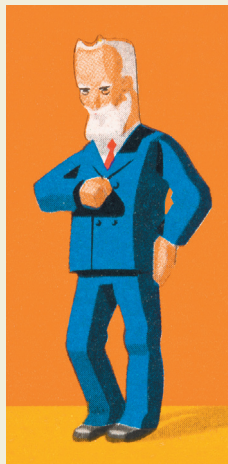


SHAW 20
FESTIVAL 23

THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD



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I WAS TALKING TO A FRIEND OF THE SHAW THE OTHER DAY:

TC: So, Shaw Friend, how do you pick which shows you see?

SF: *The first thing I do is to look for the hidden gems I would never get to see anywhere else...*

TC: ...by Bernard Shaw, for example...

SF: *True enough, these days.*

TC: All right, then what?

SF: *Well, I always book for the musical, because I know that a Shaw production will always take the piece seriously, like a play set to music.*

TC: Nicely put.

SF: *Thanks. Then, of course, the famous classics. It's surprising how often I realize "You know, I've never seen that play!" And even if I have, I know The Shaw will blow the dust off it.*



TC: So what you're saying is, you basically book for everything?

SF: *Well, I do have a Season Pass.*

TC: Of course you do. But if you could only pick one play?

SF: *Ah – then it has to be the play and the author that no one has ever heard of.*

TC: A bit counterintuitive...

SF: *Not at all. I think to myself, "Hang on, if TC has programmed this play, knowing full well that it will only get an audience if it is amazing – well, then it probably is."*

TC: May I quote you on that?

TIM CARROLL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

FESTIVAL THEATRE MAHABHARATA • GYPSY • Noël Coward's BLITHE SPIRIT • THE AMEN CORNER ROYAL GEORGE THEATRE PRINCE CASPIAN • ON THE RAZZLE • VILLAGE WOOING • THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT JACKIE MAXWELL STUDIO THEATRE THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD • THE APPLE CART • THE CLEARING OUTDOORS @ THE SHAW MOTHER, DAUGHTER • THE GAME OF LOVE AND CHANCE • A GRAND NIGHT FOR SINGING – ONE ACT – IN CONCERT • A SHORT HISTORY OF NIAGARA HOLIDAY SEASON Lerner and Loewe's BRIGADOON • A CHRISTMAS CAROL



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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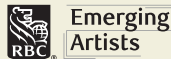
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Nous remercions l'appui du
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Stephen Ingram's internship in Music Direction was made possible through an investment by the George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation and the support of The Shaw Guild. Deborah Castrilli, Rais Clarke-Mendes, Dante Jemmott, Jawon Mapp, Tama Martin, Ryann Myers and Kiana Woo are supported by the RBC Foundation and RBC Emerging Artists. The 2023 Christopher Newton Interns are Alexandra Gratton and Taurian Teelucksingh, generously supported by Marilyn and Charles Baillie. The Baillie Cohort understudies Vinnie Alberto, Sanskruti Marathe, Frances Masaba and Sophie Smith-Dostmohamed are generously supported by the Baillie Family Fund for Education.

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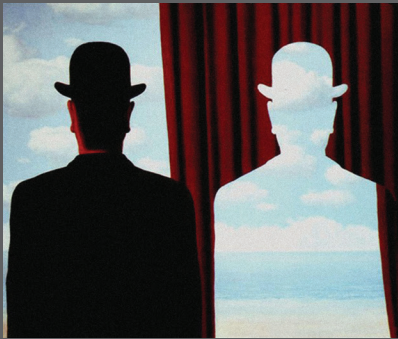
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BERNARD SHAW, *THE APPLE CART*



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Delf Dodge &
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Photo by Ken Rowe.

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The Doherty-Rand
Legacy Circle

SHAW 20
FESTIVAL 23

JACKIE MAXWELL STUDIO THEATRE, MAY 25 TO OCTOBER 7

SHAW 20 FESTIVAL 23

TIM CARROLL TIM JENNINGS
Artistic Director Executive Director

KIMBERLEY RAMPERSAD, Associate Artistic Director

THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD

by J.M. Synge

with FIONA BYRNE, SHANE CARTY, ALEXANDRA GRATTON,
QASIM KHAN, ANDREW LAWRIE, MARLA McLEAN,
RIC REID, JADE REPETA, SOPHIE SMITH-DOSTMOHAMED,
SANJAY TALWAR, JONATHAN TAN, KIANA WOO
and VINNIE ALBERTO

Directed by JACKIE MAXWELL

Set and costumes designed by JUDITH BOWDEN

Lighting designed by KEVIN LAMOTTE

Sound designed by SAMUEL SHOLDICE

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD
is generously sponsored by

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MARLA McLEAN AS PEGEEN MIKE AND
QASIM KHAN AS CHRISTY MAHON



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Kiana Woo is generously supported by the RBC Foundation and RBC Emerging Artists.

