The Cripple of Inishmaan
By Martin McDonagh

PLAY GUIDE

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A heartbreakingly hilarious comedy by one of Ireland's most celebrated playwrights, The Cripple of Inishmaan is an irresistible tale filled with a host of charming characters and plot twists. In 1934 on a remote island off the Irish Coast, word comes that Hollywood director Robert Flaherty is arriving to film The Man of Aran. No one is more excited than Cripple Billy, an unloved boy whose chief occupation has been gazing at cows and yearning for a girl who wants no part of him. For Billy is determined to audition for the Yank. With The Cripple of Inishmaan, Tony Award winning Martin McDonagh's concocts a masterpiece that is by turns eccentric, honest, and brilliantly funny.

"A play of endearing Irish souls, madcap humor ... [and] dialogue that jigs and capers ... indescribably funny ... " –The Philadelphia Inquirer

"Martin McDonagh's latest masterwork." -The Guardian

"McDonagh is a born storyteller ... the dialogue fizzes, the characters crackle ... a tough, boisterous, gifted play" -London Times

“McDonagh’s ... comic talent appears unlimited and he also has a way ... of mixing up his humor with a touch of the poet ...” –New York Post

(contains some adult language)
OpenStage Theatre

The Cripple of Inishmaan
By Martin McDonagh

Play Guide by Shela Jennings

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From the Director

The history of the Irish Theater is long and oh so full. From Sheridan and Farquhar to Oscar Wilde and Yeats, from Synge and Behan to Brian Friel, the work is full and beautiful. Martin McDonagh is the latest entry into this pantheon and his work is just as remarkable and stunning. *The Cripple of Inishmaan* is a prime example of McDonagh's plays – full of humor and wit and genius. I have been astonished by this man since I first read *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, and I am honored to work on this production. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I have the past several weeks. But most of all, have a feckin' good time.

Ken Fenwick
Director

KEN FENWICK is in his twenty-second season with OpenStage Theatre, having performed numerous roles including Big Daddy in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Victor in *The Price*, Sir in *The Dresser*, Claudius in *Hamlet*, Jonathan in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, Jack in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Joe Keller in *All My Sons*, Hucklebee in *The Fantasticks*, Salieri in *Amadeus*, Lear in *King Lear*, Adolph Freitag in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, Gaston in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, Falstaff in *Henry IV Part 1*, Niels Bohr in *Copenhagen*, Sandor Turai in *The Play's the Thing*, Lord Caversham in *An Ideal Husband*, and most recently, Matt of the Mint in *The Threepenny Opera*. Ken is a former member of The Denver Center Theatre Company, where he worked with Edward Call, Donovan Marley, Walter Schoen, Barbara Damashek and four-time Tony Award winner, Jerry Zaks. He has directed numerous productions for OpenStage Theatre including *Quilters*, which also performed as part of the Theatre in the Park celebration in Denver, as well as the Company's productions of *Enchanted April*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, *A Little Night Music*, *Into the Woods*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *A Flea In Her Ear*. Ken received the 2003 OpenStage Founder's Award, which recognizes an artist who has made significant contributions to the artistry and excellence of the Company. In addition, he has won OpenStage OPUS Awards for Best Actor for his portrayals of the title role in *King Lear* and Falstaff in *Henry IV Part 4*, Best Supporting Actor as Adolph Freitag in *The Last Night at Ballyhoo* and Best Director and Best Production for *Enchanted April* and *Into the Woods*. 
The Playwright **Martin McDonagh**

Martin McDonagh was born in Camberwell, London, England on March 26, 1970, to Irish immigrant parents. His father was a construction worker and his mother was a cleaning lady in London when he was growing up. He spent a significant amount of time visiting family in County Galway during the summers, dividing his time between Easkey in County Sligo, his mother’s home, and Connemara County, Galway, his father’s home. When Martin was sixteen his parents returned to western Ireland to live.

After his parents’ departure, Martin and his brother John Michael (a screenwriter) remained in London. They took odd jobs and collected unemployment for a number of years. He began his writing career by scripting radio plays. None of them were ever produced but they taught him how to write dialogue and tell stories. In his own opinion that was all you needed for theatre. In 1994 McDonagh produced rough drafts for seven plays in nine-months. All but one of these original drafts have since been published and produced.

