

## Director's Notes

It was with some trepidation six months ago that I agreed to make my directorial debut at the Criterion. As an actor you have nowhere to hide during the performances, as a director you have nowhere to hide during the whole rehearsal period. I am very grateful that the committee decided that *The Cripple of Inishmaan* would mark my first attempt – a play that I loved from the moment that I first read it. I am a huge fan of Martin McDonagh, I think he encompasses so much of the human condition within his plays; his characters are all flawed in some way and yet they all have moments when the audience feels some empathy with them. They hold a mirror up to us, none of us are perfect and yet all of us have some redeeming quality. Nowhere is this more evident than in this play. It has many of the elements of theatre that I get genuinely excited about; perfectly defined characters, clever and witty dialogue, dark and light comic moments and a beautifully crafted plot with a few surprises.

As with much of McDonagh's work its roots lie in the great Irish storytelling tradition. There is plenty of evidence of this from Johnnypateen's elaborate yarns to the wistful affection that all the characters have for the Emerald Isle. McDonagh himself though has become very wary of this recently. In 2011 the play was performed on the island of Inishmaan itself, the playwright was very concerned that "it had never been his intent to take the measure of his fellow Irishmen cruelly". Like one of his characters this is something that seems to eat away at him – as a Londoner he feels that sometimes he does not represent the Irish as well as he would like to. I disagree, I think that he has created very believable, very recognisable roles and it has certainly been one of my main intents to avoid any sort of stereotypes.

I would like to thank the superb company for all of their hard work with a potentially tricky piece and the cast, crew and management for their unflinching support of me in my fledgling venture. I hope that this evening you laugh, you cry, and you are transported to a little island in the Atlantic where 'the people are more friendly', eggs are often broken and people talk to stones (and cows!).

Craig Shelton

No photography or videoing allowed.

If you have any comments about your experience at the Criterion Theatre, please email Louise at [comments@critteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:comments@critteriontheatre.co.uk)



[www.criteriontheatre.co.uk](http://www.criteriontheatre.co.uk)



**By J. B. Priestly**  
7th - 14th July 2012

Twenty-five years ago, the Helliwells, the Parkers and the Soppitts were married on the same day by the same parson. They gather at the Helliwell home to celebrate their silver wedding. The new chapel organist tells them that he recently met the parson who conducted the triple wedding ceremony and reveals that he was not authorized to do so. Pandemonium breaks out when these pillars of society believe they have been living in sin for twenty-five years.

One of the most famous comedies of the 20th century, originally performed by the Criterion in Dec 1961/Jan 1962 and makes a fitting endpiece to our 50th celebrations. It has been continually performed since it was first written in 1938 and has just enjoyed a highly successful professional revival in the West End.