Vinnie Alberto and Sophie Smith-Dostmohamed are generously sponsored by the Baillie Family Fund for Education.

The 2023 Christopher Newton Intern, Alexandra Gratton, is generously supported by Marilyn and Charles Baillie.

The Cast

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Widow Quin	FIONA BYRNE
Jimmy Farrell	SHANE CARTY
Sara Tansey	ALEXANDRA GRATTON
Christy Mahon	QASIM KHAN
Shawn Keogh	ANDREW LAWRIE
Peegen Mike	MARLA McLEAN
Old Mahon	RIC REID
Susan Brady	JADE REPETA
Ensemble	SOPHIE SMITH-DOSTMOHAMED
Michael Flaherty	SANJAY TALWAR
Philly O’Cullen	JONATHAN TAN
Honor Blake	KIANA WOO

A rough hillside above a village on a wild coast of County Mayo.

ACT I: A dark autumn evening.

ACT II: The following day.

INTERMISSION

ACT III: Later the same day.

Stage Manager	BEATRICE CAMPBELL
Assistant Stage Manager	MEGHAN FROEBELIUS
Production Stage Manager	MEREDITH MACDONALD
Associate Set and Costume Designer	BEYATA HACKBORN
Assistant Lighting Designer	EMILIE TRIMBEE
Fight Director	JOHN STEAD
Fight Captain	ANDREW LAWRIE
Voice and Dialect Coach	JEFFREY SIMLETT
Baillie Cohort Understudy	VINNIE ALBERTO

Special thanks to Blachere Illumination.

Additional Properties assistance provided by Whitney Braybrook-Byl and Carol Lewis.

UNDERSTUDIES

VINNIE ALBERTO, Jimmy Farrell, Philly O’Cullen; KYLE BLAIR, Christy Mahon;
FIONA BYRNE, Peegen Mike; REBECCA NORTAN, Widow Quin;
TOM ROONEY, Michael Flaherty; SOPHIE SMITH-DOSTMOHAMED, Susan Brady, Honor Blake;
SANJAY TALWAR, Old Mahon; KIANA WOO, Sara Tansey;
AMY JEWELL, Stage Manager; LAURA LAKATOSH, Assistant Stage Manager

Running time is approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes including one intermission



Director's Note

BY JACKIE MAXWELL

In March 2020, we had just stopped rehearsals for *Playboy* here at The Shaw and had shifted into working on Zoom from our homes and apartments due to the outbreak of COVID. It was a totally strange time...halfway between heartbreak and hope. As no indoor contact was allowed, designer Judith Bowden and I took to meeting for walks on the Commons, discussing the situation and the play, looking ahead to when we might get back in the rehearsal hall to continue our work...little did we know.

One conversation I remember clearly was a mash up between noting how tricky it was to place a classic naturalistic, proscenium-focussed play into the round, which is the ongoing configuration in the Studio Theatre and wondering what it would take to get us back to work. I

said, "What if we just cleared the whole room, put a bar at one end and a bunch of chairs and boxes scattered about...at safe distances of course!" Of course, it was not to be...heartbreak won out.

That conversation stuck with us both, however, and when, absolutely thrilled, we got back together for this production, that image was still in both our minds. Obviously, it has been developed further, but there is no doubt that for us, the telling of Synge's beautiful and provocative play required the clearing of our space to focus on the people in it – an entire village which is overtaken by a stranger and his increasingly fantastic tale and the relationship between this soon to be "Playboy" and the fierce Pegeen Mike.

The play takes place in and around Pegeen's father's "shebeen" – one of many found spaces throughout the countryside that were turned into

bars, operating just about on the right side of the law! This is our version of the tale in our "found space". We have set it in the 1950s, where the grim economic conditions and the depletion from immigration in rural Ireland closely matches that of Synge's Mayo – a time we can recognize, but still one of minimal change. A time when a man could still walk the length of the country and end up sleeping in a shebeen for the night.

Postscript: I would like to thank Tim Carroll for asking me to bring this story back to life again this season and to pass on my love and thanks to all the artists who have been a part of this particular Playboy's long, heart-filled journey. I have loved this wild love story since I was first given it by a passionate drama teacher in my Belfast school, who declared that knowing it was "vital". I now understand how right she was.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: FIONA BYRNE AS WIDOW QUIN, QASIM KHAN AS CHRISTY AND RIC REID AS OLD MAHON; FIONA BYRNE AS WIDOW QUIN; MARLA McLEAN AS PEGEEN MIKE AND QASIM KHAN AS CHRISTY.