At the age of 27 he became the first playwright since Shakespeare to have four plays running simultaneously in London’s West-End. In his first play, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, there is a section where the main character describes the racist abuse she received while working as a cleaner in England. McDonagh said this was inspired by stories he heard from his mother after she worked as a cleaner in London. *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* has won many awards and still wins them in new venues. In 2005, a Los Angeles production at the Celtic Arts Center won a number of awards. (See McDonagh’s award list.) The play was first produced on the Peacock Stage at The Abbey Theatre in Dublin in 1996 and in 1997 at The Royal Court Theatre in London. It is the first play in his Connemara Trilogy. The other two are *A Skull in Connemara* (1997) and *The Lonesome West* (1997). His second trilogy is called The Aran Islands Trilogy and includes *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, and *The Banshees of Inisheer*. It took five years to stage *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* because all the major theatres in London passed on it. According to McDonagh, Trevor Nunn, artistic director of The National Theatre, refused it on the grounds that it's staging might be inflammatory and disrupt the Northern Ireland peace process. It was finally produced in London in 2002. McDonagh has also been a resident playwright at the Royal National Theatre in London. In 2003 *The Pillowman* was produced at The National Theatre in 2003.

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McDonagh has two films to his credit: a short film, *Six Shooter* (2005), and a full length film, *In Bruges*, which opened at the Sundance Festival in January 2008. *Six Shooter* won an Academy Award. In July 2006 McDonagh was invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).

Although all his plays except *The Pillowman* are based in Ireland and he regards himself as an Anglo-Irish playwright, he has never lived full time in Ireland. He lives in London and cites Martin Scorsese, David Lynch, Terrence Malick, and Quentin Tarantino as his greatest influences. He recently said, “I've been on a treadmill of plays in London and here [New York]. It's a great treadmill to be on, but I finally had to step back and maybe live a little bit more and grow up and travel and see what kind of writer or person I've become.”

*The Theatre of Martin McDonagh: A World of Savage Stories* was published in Dublin by Carysfort Press in 2006. McDonagh is notorious for dark comedy, often using his personal combination of the rough Irish dialect, heavy symbolism, and grim, surprising twists to weave a story worth hearing. Many critics compare McDonagh’s work to fellow Irish playwright, John Millington Synge, and American playwright, David Mamet. Along with other modern day playwrights Conor McPherson and Jez Butterworth, McDonagh is seen as one of the key innovators of a new genre: " In your Face " Theatre. It's function is to present the audience with vulgar, shocking, and confrontational material.

The Play The Cripple of Inishmaan

Although The Cripple of Inishmaan is fiction, it finds its basis in fact. Hollywood film director Robert Flaherty brought his crew to the Aran Islands in 1934 to make The Man of Aran, a documentary in the same man-against-nature format as his earlier success, Nanook of the North. The Venice International Film Festival awarded The Man of Aran a prize for Best Foreign Film. Other critics, however, found the documentary flawed by the manner in which it romanticizes poverty. Not all tales can be told in Hollywood terms. That's why The Cripple of Inishmaan portrays gruesome real-life poverty and a strong desire for a Hollywood escape.

Set in 1934, on a remote island off Ireland’s coast, Martin McDonagh’s play is a strange comic tale in the fabled tradition of Irish storytelling. Based on actual events, the story begins when word arrives in the town of Inishmaan that a famed Hollywood director is coming to a neighboring island to shoot a film. Three islanders would give anything to be in the movie if only to break away from the bitter tedium of the island’s daily life. In this bleak, yet wickedly funny play, McDonagh shows us a world so comically claustrophobic and mean-spirited that even the thought of that hope is an alien concept.

The Cripple of Inishmaan opened in January of 1997, directed by Nicholas Hytner, in the Cottesloe Theatre at the Royal National Theatre. It transferred to the larger Lyttelton auditorium in April of 1997. The Cripple of Inishmaan made its US debut at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre in New York in April of 1998 where, following the extraordinary success of The Beauty Queen of Leenane, it sold out its entire run while the play was still in rehearsal. The play's Chicago premiere was at Northlight Theatre.

