-ordinator at Shawbrook (2014-2021). She is currently participating in Branar's Meitheal Producer Supports programme 2023.

**Veronica Coburn** is a theatre artist whose career spans nearly 40 years. A founder member of Barabbas Theatre Company, she is particularly interested in the rich territory that exists in the collaboration of professional artists & community participants. As Artist in Residence in Draíocht she created *Hallelujah! Draíocht's Community Clown Choir, Ship of Fools*, inspired by Alessandro Barrico's *Novecento*. She was Artistic Director of Draíocht's groundbreaking HOME THEATRE (Ireland). *Songs of Change*, a Civic Theatre response to life under lockdown, culminated in 10 original songs co-written with Debra Salem, inspired by the lived experience of people in South Dublin County.

She has a particular expertise in and dedication to working with young people based on the principle of the value of developing artistic voice. She is Programme Director of TENDERFOOT, (Civic Theatre). She served as Artistic Director of The National Youth Theatre from 2018 - 2021 where she directed Dylan Coburn Gray's *Ask Too Much Of Me* & Ciara Elizabeth Smyth's *AFTERTASTE*.

Directorial work for theatre include: *Absent The Wrong (Abbey)*, *Bernarda's House*, Amy Conroy's *Eternal Rising of The Sun* and *Break*, Ruth Lehane's *The Lehane Trilogy*, and *Wicked Angels' I'm Not A.D.H.D. I'm B.O.L.D.*, (Dublin Fringe). She directed Dylan Coburn Gray's *This Is A Room* for DTF 2017 and Deirdre Kinehan's *The Visit* for Draíocht 2021, National Touring 2022.

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