TWO SCENES FROM COUNTY MAYO: ACHILL ISLAND, C.1935; THE MENAWN CLIFFS, C.1900 (BOTH MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY). OPPOSITE: J.M. SYNGE.



A Comedy with a Difference

BY NICHOLAS GRENE

What is a playboy and where is the western world? For the Irish audience who watched the play for the first time in January 1907, a playboy would have had none of our associations of rich philandering bachelors, much less *Playboy* magazine. A playboy was a trickster, a rogue hero, a title somewhere between admiration and disapproval. And the western world, long before the global divisions of the Cold War, was simply the western seaboard of Ireland.

For nationalists in this period, the West was an idealized romantic region, the least spoiled, the least Anglicized part of the country. For the authorities, in what was still the integrated United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, it was just the opposite, a backward place of lawlessness and rebellion. The playwright, J.M. Synge (1871-1909), who heard the story on which he based the play in the remote Aran Islands off the coast of Galway, remarked on the "impulse to protect the criminal" which "is universal in the west," citing as an example the man who had killed his father and was sheltered by the islanders. In the play, indeed, we hear samples of the local hatred of British colonial rule. It is thought that the wanderer Christy Mahon may have been "off east... fighting bloody wars for Kruger and the freedom of the Boers," like some

Irish nationalists who had done just that, in what they saw as the anti-imperial struggle of the Boer War (1899-1902). The much feared "loosed khaki cut-throats," "walking idle through the land," would have been the British soldiers demobilized at the war's end.

But the desolate and impoverished community represented in the play is not just resistant to the colonial rule of law; it is more generally wonder-hungry. Pegen Mike, the spirited woman who is in charge of the pub where the action is set, laments the loss of heroic figures of the past that have reduced her to the unappetizing prospect of an arranged marriage with her cousin, the timid and priest-fearing Shawn Keogh. (It is because they are cousins that they need a papal dispensation to marry.) The stranger, who is brought to confess that he has killed his father, is greeted with awed respect rather than the revulsion he expects. "That was a hanging crime, mister honey," exclaims the publican Michael James admiringly. Christy is immediately hired as bartender on the strength of his achievement: "that'd be a lad with the sense of Solomon to have as a pot-boy." This, it might well appear in Act I, is a fantastic comedy; Synge has used the fact of the distrust of law and order in the west to create a topsy-turvy world in which a parricide is honoured for his deed.

Such is the starting-point for *The Playboy of the Western World*. Yet, as the play progresses, deeper and more uncomfortable areas are explored. What sort of community would hero-worship a father-killer? How does the shy and bashful young man who enters in Act I respond to such idolization? And what happens when his illusory reputation is shattered? The locals



who so admired the supposed parricide turn nasty when violence comes closer to home. As Pegeen comments sententiously: “there’s a great gap between a gallous story [glorious tale] and a dirty deed.” Lesson learned. But before that disillusionment, it seems, father-killing is sexy. Even by the end of the first act, there is competition between Pegeen and the Widow Quin for possession of Christy, who is astonished at this sudden access of popularity – “two fine women fighting for the likes of me!” And in the morning, a whole gaggle of girls comes running to gape at the “curiosity man.”

Synge plays games on the Oedipus myth throughout. In the Greek story, Oedipus fled Corinth because of a prophecy that he would kill his father and marry his mother. Christy runs away from his home convinced that he has actually killed his father, and the occasion of the row between them was his father’s insistence that he marry the Widow Casey, who was his own foster-mother: “all knows she did suckle me for six weeks when I came into the world.” (Christy’s actual mother, we have to assume, must have died in childbirth.) But the Widow Quin is another, if more attractive, mother figure, seeking to tempt him away from Pegeen with a protective maternal love. Oedipus’s tragedy is to discover that he has fulfilled the prophecy and killed his father. Christy’s tragedy is that he cannot succeed in killing his father, however often he tried.

One of the puzzles of *The Playboy* for a modern audience is why it should have caused riots when it was first performed. It was partly the very fact that it was set in the west of Ireland, so romanticized by the nationalists who attended the Abbey, their own national theatre. They objected to the representation of County Mayo villagers hero-worshipping a father-killer: “That’s not the West,” exclaimed one of the