INISHMAAN VOCABULARY LIST

Bang on the gob – a hit across the face
Banshees - spirits who warn of death
Colleen - young girl
Curragh - lightweight, open boat made of lath and canvas
Doolally - crazy, loony
Eejit - fool, simpleton, idiot
-een - added to the end of a word, it means "little", as in “Bitteen --a little bit”
Gasur - young boy
Get - despicable person
Gob - mouth, face
Jam Roly Poly - jelly-filled sponge cake
Jumper – sweater
Peg - throw, hammer, beat
Poteen - whiskey made from potatoes
Praities – potatoes
Shillelagh - stout cudgel or club
Winkles – snails

http://www.ctgonline.org/productions/archive/cripple.html
As a child, the playwright Martin McDonagh spent nearly every summer with his parents and older brother in Connemara, a rugged region on Ireland’s west coast. Once, when he was six, his family boarded a curragh—a long rowboat made of slatted wood, of the sort that local fishermen have used for almost two thousand years—and made the trip from Lettermullan, the Connemara fishing village where his father grew up, to the Aran Islands, ten miles off the coast. Being on the boat surrounded by so much empty sky and water terrified McDonagh, but at the same time he was exhilarated. The landscape “always stuck in my mind,” he recalled. “Just the lunar quality, the remoteness, the wildness, the loneliness of it.”

“The Martin I know is quiet, genial, funny, courteous, extremely easy to get on with,” says Nicholas Hytner, the artistic director of the National Theatre in London, who staged the first production of The Cripple of Inishmaan, in 1997. “That cruel imagination is an interior affair. It comes from somewhere that’s not accessible to anyone else.”

His relationship with his brother, John, who is two and a half years older, was intense, and was characterized, McDonagh says, by “love, love, love, and a tiny spark of hate” […] Fraternal conflict is a recurring theme in his work: both The Lonesome West and The Pillowman revolve around the intimate, often fractious relationship of a pair of brothers.

McDonagh and his brother attended Catholic schools, where most of the teachers were Irish priests, and where most of the pupils were of Irish descent. Religious as a child, he lost his faith at the age of twelve, about the time that he began listening to his brother’s punk-rock records—in particular, the raucous, anti-establishment songs of the Clash. “I started questioning, partly as a reaction to just being around priests in my school,” he said. “None of them were particularly vicious or spiteful to me, but you could see it with other kids. Some of them were nice, some of them were thugs.”

The conflict in Northern Ireland entered its bloodiest phase during McDonagh’s childhood and, though his parents were sympathetic to the Catholic nationalist side, he was deeply suspicious of the terror campaign of the Irish Republican Army and of the sentimental cult surrounding the men who died for the cause. “Even from an early age, I was trying to think about all that stuff myself,” he said. “I was always coming from a left-wing or pacifist or anarchist angle that started with punk, and which was against all nationalisms.”

The Clash had taught him to be skeptical of authority, but the Pogues, a London Irish punk band that combined the raw aggression of the Sex Pistols with the lyrical storytelling of traditional Irish ballads, provided a more valuable lesson: they showed him that he didn’t have to discard his Irish heritage; he could make use of it instead. “Maybe not consciously, I was beginning to get the same idea: taking the parts you love and destroying the parts you hate.” Just as the Pogues set harsh new lyrics to old Irish tunes, McDonagh’s plays subject the pieties of Irish Catholicism and nationalism to impudent satire.

Admirers have ascribed McDonagh’s power as a satirist to his vantage point as an Irishman who grew up in England. “No one who isn’t Irish could have caught that world so dead-on right,” Nicholas Hytner told me. “But there is in Martin also a kind of alert, sarcastic, cocky South London street voice—the side of him that is ruthless with sentimentality. That’s something that is much more Camberwell than Connemara.” The plays are quite literally mongrels: they are written in an English that uses Gaelic syntax and yields oddly coiled sentences like “When it’s there I am, it’s here I wish I was, of course,” and they exhibit an acute self-consciousness about language.

McDonagh’s brother left school at seventeen, intending to be a writer, and started to live on welfare. (He is now a screenwriter—his script Ned Kelly was made into a film, which was released in 2003, with Heath Ledger in the title role.) As soon as McDonagh turned sixteen, he did the same. “I didn’t know what I wanted to do,” he said. “I didn’t want to educate myself toward some kind of job. I didn’t even want a job. I didn’t want a boss.”

In 1994, John won a fellowship to study screenwriting at the University of Southern California and moved to Los Angeles. McDonagh quit his job at the Department of Trade and Industry and, alone in the house in Camberwell, began to write every day. In nine months, he produced drafts of seven plays—his entire dramatic corpus. (Only one of the plays has not been staged: The Banshees of Inisheer; which, McDonagh says, “isn’t any good.”)
McDonagh wrote every day, seldom leaving the house and hardly speaking to anyone. He started to send his plays to theatre companies. Most did not respond. In the spring of 1995, Garry Hynes, the director of the Druid Theatre, in Galway, found herself “sitting down one night after dinner at home, with the script of A Skull in Connemara. As soon as I read the dialogue, I wanted to hear it, to the degree that I started reading it aloud to myself. I very clearly remember reading it aloud and throwing myself on the floor in paroxysms of laughter.” She called McDonagh, and asked to see his other plays. He sent her the rest of the Leenane trilogy, and Hynes immediately bought the rights to produce all three.

