

## 'OUR LADY OF SLIGO' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## MASKERS FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

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# the maskers theatre company

## OUR LADY OF SLIGO

By Sebastian Barry  
Directed by Ron Stannard



23rd - 28th April 2007

## A NOTE ON THE PLAY

'Our Lady of Sligo' was first performed at the National in 1998 when Sebastian Barry was described as 'the new crown prince of Ireland's majestic theatrical tradition'. Certainly his dramatic verve and his extraordinary lyricism make him a worthy successor to Synge and O'Casey; and he is among a group of contemporary Irish dramatists whose work is characterised by the strength of the writing and the richness of the language. Based on the life of his grandmother, 'Our Lady' is the sixth in Barry's series of family history plays and it is full of striking poetic images that often bring humour to heartbreak.

In a depressing hospital room, Mai O'Hara lies dying, visited by her husband, daughter and the spirit of her dead father. And as she looks back at the high hopes of her youth and her flamboyant but destructive marriage, her tale of bitter disappointment shifts constantly between memory, dream and present reality. Mai was born with the century and brought up to expect a secure future that never came. And it is here that family and national history intersect, for the disillusionment that Mai and Jack feel reflects the unfulfilled expectations of Ireland's Catholic Middle-class after the establishment of self-rule and their sense of betrayal by the governments of Eamon de Valera.

In our production we have kept some of the allusions to Irish history and politics but we have focussed on the human drama; on the frank portrait of a dying woman and the damaged family she will leave behind; on her moving efforts to make sense of her life; and on the yearning, finally, for some understanding and closure. And if it's a play about dying and the loss of small children, it's also a play about life - a life fuelled (and ultimately destroyed) by alcohol, admittedly, but a life, too, that once had passion and style, with haunting memories of dance-halls and tennis parties in darkened gardens.

'Our Lady of Sligo' is a challenging play, not least in the daunting demands it places on the central role. I have been fortunate, indeed, to have actors and a production team who have embraced and risen to those challenges so enthusiastically.

Ron Stannard, Director

### IRELAND, 1829-1951 : SELECTED DATES

1829	—	Catholic Emancipation
1846-49	—	Irish Famine
1849	—	Queen's College, Galway opens
1904	—	Abbey Theatre opens
1908	—	Irish Universities Act : greater role for women
1913	—	Home Rule Bill passed
1916	—	Easter Rising
1919	—	de Valera elected President
1921	—	Anglo-Irish Treaty signed by Michael Collins
1922	—	Civil War begins. Michael Collins killed
1926	—	Fianna Fail founded by de Valera
1929	—	Censorship of Publications Act
1932	—	de Valera becomes Prime Minister
1939	—	Ireland remains neutral during Second World War
1948	—	Eire becomes Republic of Ireland
1951	—	Fianna Fail regains power and de Valera is returned to office as Prime Minister

## CAST

Mai O'Hara.....	Hazel Burrows
Sister.....	Jan Spiers
Jack, Mai's husband.....	Ian Morley
Joanie, her daughter.....	Rachael Courage
Maria.....	Brenda Atkinson
Dada, Mai's father.....	Bruce Atkinson
Little girl.....	Mia Carrington
.....	Lydia Caveney

The play is set in a Dublin hospital in 1953.  
It is in two Acts, with one interval of 15 minutes.

'This is a play about my grandmother as I imagine her to have been - I never met her and indeed she died before I was born. There was a deal of suffering in her allotment of days, her own suffering and the suffering she caused others. Alcoholism is a deep, dark and doom-afflicted disease and roads out of it were rare enough in her day. Not to mention roads out of marriage.....'

Sebastian Barry, 1997

'There's some story there with the wife.....as far as he's aware the wife's a very fine woman from Galway that Jack adores, whose father was quite the gentleman living out the Grattan Road; there's something else that no-one can tell him.....'

From *The Whereabouts of Eneas MacNulty* by Sebastian Barry

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Director.....	Ron Stannard
Production Manager.....	Sheana Carrington
Stage Managers.....	Elizabeth Davies
.....	Alison Tebbutt
Scenic design and paint.....	Ken Spencer
Set construction.....	Roger Lockett
.....	Chris Byers
Lighting design.....	Nathan Weeks
Lighting operator.....	Kathryn Salmon
Sound.....	Jamie McCarthy
Wardrobe.....	Eileen Stannard
Props and furniture.....	Ella Lockett
.....	Gill Buchanan
Publicity.....	Angela Stansbridge
Publicity artwork design.....	John Hamon
Programme.....	Luciana Lattanzi