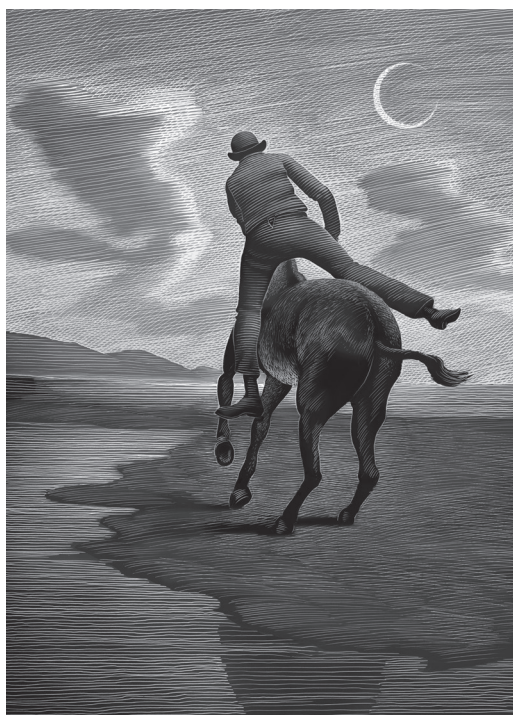


protesters. And then there was the sexual dimension. The trigger line for the riots came when Widow Quin tried to persuade the Pegeen-obsessed Christy to leave an increasingly dangerous situation, offering him the choice of any number of girls instead: “what’d I care if you brought me a drift of chosen females,” he exclaimed, “standing in their shifts itself maybe, from this place to the Eastern World.” Pandemonium. A “shift” was a woman’s petticoat or slip, but by 1907 for polite Dubliners it had become an unmentionable word, replaced by the more genteel “chemise.” This fetishized word disturbed the image of beautiful, chaste Western colleens, with its reminder that they wore undergarments and had fully functioning female bodies underneath.

The play ends quite well for Christy, but not with the marriage and happy-ever-after we might expect from a comedy. Pegeen is left to mourn in the play’s famous last line: “Oh my grief, I’ve lost him surely. I’ve lost the only playboy of the western world.” What are we to make of this? What has she in fact lost? The title remains as hard to read as ever. In the wake of the play’s first performance, Synge wrote a cautious letter to the papers seeking to qualify a statement he had made in a press interview saying it was just an extravaganza. Even comedies could have serious dimensions: “There are,” he concluded, “several sides to ‘The Playboy.’” Indeed. Watch and enjoy all the sides of this very funny, complex and dramatically enthralling play.

NICHOLAS GRENE IS EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN, AND HAS WRITTEN BOOKS ON SHAW, SYNGE AND SHAKESPEARE.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PEASANTS AT GWEEDORE, COUNTY DONEGAL; POSTER ILLUSTRATION FOR A 2009 PRODUCTION OF *THE PLAYBOY* AT THE PEARL THEATRE COMPANY, NEW YORK, BY SCOTT MCKOWEN; THE ABBEY THEATRE, DUBLIN.



*The Playboy of the
Western World, 2023*





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
 MARLA McLEAN AS PEGEEN
 MIKE, FIONA BYRNE AS
 WIDOW QUIN AND QASIM
 KHAN AS CHRISTY; JADE
 REPETA AS SUSAN BRADY,
 KIANA WOO AS HONOR
 BLAKE AND ALEXANDRA
 GRATTON AS SARA TANSEY;
 JONATHAN TAN AS PHILLY
 O'CULLEN AND SHANE
 CARTY AS JIMMY FARRELL;
 SANJAY TALWAR AS MICHAEL
 FLAHERTY, QASIM KHAN AS
 CHRISTY, MARLA McLEAN AS
 PEGEEN MIKE AND RIC REID
 AS OLD MAHON; ANDREW
 LAWRIE AS SHAWN KEOGH,
 SANJAY TALWAR AS MICHAEL
 FLAHERTY, QASIM KHAN
 AS CHRISTY AND MARLA
 McLEAN AS PEGEEN MIKE.