The Beauty Queen of Leenane opened in Galway in February, 1996. McDonagh arrived several weeks beforehand, to attend rehearsals, and while he was there Hynes and the actors took him out to dinner. It was McDonagh’s first meal in a fancy restaurant. One of the actors ordered tzatziki, and McDonagh, who had never tasted it, was deeply impressed and, for the first time, aware of his lack of social experience. He was wary of being in the limelight. When Hynes was preparing the playbill for Beauty Queen, she gave him a draft of his biographical note. “He said, ‘I don’t want any biography, I don’t want any attention,’” she recalled. “I remember saying, ‘Martin, if you don’t put in any biography, there’s going to be a lot more attention than if you do.’”

Nine months later, he received the Most Promising Playwright Prize at the London Evening Standard Theatre Awards ceremony, which was held at the Savoy Hotel. “I was so nervous at having to collect it that myself and my brother got tanked up on vodka, and the vodka really kicked in by the time we arrived at the Savoy,” he said. “And we were a little bit rowdy when they started toasting the Queen, good Irish boys that we were. And Sean Connery came over and told us to shut up and I told him to fuck off. He backed away and we left, and I can’t remember a single thing about the rest of the event. Apparently I kissed Jessica Lange, but I have no memory of that whatsoever.”

McDonagh awoke the next day to find himself the subject of a national scandal. (“IRISH WRITER CURSES BOND AT ARTS BASH” a headline in the Daily Mirror read.) Initially, he welcomed the notoriety; it gave him a persona to hide behind, that of the drunken, volcanic Irish writer, a familiar stereotype. He also earned a reputation for arrogance by repeatedly declaring his indifference to most plays other than his own. “I always thought theatre was the least interesting of the art forms,” he told me when I first met him, in 1997. “I’d much rather sit at home and watch a good TV play or series than go to the theatre.”

In the late nineteen-nineties, the Druid, the Royal Court, and the National—the theatres that had produced his work in the past—refused to stage The Lieutenant of Inishmore, whose graphic depiction of torture, murder, and dismemberment, even within the framework of a madcap farce, was deemed both offensive and politically insensitive. McDonagh retaliated by announcing in the press that he would submit no new plays until The Lieutenant was produced. In November, 2000, Harper’s & Queen published a series of photographs by David Bailey of famous thirty-year-olds, including McDonagh. In a caption, McDonagh denounced the Royal Court and the National for lacking the courage to stage the play. Simon Reade, then the literary manager of the Royal Shakespeare Company, saw the photograph and approached McDonagh’s agent, asking for a copy of The Lieutenant. It opened at the R.S.C. in May, 2001, and was a critical and popular success.

The fruits of his miraculous year made McDonagh seem, in public, amazingly prolific. In truth, however, his insistence on seeing The Lieutenant of Inishmore on stage before delivering more work obscured the fact that he had none to offer. He was terrified that the deluge of voices and stories that had come over him in 1994 had been an anomaly. “I did so much stuff in that year that I’d been worried that that was my writing time, that was it,” he said.

The fear abated somewhat when, after the London run of The Lieutenant, he returned to his 1994 draft of The Pillowman and began to rework it. The play, which premiered at the National Theatre, in November, 2003, has since been produced in Tokyo and in New York, where it received six Tony nominations. It remains the case, however, that McDonagh has not written a new play in more than a decade.

He insists that he has no intention of writing another play. “I think I’ve said enough as a young dramatist,” he said. “Until I’ve lived a little more, and experienced a lot more things, and I have more to say that I haven’t said already, it will just feel like repeating the old tricks.” For a moment, McDonagh looked disconsolate. But he sounded hopeful. “I want to just write for the love of it,” he said. “And also grow up, because all the plays have the sensibility of a young man.”