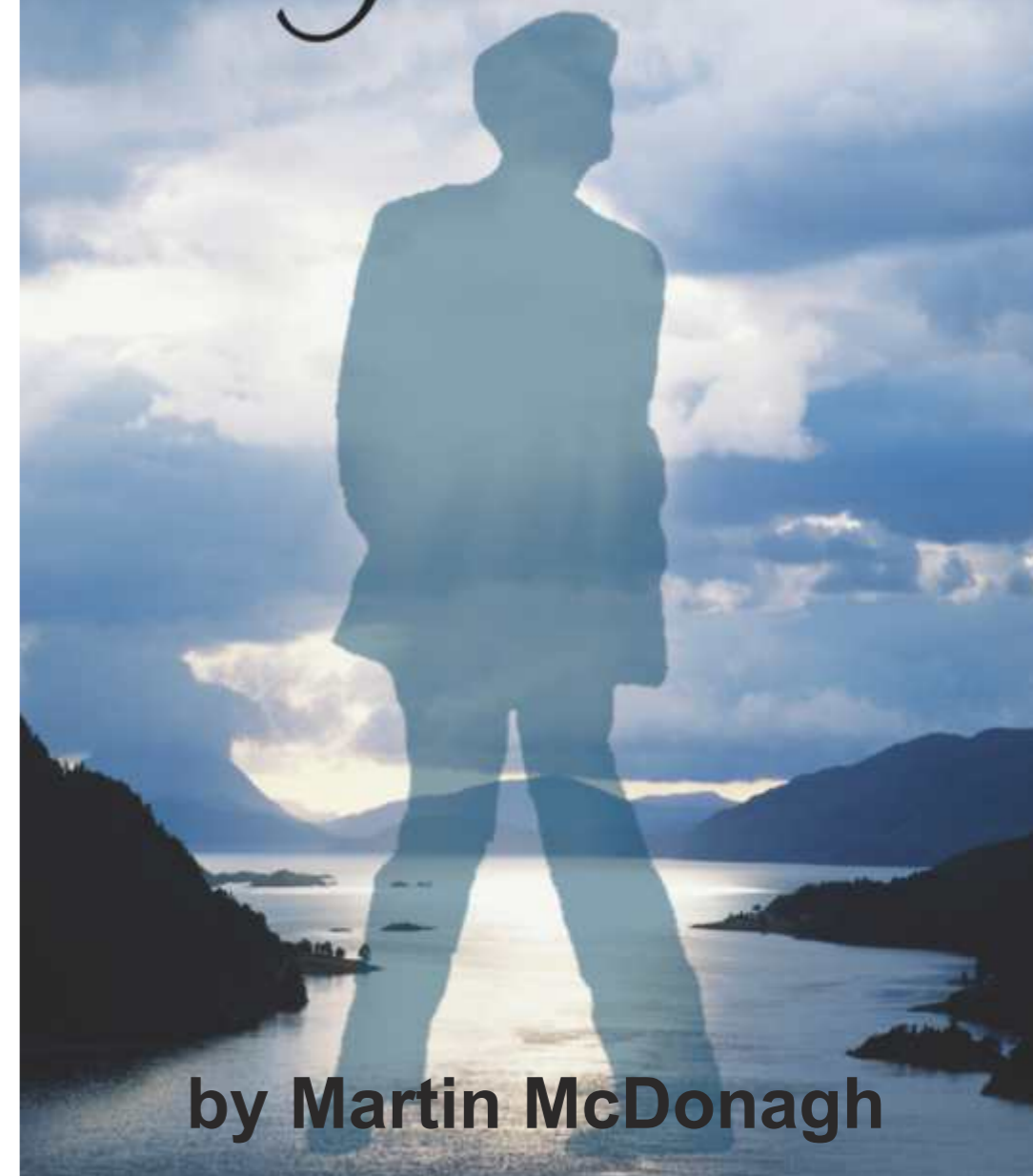


Supported by Shortland Horne



The Criterion is a non-smoking theatre.

# THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN



by Martin McDonagh

# Programme

By arrangement with Samuel French Ltd

**Annie Gay**

Annie is delighted to be making her debut at the Criterion. She played Bella Manningham in "Gaslight" at Rugby Theatre two years ago and has previously worked in many productions in Birmingham and Solihull. She has written and performed in numerous sketches for NHS training workshops and her local church. Annie and her husband are part of a team of actors in murder mystery plays at Coombe Abbey. It's unlikely that she'll commit murder in "The Cripple of Inishmaan"..... unless the Director shouts at her.

**Peter Gillam**

Pete has thoroughly enjoyed rehearsing in his second regeneration of The Doctor since appearing in February's production of Punk Rock. He first stepped on a stage in 2006 as the long-lost father in Daisy Pulls It Off at the Criterion and has been active both on- and off-stage ever since. Favourite roles include: The Shape of Things (Phil), It Can Damage Your Health (Charlie Palmer), Not About Heroes (Siegfried Sassoon) and most recently as Donald Duck in Blue Remembered Hills at the Talisman Theatre.

**Jon Elves**

Jon first came to the Criterion in the early 1990's and has since appeared in various productions. Some of his favourite roles have included Mozart in Amadeus, Phil in Brassed Off, Sharkey in The Seafarer, and Ben Hecht in Moonlight and Magnolias. Jon was most recently seen as one of the clowns in 39 Steps opposite Craig Shelton.... Being directed by him in this show has been as much of a pleasure as acting with him and it is good to see that he has carried on wearing women's clothes whilst at the theatre....