Glossary

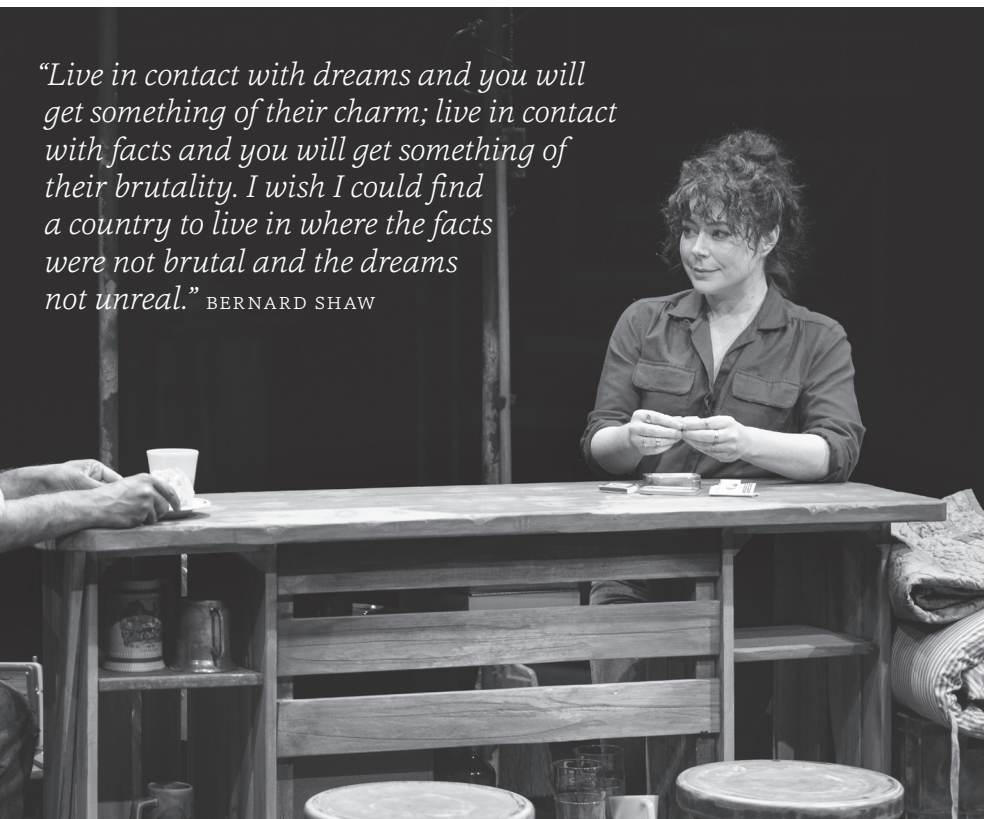
BANNS public notice of intention to marry. **CURAGH** a small knee-less canoe made of wickerwork covered with hides. **GALLOUS** splendid. **THE OLD HEN** influenza. **LOY** a long narrow spade. **PEELERS** policemen, nicknamed after Sir Robert Peel, who established Ireland's first constabulary. **PORTER** malt beer. **POTEEN** illegally distilled whiskey. **SHEBEEN** a low wayside public-house. **TINKER** Itinerant handyman, often living outside conventional morality. **TURF** peat, a common fuel.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: FIONA BYRNE AS WIDOW QUIN AND RIC REID AS OLD MAHON, WITH QASIM KHAN AS CHRISTY; QASIM KHAN AS CHRISTY, JONATHAN TAN AS PHILLY O'CULLEN, ANDREW LAWRIE AS SHAWN KEOGH, SANJAY TALWAR AS MICHAEL FLAHERTY AND SHANE CARTY AS JIMMY FARRELL; QASIM KHAN AS CHRISTY AND MARLA McLEAN AS PEGEEN MIKE.





“Live in contact with dreams and you will get something of their charm; live in contact with facts and you will get something of their brutality. I wish I could find a country to live in where the facts were not brutal and the dreams not unreal.” BERNARD SHAW



Production History

The Playboy of the Western World premiered at Dublin's Abbey Theatre on January 26, 1907 and was immediately met with fierce protests within and outside the theatre against the play's perceived defamatory depiction of the Irish people. Similar controversy occurred on the Abbey's tour of the play in the United States, where it was first produced at Boston's Plymouth Theatre on October 16, 1911. The New York production on November 27, 1911 created turbulence similar to that experienced in Dublin. A subsequent tour of North America in 1912-13 was less controversial; the Canadian premiere at His Majesty's Theatre in Montreal on January 27, 1913 generated hisses, but no violence. There have been several uneventful revivals in Ireland and elsewhere since then.

A 1962 film version of *The Playboy of the Western World* featured Gary Raymond as Christy Mahon and Siobhán McKenna as Pegeen Mike.

This is the second Shaw Festival production of the play. The first, in 1996, featured Oliver Becker as Christy Mahon and Kelli Fox as Pegeen Mike. It was directed by Jim Mezon.

The Author

J.M. (JOHN MILLINGTON) SYNGE (1871-1909) was born in a suburban village near Dublin, the youngest of five children of a Protestant upper-class family. He was raised by a fervently religious mother, after his father died when Syngé was only a year old. Due to ill health Syngé was educated mainly by private tutors, until he entered Trinity College, Dublin, at age seventeen. There he won prizes in languages (Irish and Hebrew), while also studying music and beginning to write poetry.

In 1893 Syngé went to Germany to pursue his musical studies, and moved to Paris the next year. In Paris in 1896 he met William Butler Yeats, who was to have a





profound influence on his career. Yeats complained that Synge's writing so far exhibited "that conventional language of modern poetry which has begun to make us all weary." He recommended that Synge spend some time in the Aran Islands, off the west coast of Ireland. This suggestion provided the impetus and the background for the six plays that Synge was to write. Also in 1896, Yeats and Lady Gregory began to discuss the possibility of creating a new theatre to develop a native Irish drama. As a result, they founded the Irish Literary Theatre, which put on annual productions from 1899 to 1901.