Excerpted from the edited article as it appeared in: http://www.berkeleyrep.org/season/0607/pi_program.asp
Other Plays in the **Aran Trilogy**

**The Lieutenant of Inishmore**  
*A Customer Review*

In Martin McDonagh's black comedy, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, Padraic, a man refused entry to the I.R.A for being 'too mad', reacts badly to the news that his cat is 'ill'. Following his immediate return from Northern Ireland, having left his usual duties of torturing and terrorism, the situation goes from bad to worse for Donny, Padraic's weary father, and Davey, his teenage next door neighbor.

One of the funniest plays I have seen, this political satire is also the most shocking. Banned in many parts of Ireland, the play is characterized by a surfeit of violence that is fortunately mitigated by its humor. Significantly this is not, as many critics like to crow, violence for violence's sake; it is a deeply cutting, significant statement about the nature of Ireland and its troubles. A final twist in the story leaves the audience left with an inescapable sense of pointlessness, and of how so much is lost for so little gain.

Without its witty writing, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* would be unwatchable. However, humor is an intrinsic part of the play, and an aspect that makes its message all the more memorable. A play that draws upon a rich heritage of political theatre to create something thing unique, I would recommend it to all.

*Edited copy from: [http://www.amazon.co.uk/Lieutenant-Inishmore-Methuen-Modern-Plays/dp/0413765008](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Lieutenant-Inishmore-Methuen-Modern-Plays/dp/0413765008)*

**The Banshees of Inisheer**  
*The Banshees of Inisheer* has not been published or produced. McDonagh says, “(It) isn’t any good.”

*Quoted in: [http://www.berkeleyrep.org/season/0607/pi_program.asp](http://www.berkeleyrep.org/season/0607/pi_program.asp)*
The Irish Free State was established as a dominion on December 6, 1922, with six northern counties remaining as part of the United Kingdom. A civil war ensued between those supporting the Anglo-Irish Treaty that established the Irish Free State and those repudiating it because it led to the partitioning of the island. The Irish Republican Army (IRA), led by Eamon de Valera, fought against the partition but lost. De Valera joined the government in 1927 and became prime minister in 1932. In 1937 a new constitution changed the nation's name to Éire. Ireland remained neutral in World War II.

In 1948, De Valera was defeated by John A. Costello, who demanded final independence from Britain. The Republic of Ireland was proclaimed on April 18, 1949, and withdrew from the Commonwealth. From the 1960s onward two antagonistic currents dominated Irish politics. One sought to bind the wounds of the rebellion and civil war. The other was the effort of the outlawed Irish Republican Army and more moderate groups to bring Northern Ireland into the republic. The “troubles”—the violence and terrorist acts between Republicans and Unionists in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland—would plague the island for the remainder of the century and beyond.

Under the First Programme for Economic Expansion (1958–1963), economic protection was dismantled and foreign investment encouraged. This prosperity brought profound social and cultural changes to what had been one of the poorest and least technologically advanced countries in Europe. Ireland joined the European Economic Community (now the EU) in 1973. In the 1990 presidential election, Mary Robinson was elected the Republic's first woman president. The election of a candidate with socialist and feminist sympathies was regarded as a watershed in Irish political life, reflecting the changes taking place in Irish society. Irish voters approved the Maastricht Treaty, which paved the way for the establishment of the EU, by a large majority in a referendum held in 1992. In 1993, the Irish and British governments signed a joint peace initiative (the Downing Street Declaration), which affirmed Northern Ireland's right to self-determination. A referendum on allowing divorce under certain conditions—hitherto constitutionally forbidden—was narrowly passed in November, 1995.

In 1998 hope for a solution to the troubles in Northern Ireland seemed palpable. A landmark settlement, the Good Friday Agreement of April 10, 1998, called for Protestants to share political power with the minority Catholics and gave the Republic of Ireland a voice in the affairs of Northern Ireland. The resounding commitment to the settlement was demonstrated in a dual referendum on May 22: the North approved the accord by a vote of 71% to 29%, and in the Irish Republic 94% favored it. After numerous stops and starts, the new government in Northern Ireland was formed on December 2, 2000, but it has been suspended four times since then (and has remained suspended since October 2002), primarily because of Sinn Fein's reluctance to disarm its military wing, the IRA. In 2005, however, the IRA renounced armed struggle, and peace again seemed possible.

Despite a number of recent corruption and bribery scandals, most of which involved the centrist Fianna Fáil Party of Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, the party won 81 of 166 seats in May 2002. Ahern became the first Irish prime minister in 33 years to be elected to a second successive term.

