

## **Backstage Theatre**

### **In house production / Artist in Residence Project**

#### **In house production 2010**

In 2010 to coincide with the launch of our Canal Studio a new project was introduced at Backstage to offer people from the region an opportunity to interact with professional theatre practitioners on a new production which would be devised and developed in the studio. A production of Brian Friel's "Philadelphia Here I Come" was created and rehearsed in the Canal Studio in August/September 2010.

The cast of fourteen was drawn from the amateur circuit in Longford and surrounding counties through an open audition process.

The production was directed by a local director who was mentored by Padraic Mc Intyre of Livin Dred Theatre Co.

During the rehearsal period, the cast participated in a workshop programme with professional facilitators Raymond Keane and Bryan Burroughs.

The production played to full houses over a three night run plus preview in October 2010.

#### **Artist in Residence Project**

After the success of our first in house production, Backstage introduced an artist in residence programme in 2011 in collaboration with the Ramor Theatre in Virginia, funded under the arts council artist in residency scheme.

Padraic Mc Intyre was the Artist in Residence at Backstage and the Ramor.

At Backstage, Padraic directed his own play "The Carnival at Glenaduff"

Once again open auditions were held in April 2011 to select the cast of 28 for this production.

A separate audition was held to select four of the cast who would play the parts of four young show band musicians who would play live music during the production.

An additional 12 extras were cast for the dance hall scenes.

The cast rehearsed under the direction of Padraic Mc Intyre during May and June and the production was staged in early July.

A three night run was extended to five nights due to demand for tickets and all five nights sold out.

Padraic also directed a production of a new show written by him called "A Holy Show" in the Ramor in Virginia. This production toured to backstage as part of the Artist in Residence scheme where it played to three full houses in September 2012.

**In house production 2011**

Immediately following the production of "The Carnival" at Backstage open auditions were held for a new production of "The Hostage" by Brendan Behan.

The director of Philadelphia who had been mentored by Padraic Mc Intyre returned to direct "The Hostage".

The cast of fourteen was drawn from Longford, Roscommon, Cavan and Galway and included one Slovakian and one African both newly resident in Longford.

Rehearsals commenced in mid August and during the rehearsal period the cast had a workshop in physical movement with Bryan Burroughs.

Local musicians came on board to record music for the production.

"The Hostage" ran over three nights in early October to full houses before transferring to The Ramor in Virginia for three nights.

**Overview**

In all three productions the Venue Manager took on the role of producer.

Local people involved in amateur drama came on board to assist with set construction, costume and stage management.

Production costs were kept to a minimum through the co-operation of local business people and local drama groups/musical societies in the procurement of props and set.

**Marketing Initiatives on all three productions included the following**

- Feature in venue season brochure
- Radio ads and interviews
- Features and advertising in regional papers with a particular focus on the counties cast were drawn from.
- Poster and flyer Distribution
- Direct Mailshot
- Billboard and banners on outskirts on Longford Town.
- Showcase of excerpt from plays in local coffee shops

## Key Figures

### Philadelphia Here I Come

No of Nights	4 (including preview)
Audience Total	729
Cast size	14
Crew Size	6

### The Carnival at Glenaduff

No of Nights	5 (including preview)
Audience Total	1064
Cast size	40
Crew Size	6

### The Hostage

No of Nights	3
Audience Total	637
Cast size	14
Crew Size	6

## Conclusion

The in house production and Artist in Residence schemes have proven to be very positive projects on a number of levels,

- Over the course of three productions at Backstage 68 local people with an interest in the arts developed their skills through workshops with professional facilitators
- The participants, all of whom gave very positive feedback on their experience, were able to bring these skills back to their own drama groups.
- Capacity audiences were achieved for all three productions.
- Audiences were treated to a high standard of locally produced theatre.
- The project proved to a valuable source of additional income to the venue. Box Office Income for "The Carnival" alone was in excess of €17,000