In 1902 they joined forces with actors Frank and William Fay to form the Irish National Dramatic Society,

which the next year produced Synge's first two plays, *Riders to the Sea* and *The Shadow of the Glen*. A brief London appearance by this company persuaded tea heiress Annie Horniman to finance the company. With Miss Horniman's subsidy, the Abbey Theatre opened in Dublin in December 1904, with a bill of three one-acts by Yeats and Lady Gregory. Synge's first full-length play, *The Well of the Saints*, premiered at the Abbey in 1905; so did his masterpiece, *The Playboy of the Western World*, two years later. But by the time *The Playboy* opened amid controversy, with Synge's nineteen-year-old fiancée Molly Allgood (Maire O'Neill) in the leading role, Synge had become ill with Hodgkin's disease. He died in March 1909, a few weeks short of his 38th birthday. His other two plays, *The Tinker's Wedding* and *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, were produced posthumously.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: KELLI FOX AS PEGEEN MIKE WITH RICHARD FARRELL AS OLD MAHON AND ENSEMBLE, IN THE SHAW'S 1997 PRODUCTION (PHOTO BY DAVID COOPER); ARTHUR SHIELDS CHRISTY AND MAUREEN DELANCY AS WIDOW QUIN IN THE ABBEY THEATRE PLAYERS' 1932-1933 PRODUCTION; FRANCES STERNHAGEN AS WIDOW QUIN, DAVID BIRNEY AS CHRISTY, AND MARTHA HENRY AS PEGEEN MIKE IN THE REPERTORY THEATRE OF LINCOLN CENTRE'S 1971 PRODUCTION, DIRECTED BY JOHN HIRSCH (PHOTO BY MARTHA SWOPE); KATE BURTON AS PEGEEN MIKE AND KEN MARSHALL AS CHRISTY IN ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY'S 1985 PRODUCTION (PHOTO BY MARTHA SWOPE).

For full biographical information about our cast and creative team, please visit shawfest.com/ensemble.

JACKIE MAXWELL Director

SHAW 2023: Director for *The Playboy of the Western World*. My mother was an English teacher who loved theatre. She was an enthusiastic member of a local community theatre group, and I have vivid childhood memories of sessions in our living room where costumes would be assembled, and props built, as people ran through their lines. It seemed exciting and fun with an underlying sense of panic, which would increase as performance deadlines neared. Almost inevitably, it seems, I decided to embrace this world full-time and many, many plays on, I still experience that combination of feelings. I'm very happy that my mother was able to see many of these pieces...always giving me her detailed and terrifyingly honest response!... and will always be grateful to her for opening up this extraordinary world to me.

JUDITH BOWDEN

Set and Costume Designer

SHAW 2023: Set and costume designer for *The Playboy of the Western World* and *The Apple Cart*. My first experience on-stage was as a flame around a cauldron in a production of a very condensed version of *Macbeth* at Roding primary school. I can still remember the witches' song. I bet that fire costume and the song I still have memorized led to twenty-some years of designing. I always treasure the words that float around in my head long after the performance of a juicy piece of theatre.

KEVIN LAMOTTE Lighting Designer

SHAW 2023: Lighting designer for *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Mahabharata*, *Blithe Spirit* and *The Clearing*. One of my earliest experiences in theatre was watching *Cyrano de Bergerac* here at the Shaw Festival in 1982. I was considering a career in the arts, and possibly theatre design, which all seemed like a long shot as a teenager. The set and costumes by Cameron Porteous, as well as the lighting design by Robert Thomson, were so inspiring at the time. The design of the show has remained with me. In 1988, I returned to the Shaw Festival as a lighting designer and had the privilege of working with Artistic Director, Christopher Newton. He said, "I put creative people together and point them in the right direction", but he did a great deal more. Christopher's passion for all aspects of theatre and the arts continue to inspire. Memories of him and his work keep me pointed in the right direction!



JACKIE MAXWELL



KEVIN LAMOTTE



SAMUEL SHOLDICE Sound Designer

SHAW 2023: Sound designer for *The Playboy of the Western World*. I hail from Blyth, Ontario, but now call Toronto my home. I was raised in the theatre and thusly made it my (sometimes) job, opting to program sound effects for theatrical productions in addition to making music documentaries and horror films. My favourite audience comment ever was, "Sound designer? Really? I didn't even notice there was sound in that!"

FIONA BYRNE Widow Quin

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Prince Caspian*; 20th season. I started here in 1997, very young, so excited and incredibly scared. I had dreamed of coming here since attending *The Marrying of Ann Leete* as a drama student years before, and watching the love scene between Ann Baggley and Roger Honeywell.