Once a country plagued with high unemployment, high inflation, slow growth, and a large public debt, Ireland has undergone an extraordinary economic transformation in the last 15 years. Formerly an agriculture-based economy, the “Celtic Tiger” has become a leader in high-tech industries. In some recent years its economy has grown as much as 10%.

http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107648.html
The Aran Islands

The Aran Islands, where most of the action in *The Cripple of Inishmaan* takes place, mark the westernmost point of the European continent. They sit in front of Galway Bay where it opens into the Atlantic Ocean. The three islands are Inishmore (Inis Mor, meaning big island-9 miles long), Inishmaan (Inis Meain, middle island, 3.5 miles in diameter), and Inisheer (Inis Oirr, eastern island-3 miles in diameter). Inishmaan is the shortest in length of the three Aran Islands. All three islands are limestone. Inishmore is by far the most populated and interesting. Inisheer is smaller and less populated. Inishmaan has a population of about 250 people. The landscape of all three islands is harsh: steep, rugged cliffs and windswept, rocky fields divided by stone walls. During the winter, severe gales sweep the islands; because of this, most of the settlements are found on the side facing away from the Atlantic Ocean.

There's a stark beauty about these islands and the simple lives their inhabitants eke out of six inches of topsoil and a mean sea. Precious little of the land is productive. In the past, people made a precarious living from fishing, farming, and sheep. The layers of limestone rock offered little natural soil. The islanders have been layering seaweed with sand for centuries to build up a layer of soil for farming. The fields are small, divided by several thousand miles of drystone wall. Most of these are built in the Aran "gap" style with angled upright stones filled with smaller stones. This allows a farmer who wants to move stock to dismantle and rebuild the walls easily. Tourism has become important to all three islands today, but in the time of the play fishing, farming, sheep, and a little mining were the only sources of income. The rocky islands are home to many sheep.

World-renowned Aran sweaters are still hand-knit in homes across the islands and shipped to upscale boutiques around the world. The classic style is an ecru-colored, rough, boiled sheep's wool with a wavy pattern.

A steep-sided hill on Inishmaan holds the oval fort of Dún Conor (a National Monument), with a number of early hut sites restored in the interior. The old way of life of the Aran islanders, especially their clothing, is particularly well preserved on Inishmaan. The house of the poet and dramatist John Millington Synge has also been carefully preserved. Synge drew attention to the special nature of the archipelago in his book *The Aran Islands* (1907). Synge’s classic one-act tragedy, “Riders to the Sea,” is set on “an island off the coast of Ireland,” (probably Inishmaan), and describes the harsh conditions of fishing in the wild north Atlantic.

Electricity arrived on Inishmaan at the late date of 1975. Gaelic is the native language of Inishmaan, and many of the residents do not speak English at all. Yet, these tiny islands have been the source of inspiration for many other Irish writers: Lady Gregory, Liam O'Flaherty, W.B. Yeats, Sean Keating, and Harry Clarke. Martin McDonagh uses the Irish gift of eloquent gab he learned in his summers on the island. He uses the islanders’ exquisite tempos, rhythms, and lilt to build his characters and enhance his storytelling.

A final note on the Aran Islands for crossword puzzle fanatics: "Aran" is frequently the 4-letter answer to a clue about small islands of great importance to poetry or sweaters.

Irish Facts and Statistics

National name: Éire

President: Mary McAleese (1997)

Taoiseach (Prime Minister): Bertie Ahern (1997)

Land Area: 26,598 sq mi; Total Area: 27,135 sq mi

Population (2007 est.): 4,109,086 (growth rate: 1.1%); birth rate: 14.4/1000; infant mortality rate: 5.2/1000; life expectancy: 77.9; density per sq mi: 154

Capital: Dublin, population in 2003 estimated at 1,018,500

Other Large Cities: Cork, 193,400; Limerick, 84,900; Galway, 67,200

Monetary Units: Euro (formerly Irish pound [punt])

Languages: English, Irish (Gaelic) (both official)

Ethnicity/Race: Celtic, English

Religions: 88% Roman Catholic, 3% Church of Ireland, 2% Other Christian, 4% None, 3% No Answer

Literacy Rate: 98% (a 1981 est.)

Economic Summary: GDP/PPP (2005 est.): $136.9 billion; per capita $34,100.

Real Growth Rate: 4.7%. Inflation: 2.7%. Unemployment: 4.2%. Arable land: 15%.

Agriculture: turnips, barley, potatoes, sugar beets, wheat; beef, dairy products.

