

Tradsoc Presents...

To Stay

Or Leave

Written & Directed by Daithi Kearney



Gráinne McHale

A note of welcome

The title of this production is a question many people, in many parts of the world must ask themselves, often more than once in their lifetime. That it is presented here in a past era does not detract from its relevance in contemporary society. Despite the shrinking of time space barriers, the emotions felt when migrating, in particular when leaving a homeplace, remain strong. The importance of our identity, a sense of culture that we can inherit is the focus of this production.

I have been fortunate to have been inspired from an early age by a number of people, not least my family. Growing up, I was involved with Siamsa Tíre where I was influenced and inspired by Monsignor Pat Ahern, Patricia Hanafin, Nicky and Anne McAulliffe and many others. The local branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann provided another family, a community where cultural expression and development was fostered and encouraged by Máire Griffen. During the last few years, I have been conducting research into Irish folk culture and Irish traditional music. Reading the stories of others has both given me an insight into the culture that I have inherited and further inspired me to develop this show.

Daithí Kearney

Cast: Daithí Kearney, David Hickey, Edwina Burke, Grace Kearney, Jack Talty, Louise Keating, Mairéad Hickey, Margaret McCarthy, Melanie Jones, Micheál O Suilleabháin, Muireann Ní Dhonnabháin, Naomi Morrissey

Lighting Design: Daragh O'Connor

Lighting/Sound Operator: Daragh O'Connor, Gráinne McHale

Artwork: Gráinne McHale

Special thanks to UCC Tradsoc, The Granary Theatre, Siamsa Tíre, IRCSS, Monsignor Pat Ahern, Tom Hanafin, Jonathon Kelliher, Michelle Finnerty, Nuada, Professor Patrick O'Flanagan, Mel Mercier, Kathleen Beecher, Jane Colton and all those who helped in any way.

Act 1

The Country House Dance

We are introduced to many of the main characters who are enjoying a house dance until the parish priest turns up!

Róisín Rua

A man was always expected to walk a lady to the cross but should go no further, though he may dream of future pursuit.

A strange encounter

Wandering in the woods could often lead to getting lost and goodness who knows who you might meet!

De Valera's Vision

1926 saw the foundation of Fianna Fáil. Much of the party's success was built on the charisma of its leader Éamonn de Valera and the development of local Cumann around the country. However, many did not share his vision nor believe completely in his policies.

A fairy feast

A fairy feast was a tempting sight but once food or drink was consumed the human could never leave. Often wandering musicians learnt tunes or inherited instruments from the fairies, which they would have to respect forever.

The morning after

When finding a man on her kitchen table, what is she to think? Perhaps this is the result of...

An Cáilín Aerach

A prize for any man, Róisín is a girl who is musical, beautiful and virtuous. If marriage is arranged there will surely be a party!

Act 2

Success on a Foreign Shore

Some years later and our couple have settled with a child but around them life is far from idyllic. Emigration breaks up families and separates friends. With the development of the recording industry in America, local musicians and their music are replaced by icons such as Michael Coleman. In many instances the record replaces the real as musicians put away their instruments.

A musical adventure

Despite the generation gap, there is an element of culture that seems to run through our veins. Perhaps it is something calling us from another world to uncover our culture and talents.

The Boat to Ellis Island

The people leave from all around. Standing at the pier they dream of locations far across the Atlantic Ocean where a new life awaits. Their destination, as for so many thousands since Annie Moore, is Ellis Island.

Towards a Brighter Future

A child possessed with musical talent, transmitted as if by magic, brings tears to her father's eyes. Can a nation survive without its music and song?

Pier Parting

It is time to say goodbye. The parting is softened by the lingering sense of hope and the gifts that are exchanged.

The Ramblin' House

A new record means new music and an excuse for a party. Perhaps the old master has new steps.