Sitting in the back row of the Court House, I barely breathed so I wouldn't miss a word. Neil Munro had brilliantly directed this beautiful twosome acting in candlelight and creating magic. A few years later, sitting in the dressing room with Ann, having been cast alongside her my first season in *The Shop at Sly Corner* and *The Lady's Not for Burning*, I couldn't believe my good fortune. I still get a thrill whenever I get to stand on the stage and be part of the magic. I am beyond grateful for these twenty seasons.



SHANE CARTY Jimmy Farrell

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Prince Caspian* and *Mother, Daughter*; 2nd season. I'm from Kingston,

Ontario. I was in a production of *Camelot* when I was fourteen years old, which got me hooked. When I was at Queen's University, I became interested in the theatre scene and changed my major from political science to drama. The head of the drama department at Queen's, Tim Fort, got me interested in Sondheim, among other geniuses, and I've been at it ever since. My first paid acting job was as Brad in a particularly saucy production of *The Rocky Horror Show*, directed by Peter Hinton. My parents were definitely shocked and possibly proud. We'll never know about the latter.

ALEXANDRA GRATTON

Sara Tansey

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World* and *On the Razzle*; 2nd season. I am

delighted to be joining the Shaw Festival for another season. I had two wonderful experiences through *Damn Yankees* and Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* last year, and I'm overjoyed to share more stories on these stages. It's a big "thumbs up" from me to be doing what I love. I would like to thank my family and friends for their undying support and love. Let's make some theatre magic! Follow me through @alex_gratton.



QASIM KHAN Christy Mahon

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Prince Caspian*; 1st season. I'm from Newmarket, Ontario, and my first time experiencing theatre was my school's production of *Oh My Deer*, which was about a herd of deer that take over a small town. As I watched my peers walk around in antlers and tails, I thought, "these people are rockstars!" My debut happened in grade four, playing the Lively Lad in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Who's the Lively Lad? Good question. My school couldn't afford the rights to the published version of *Joseph*, so we used an obscure early script. He appears only in that. He had one line. It changed my life. Nowadays, you might recognize me from the Stratford Festival. Some favourite roles there over the last five years have been Adam in *Paradise Lost*, Charlie in *The Miser*, and Atreyu in *The Neverending Story*.

ANDREW LAWRIE Shawn Keogh

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Prince Caspian*; 7th season. Once, after a show, someone told me, "Seeing this production made my day." This was my favourite comment that I've ever heard from an audience member. By itself it seems to just be a simple and lovely sentiment, but to me it resonated with why I chose to become an actor. I feel that my job as an actor is to affect others with my work. Whether that means to provoke important discourse, to instigate different ways of thinking or simply to make someone's day special, that's why I do what I do. That's why I'm an actor.

MARLA MCLEAN Pegeen Mike

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Prince Caspian*; 17th season. Growing up in Nova Scotia, I had the great fortune of finding my regional theatre early in life. The company created an apprenticeship of sorts that allowed me (who couldn't afford to train) a chance to learn on my feet. More companies should endeavour to find creative ways to support young actors from a working-class background. If you find yourself able, search out ways to facilitate this in your own community. It can change a young artist's life. Inspiration in our work comes from many places and I'm eternally grateful for, and inspired by, my partner and our wee boy. "*This is the true joy in life; the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one, the being a force of nature.*" – GBS

RIC REID Old Mahon

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World* and *On the Razzle*; 20th season. This season marks my twentieth at Shaw. A few other brave souls are also marking the same. When I arrived, I had a full head of hair. Gone. I could see without the aid of glasses. I was newly married and the stepfather to two great boys. My wife, Kelly, and I have added another to the group, and I can't see the road up ahead. Three boys over six feet will do that. Does wisdom come with age? No. Nor patience. It is a long road and I strain to learn either. However, my co-workers from all departments have made the time fly by and worth every second. It is a grand place this Shaw Festival, where arguments, passion, silliness, and hard work come together, and where we pass it all on to you.



MARLA MCLEAN



JADE REPETA



RIC REID

QASIM KHAN



JADE REPETA Susan Brady

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Prince Caspian* and *Mother, Daughter*; 2nd season. I am so thrilled to be back here at the Shaw Festival for another wonderful season! I began my performing career in Winnipeg, my dear and chilly hometown. In fact, there are quite a few of us Winnipeggers here in the 2023 Shaw season, which makes me very proud! I have since graduated from theatre school and have been working in the Canadian theatre industry for over fifteen years. I am so thankful for the

many people in my life that have encouraged and supported me in my pursuit of this incredibly odd and wonderful job that I am so grateful to do!