Labor Force: 2.03 million (2005 est.); agriculture 8%, industry 29%, services 64% (2002 est.).

Industries: steel, lead, zinc, silver, aluminum, barite, and gypsum mining processing; food products, brewing, textiles, clothing; chemicals, pharmaceuticals; machinery, rail transportation equipment, passenger and commercial vehicles, ship construction and refurbishment; glass and crystal; software, tourism.

Natural Resources: zinc, lead, natural gas, barite, copper, gypsum, limestone, dolomite, peat, silver.

Exports: $102 billion f.o.b. (2005 est.): machinery and equipment, computers, chemicals, pharmaceuticals; live animals, animal products.

Imports: $65.47 billion f.o.b. (2005 est.): data processing equipment, other machinery and equipment, chemicals, petroleum and petroleum products, textiles, clothing.


Transportation: Railways: total: 3,312 km (2004). Highways: total: 95,736 km; paved: 95,736 km (including 125 km of expressways); unpaved: 0 km (2002).


http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107648.html
Awards for The Beauty Queen of Leenane
The George Devine Award for Most Promising Playwright, 1996
The Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright, 1966
Tony Nomination for author of a Best Play, 1998
The 1997-1998 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play, 1998
Tied with Gloss Indecency for The Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Play, 1998
3 Critic's Picks (Los Angeles Times, BackStage West, & ShowMag.com)
3 Garland Award Honorable Mentions: One for "Best Play" and two for cast members, Kathleen M. Darcy ("Maureen") and Casey Kramer ("Mag")
Outer Critics Award for Best Broadway Play, 1998

Awards for The Lonesome West
Nominated for Broadway’s Tony Award, 1999
Czech Theatre Award: The Alfred Radok Award for Best Play, 2002.

Awards for A Skull in Connemara
Nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Comedy, 1997

Awards for The Lieutenant of Inishmore
Alfred Radok Theatre Award for Best Play, 2003
The Olivier Award for Best New Comedy, 2006
Obie Award for Best Play, 2006
Tony Award for Best Play, 2006
Nominated for The Drama Desk Award for Best Play, 2006

Awards for The Pillowman
The Oliver Award for Best New Play, 2004
Nominated for The Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play, 2005
Nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play, 2005

Other Awards
The Writers Guild Award for Best Fringe Play at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, 1996


Martin McDonagh Publications

The Plays
The Leenane Trilogy
  The Beauty Queen of Leenane, 1996
  A Skull in Connemara, 1997
  The Lonesome West, 1997
The Aran Islands Trilogy
  The Cripple of Inishmaan, 1997
  The Lieutenant of Inishmore, 1997
  The Banshees of Inisheer, 1997

The Films
Six Shooter (a short), 2005
In Bruges, 2008

Creating a **Theatrical Production**

By Denise Burson Freestone, Artistic Director and Co-Founder

From start to finish, it takes an incredible number of artists to create a theatrical production, and the greatest productions are frequently realized by individuals who respect each others’ talents and abilities and develop a strong sense of teamwork — camaraderie, dedication, and joy in the work being accomplished are often the first signs that an excellent work of art will soon be created. First, and obviously foremost, is the **Playwright**. In modern theatre, the vast majority of plays are in written script form. However, other types of plays are still developed today, such as scripts that are loosely based on a “scenario” or plot line and then improvised by the actors and director with no specific spoken lines ever being formally written.

For OpenStage Theatre, the plays to be performed in a given season are selected by the **Artistic Director**, with a great deal of input and recommendations made by the Company’s regular directors and key Company Members. Once the season is chosen, the Artistic Director then selects the individual **Directors** for each play. Each spring, OpenStage holds auditions for all of the shows to be produced the following season, which runs from August through the following June. The Directors cast their plays from actors and actresses who are new to the Company as well as those who have worked with the Company previously (some for as long as thirty-four years).

Each production rehearses for six to seven weeks, four to five times a week, usually for three hours per rehearsal. During the rehearsal process, the **Assistant Director** helps the Director in numerous capacities, including recording stage blocking, making notes for the Director, communicating necessary information to the performers and designers, etc. Prior to the beginning of rehearsals, the Director meets with the **Design Team**, which is composed of the **Set Designer**, **Costume Designer**, **Lighting Designer**, **Properties Designer/Set Dresser**, **Sound Designer**, **Hair Designer**, and **Make-Up Designer**. The Design Team determines all of the physical design elements for a production, from how an individual character’s hair is styled to what quality, intensity and hue the lights will have during individual scenes. All of these elements—set, costumes, hand properties, furniture, set dressing, lights, sound, make-up, hair, and special effects (if needed)—must be coordinated so that they work together to actualize the Director’s vision in the best possible way. The Design Team continues to meet throughout the rehearsal period, and their expertise in visualizing the final physical product of the play is a vital element for the play’s success.