**Sam Taylor**

This is Sam's debut performance at The Criterion. He has previously played Kenickie in 'Grease', Deltoid in 'A Clockwork Orange' and the Mum in 'Beast' at Woodlands School. He is currently taking his A-levels, would love a career in the theatre and hopes to be able to be part of many more productions at the Criterion once he leaves school.

**Elliot Relton-Williams**

Elliot's acting experience includes: Taplow in "The Browning Version", various youth productions at the Belgrade including "Spring Awakening", short films, a radio play and library stock footage. Elliot has also performed at the Talisman theatre. His most recent venture was Single Spies, submitted for a one act play competition at the Abbey Theatre Nuneaton. This is Elliot's third production at the Criterion.

# THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN

Katie

Debra Relton-Elves

Eileen

Annie Gay

Johnnypateenmike

Pete Bagley

Billy

Elliot Relton-Williams

Helen

Lucy Hayton

Bartley

Sam Taylor

Babbybobby

Jon Elves

Mammy

Annie Woodward

Doctor McSharry

Peter Gillam

There will be one interval of 15 minutes.

Set circa 1934 on the small Aran islands community of Inishmaan off the Western Coast of Ireland.

Director:	Craig Shelton
Stage Manager:	Ben Woodward
Set Design:	Judy Talbot
Lighting Design:	Ian Knight
Lighting Operators:	Joe Fallowell, Antonio Graham
Sound Design:	Becky Bartlett
Sound Operator:	Matt Hadlum
Set Build:	Ben Woodward, Judy Talbot Mike Tooley, Pete Bagley
Set Paint:	Judy Talbot, Marian McGlone
Wardrobe:	Maureen Liggins, Pam Coleman Candy Waddell, Nancy Silvester
Props:	Les Rahilly, Kathy Brewerton Jackie Crisp
Flautist:	Rachael Pearce
Prompt:	Shirley Jobson

**Deb Relton-Elves**

Deb started dancing and acting at the age of three, appearing in shows at the Belgrade and Coventry Theatre. During her professional career as a dancer, she worked with many well-known entertainers including Norman Wisdom and Frankie Howard. Returning to Coventry to take up a different career, she missed the stage so she joined The Criterion, where she has played many roles including Mavis in Stepping Out, Alma Rattenbury in Cause Celebre and co-choreographed Oh! What a Lovely War. Her last appearance on stage was as Miss Haversham in Great Expectations.

**Annie Woodward**

Annie joined the Criterion as Ann Stewart in 1972 and played Maggie, the Irish maid in Bob Morley's production of 'Pride and Prejudice'. She enjoyed it so much she just kept going, playing Hippobomene in 'Rape of the Belt' a month later. She made the theatre her second home and to date has played in 45 productions and directed 20, as well as doing two stints as Artistic Director, one as Theatre Manager and one as Chairman. Annie recently appeared in a cameo role in 'The Bear', then jumped at the chance of playing Mammy in this play. She is looking forward to directing 'Visiting Mr. Green' later this year.

**Pete Bagley**

Pete has been around the Criterion for more years than he cares to remember or is even capable of remembering. However, something always seems to draw him back (perhaps it's the bar!) Pete has performed in many plays over the years and also directed numerous shows of different types and is looking forward to only his 3rd Irish play in all that time. He can be found at any time perfecting his character over a pint of Guinness at the bar! Hope you enjoy the "Craic".

**Lucy Hayton**

Lucy spent over 10 years at David Eden Theatre Company, taking occasional roles and appearing in many shows and showcases. Before leaving for London she briefly joined the Criterion and took the role of Lucy in Threepenny Opera at the Loft. After completing her degree in Theatre Arts at Goldsmiths she spent several years in London pursuing her career and further study. She recently returned to the Criterion to be in the Hot Box in Guys and Dolls, making this her third production with the company.