SOPHIE SMITH-DOSTMOHAMED

SOPHIE SMITH-DOSTMOHAMED
Ensemble

SHAW 2023: Ensemble for *The Playboy of the Western World*; Baillie Cohort Understudy for *Prince Caspian*; 1st season (they/them). I'm a queer, Middle Eastern/Canadian artist born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba. For as long as I can remember, I've wanted to be a performer and never really had much of a backup plan. While I am primarily an actor, writing is a large part of my life as well – plays sometimes, love letters often, and silly little poems always. With a fervent hope to always have more to learn than to teach, my own artistic practice involves leading with love, and prioritizing queer representation and joy. I hold my dear friends and mentors close to my heart, and have them to thank for teaching me rigour, patience and forgiveness. Believing in Big Love at All Costs, I really just want to keep making art with my friends forever, or until it stops being fun.



SANJAY TALWAR

SANJAY TALWAR Michael Flaherty

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Prince Caspian*; 9th season. I was inspired to pursue professional acting by a professor in university, who asked me if I was interested in auditioning for the acting program there. I was majoring in another subject and taking her theatre course as an elective. I was interested and, sensing I needed a push, she told me I'd fail her course if I didn't at least apply for an audition. I thought it was a nice compliment...until I got my marks and saw the "F". I applied for an audition the next day, and three years later completed the program and began a journey that has led to the Shaw Festival.



ANDREW LAWRIE

JONATHAN TAN Philly O'Cullen

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World* and *On the Razzle*; 13th season. In my first year of university, there was a serendipitous shortage of second basses – serendipitous because a baritone who drinks like a frosh wakes up with solid low-Cs. Those few extra notes got me into some choirs that – to be honest – were too good for my very green self, the most special of which was a group called Amabile. With them, I saw Europe, sang with symphonies, recorded albums, even performed for The Queen, all as an anonymous second bass amongst dozens – sometime

hundreds – of singers. We made music out of nothing more than our bodies in space, weaving single voices into a harmonic whole so much greater than the sum of its parts. At this intersection of math and magic, there is no I – just us, the moment, and music. Long live the humble choir.

KIANA WOO Honor Blake

SHAW 2023: *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Prince Caspian*; 1st season. When I was growing up, I loved to play pretend with my little brother and we often made fantastical stories for our toys. I had so much energy and that was one of my favourite ways to spend it, making little stories. We attended a drama camp in Calgary when I was quite young, and something just clicked. I finally felt like my energy fit somewhere – the theatre just welcomed me in, and I felt at home. I've been an actor ever since. Recently, I was fortunate enough to have my work as Alice in the Guild Festival Theatre's production of *Alice in Wonderland* recognized with a Dora award. This show really allowed me to tap back into the same childhood storytelling I did with my brother, so it was incredibly touching to have that work recognized.

BEATRICE CAMPBELL

Stage Manager

SHAW 2023: Stage manager for *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Prince Caspian*; 19th season. Reflecting on my life in the theatre, in order to fulfil the requirements of this bio, I realize how lucky I've been to work with so many interesting, talented, odd, entertaining, intelligent, silly, and fabulous people over my many decades as a stage manager. The main highlight has been working with my family – parents Douglas and Moira, brother Ben, and sister-in-law Jackie; but my theatre family has been equally wonderful. It might be tiring, but it's never dull. Thank you for spending your time with us.

MEGHAN FROEBELIUS Assistant Stage Manager

SHAW 2023: Assistant stage manager for *The Playboy of the Western World* and *On the Razzle*; 5th season. There are three distinct memories I have of coming to Shaw throughout my schooling. The first was at the end of high school – that was the trip where I fell in love with theatre. The second trip was during my time at Queen's, when I decided to pursue theatre professionally. The third was at the end of theatre school, when I was hired here as an apprentice stage manager. My entire career set its course, at different points, through the Shaw Festival and its community of artists. I owe so much of who I am to this theatre and now with every production I work on here, I like to think about the audience and wonder if it's doing the same for someone else.

VINNIE ALBERTO Baillie Cohort Understudy

SHAW 2023: Baillie Cohort Understudy for *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Prince Caspian*; ensemble for *Mother, Daughter*; 1st season. Hi Folks! My name is Vinnie. I am an Indigenous artist born and raised on Treaty One Territory, which Winnipeg resides on. I was a late bloomer into the arts, but never shied away from performance. Early on, I found a love for performing through sports. That was until I got pulled into a choral room with my football jersey on and watched a choir of forty sing "Bohemian Rhapsody", I got chills! After discovering how full a heart can become when surrounded by beautiful, brave and curious theatre folks, I swapped for a new playing field...the stage. I am incredibly fortunate and grateful to call my work "playing." We all question, learn and challenge each day in order to grow, and I love it! I mean, aren't we all just kids in adult bodies?



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