The **Producer** or **Production Manager** oversees all of these efforts, as well as the realization of the designs—such as set construction, costume construction, etc. This realization may be accomplished by the Designers or by **Theatre Technicians**, such as **Master Carpenters**, **Seamstresses**, **Master Electricians**, **Sound Engineers**, **Hair** or **Make-Up Stylists**, etc. Other Theatre Technicians vital to mounting a finished production include the **Stagehands**, who run the show backstage, the **Lighting and Sound Board Operators**, and, most importantly, the **Stage Manager**, who is in charge of all aspects of the play once the design aspects and the acting are merged together. This “merging” occurs when the play “sets in,” or moves out of the rehearsal and construction space and into the performance space for technical rehearsals and dress rehearsals, which usually last one week. The Stage Manager makes sure the stage is set appropriately, that all equipment is operating correctly, that all performers are present for their entrances, and “calls” all the cues during performances by telling the Board Operators and Stagehands when to execute a change in lighting, sound or stage setting.

All of these individuals are vital to the final product and, in essence, are present on the stage during the performance through their artistic contributions. They create the world the **Actors** and **Actresses** reside in during the actual performance. But all of these efforts would be meaningless without the **Audience**. The following quote, from the play **The Dresser** by Ronald Harwood, captures the true purpose of theatre:

> “I had a friend once said, ‘Norman, I don’t care if there are only three people out front, or if the audience laugh when they shouldn’t, or don’t when they should, one person, just one person is certain to know and understand. And I act for him.’ That’s what my friend said.”
A Brief Overview of OpenStage Theatre & Company

Founded in 1973, OpenStage Theatre & Company has committed itself to a professional orientation for the serious theatre artist. The organization’s goal has always been to establish a nationally recognized theatre in Northern Colorado. Excellence, discipline and artistic integrity are the principles that continue to guide the Company, as evidenced by the Company receiving the 1997 Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts.

OpenStage Theatre has been actively producing and promoting live performing arts in Northern Colorado since its inception, making it one of the longest practicing theatrical producers in Colorado. The Company has grown steadily and consistently and is a strong member of the statewide arts producing community. The Theatre produces shows for a wide range of audiences, including adult and family fare in both the contemporary and classical genres and supplements its six regular season shows with challenging and original works through openstage etc. The Company has produced comedies, dramas, histories, grand operas, musicals and original works and has toured regionally.

OpenStage Theatre continues an ambitious policy of community outreach and development, providing materials, personnel and professional advice to schools, government and social service agencies, businesses, and other art producers. The Company is an active partner in the planning efforts of Beet Street, Arts Alive Fort Collins, the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Fort Collins, the Downtown Development Authority, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Colorado Council on the Arts and the Colorado Theatre Guild.

OpenStage Theatre & Company is committed to the development of Fort Collins as an important and viable cultural center for Colorado. Its reputation for quality and consistency has been built through years of hard work and with the talents of many fine performers and theatre artists. The Company has been paying honorariums to actors and technicians since 1977. In numerous instances, the training and experience acquired through OpenStage have provided individual artists with the expertise to launch successful professional careers.

During its history the Theatre has produced over 250 theatrical productions, and the caliber of its shows has been compared with professional companies in Chicago, Houston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver and…yes…even New York.

“OpenStage Theatre Company – the trailbreaker, the stalwart, the adventurer, almost all things to all theater people in Northern Colorado for [over] thirty years…” Loveland Reporter Herald

“OpenStage …can easily take its place among Colorado’s best companies…” The Denver Post

“OpenStage productions rival anything to be seen in Denver…” Greeley Tribune

“Northern Colorado does not have a Radio City Music Hall, a Metropolitan Museum of Art or a Rockefeller Center. But it does have OpenStage Theatre & Company, a premiere performing arts organization whose caliber of professionalism makes Fort Collins theatre-goers feel like they are in New York City…Whether you’re looking for an evening of theatrical professionalism or nontraditional innovation, OpenStage Theatre & Company is a sure bet for quality entertainment.” Scene Magazine