

Success on a Foreign Shore

Lullabies were said to have magical powers that could provide protection; their power increased by the quality of singing. 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. Our young girl is drawn to the woods by the magic of the fairies.

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, from where they will travel to other parts of America, shaping the development of that nation.

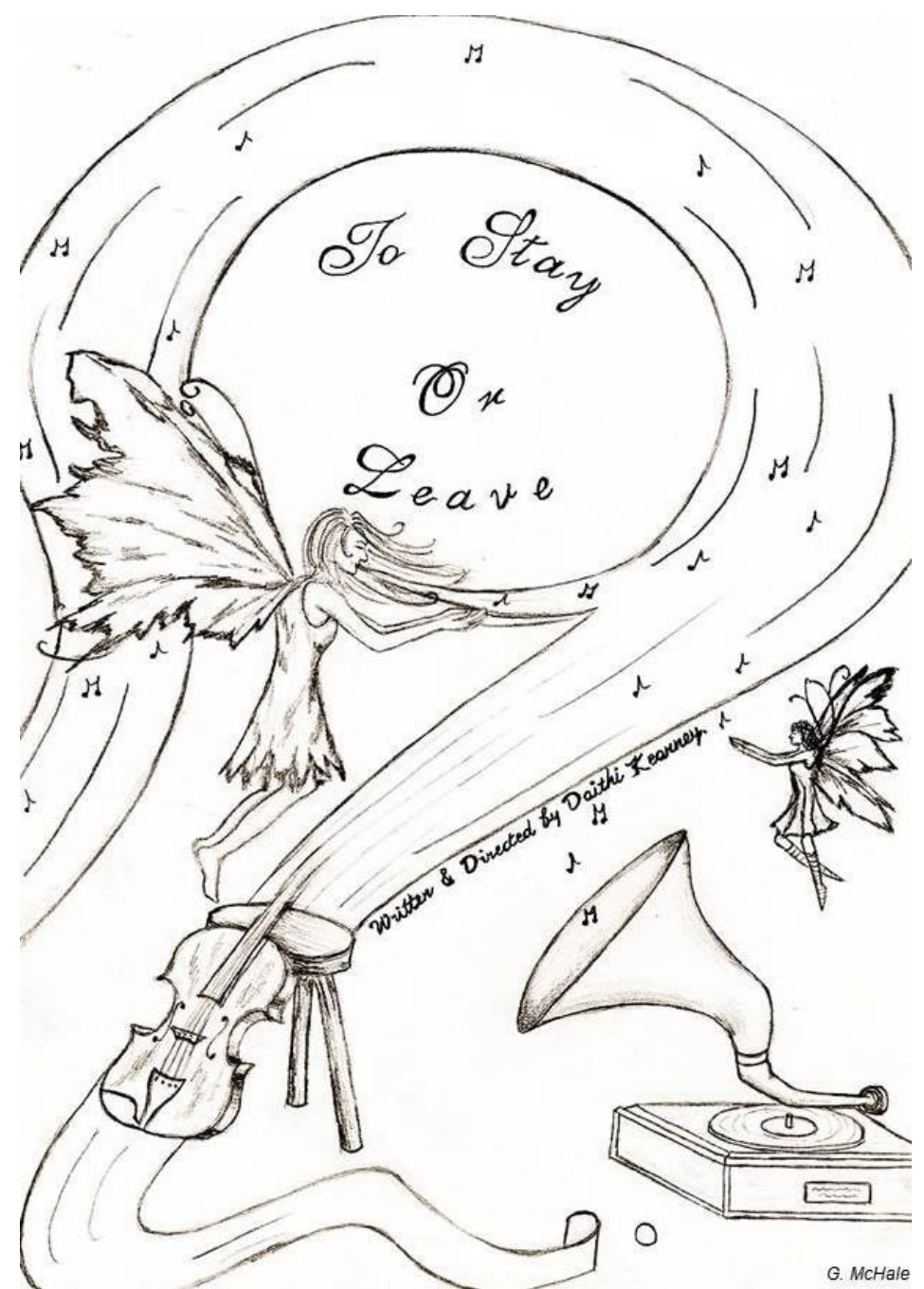
Towards a Brighter Future

A child possessed with musical talent, transmitted as if by magic, brings tears to her father's eyes. Our music and songs provide the intangible heritage that shape a nation and community and provide hope for the future.

Pier Parting

It is time to say goodbye but some will stay at home. The parting is softened by the lingering sense of hope that no matter where we are, we can always hope and strive for a better life, at home or far away.

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G. 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 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. At university, I have undertaken 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.

Since coming to Dundalk, I have become immersed in the culture of the Oriel region. I have returned to this production with a new cast drawn from my new community, including colleagues, students and graduates of music at Dundalk Institute of Technology and members of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, and I am very grateful to them for their participation. I am delighted to have the opportunity to perform at the Mac Anna Theatre, named after the great director Tomás Mac Anna, who engaged with Irish drama and themes in a very meaningful and successful way. At a time when so many people around the world are displaced, I hope you find meaning in this short tale.



Cast:

Róisín	Adèle Commins
An Damhsóir	Daithí Kearney
Daughter	Katie Lennon
Micheál	Shane Keeley
Fairies	Finola Kirby, Kerriane McArdle, Kim Poole, Aine Scott
Musicians	Joanne Cusack, Martha Guiney, Jessica Hui Sze Lee, Micheál Mullen, Gillian Power
Technical Support	Derek Farrell
Artwork	Gráinne McHale

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 Dubh

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! There are many stories of wandering musicians learning tunes or inheriting instruments from the fairies, which they would have to respect forever.

Disbelief

When finding a man on her kitchen table, what is she to think? It can be sometimes difficult to persuade people of the wonders encountered when meeting with the fairies. Such stories may not be enough to persuade sensible ladies of a man's suitability for marriage. A prize for any man, Róisín is a girl who is musical, beautiful and virtuous.

The Gold Ring

While sometimes mischievous, the fairies could also be kind benefactors who were skilled in many ways. In return for entertainment, it was known for payment to be made in the form of a gold ring; useful for a man with marriage on his mind!

Political Struggles

1926 saw the foundation of Fianna Fáil and the promotion of deValerian ideals. Although popular at the polls, some did not share his vision nor believe completely in his policies.

