

BIRR THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE WITH JASANGO THEATRE PRESENT

# Scripts

Ireland's Playwriting Festival



**11-14 JULY 2024** [www.scriptsireland.com](http://www.scriptsireland.com)



### SPECIAL THANKS

Abbey Theatre; Fishamble;  
The Arts Council; Dr. Sally O'Leary,  
Offaly County Council Arts Officer;  
Offaly LEO; Minding Creative Minds;  
Anne Coughlan; Ger Nolan;  
Connor Keaveny; Birr – LOETB;  
Michelle's Boutique; Birr Castle Demesne;  
Brosna Press; Birr Festivals Collective.

### FESTIVAL TEAM

Lisa Daly, Emma Nee Haslam,  
Angela Ryan Whyte, Eugene O'Brien,  
Gildas Le Pallec, Rebecca Kelly,  
Emma Hanley.



Festival Founders

**Welcome to the tenth outing of Scripts: Ireland's Playwriting Festival**, a dynamic celebration of contemporary Irish theatre, dedicated to nurturing and showcasing the finest new plays from emerging and established playwrights. Held in the vibrant town of Birr, County Offaly, the festival transforms the historic Birr Theatre & Arts Centre into a buzzing hub of creativity and innovation. Over the course of several days, audiences are treated to a diverse lineup of staged readings, full productions and engaging workshops, all helmed by talented Irish artists. With our commitment to fostering fresh voices and bold storytelling, *Scripts* not only enriches Ireland's cultural landscape but also offers a unique platform for playwrights to develop their craft and connect with enthusiastic theatregoers. Join us for an unforgettable journey through the power and passion of live theatre at *Scripts: Ireland's Playwriting Festival*.

This year's selected writers are **Dee Roycroft**, **Áine Ryan** and **Conor Montague**. The writers will work with their mentor, Eugene O'Brien, for a week to further develop the final plays, which will be performed as rehearsed readings with professional actors at *Nurtured New Works* on Sunday 14 July, and a winner will be announced.

The theme of this year's festival is **Time**, an exploration profoundly resonant with the era we inhabit. In a period marked by rapid change, uncertainty and reflection, time serves as both a lens and a canvas, inviting playwrights to examine the past, present and future. Whether grappling with historical events, envisioning dystopian futures or capturing fleeting human experiences, the plays presented this year promise to offer insightful and poignant reflections on how time shapes and is shaped by the world around us.



# FESTIVAL PROGRAMME

## THURSDAY 11 JULY

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10.30am	<b>Lights Up</b> Children's Theatre-making Workshop with Lisa Daly	Family	9
2pm	<b>Embracing Technology</b> The Role of AI in the Creative Process with Offaly LEO	Workshop	7
8pm	<b>The Dead House</b> by Martin Warde	Theatre	4

AFTERSHOW: THE CHESTNUT

## FRIDAY 12 JULY

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2pm	<b>Playing With Time</b> with Rian Smith, The Abbey Theatre	Workshop	7
8pm	<b>Truth, Love or Promise</b> by Nuala McKeever	Theatre	5

AFTERSHOW: KELLY'S

## SATURDAY 13 JULY

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10.30am	<b>Family Yoga</b>	Family	9
11.30am	<b>The Monster Making Machine</b> The Sketchcan Caravan	Family	9
2pm	<b>Changing Room</b> Pop-up Play	Theatre	6
3pm	<b>Promoting Female Writers</b> In association with Minding Creative Minds	Workshop	7
8pm	<b>Sugar</b> by Michael Patric	Theatre	6

AFTERSHOW: CRAUGHWELL'S

## SUNDAY 14 JULY

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10am	<b>Time for Action</b> with David Horan	Workshop	8
2pm	<b>Where the Stage Meets the Digital Age</b> with Niall Austin	Workshop	8
4pm	<b>Nurtured New Works</b> Festival Finale	Theatre	10

## TICKET OFFERS

All events are individually priced but why not pick a bundle and immerse yourself in Scripts!

### ONE-A-DAY €50

Thur: The Deadhouse  
Fri: Truth, Love or Promise  
Sat: Sugar  
Sun: Nurtured New Works

### SUPER SCRIPTS SUNDAY €40

Two Workshops & Nurtured New Works

### SCRIPTS SCHOLAR €100

Access to all performances and workshops and observing Scripts mentoring session

To avail of the above discounts, the FULL package must be purchased at the one time.

[www.scriptsireland.com](http://www.scriptsireland.com)



# THE DEAD HOUSE

Written and performed  
by Martin Warde

"We are gathered at the dead house. Such a morbid name, I mean, there is still another person alive in that place, my granny. My grandfather's cold and lifeless body is laid out so that we can all have a final moment to say goodbye. "Goodbye grandad", as if he can even hear us."

Patrick is an Irish Traveller who hasn't been home in 10 years but returns from self-exile for his grandfather's funeral. Comedian and writer Martin Warde's debut play is a powerful and moving dark comedy that explores complex themes of family, tradition and self-acceptance.

The play is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of finding one's voice and identity.

**Thursday 11 July, 8pm**  
**BOYD'S FUNERAL HOME\***

€15 - LIMITED AVAILABILITY - BOOK EARLY

*\*On the sad occasion of the funeral home being in use, this play will move to Birr Theatre. Ticket holders will be notified.*

*Martin Warde, a member of the Irish Traveller Community, holds a Sociology and Politics Degree from NUI Galway and an MA in Journalism from UL. He is a stand up comedian, writer, theatre-maker and photographer. Martin advocates for better representation of his community in Irish media and the Arts. His play "The Dead House" had a sold-out run at Dublin Theatre Festival, Galway Theatre Festival and Listowel Writer's Week. He writes for major Irish newspapers and appears on RTÉ and Virgin Media. Martin's TV series "The End of the World with Beanz" aired on RTÉ One in March 2024.*



# TRUTH, LOVE OR PROMISE

A New Comedy Drama  
Written and Performed  
by Nuala McKeever

Internationally-acclaimed writer and actor Nuala McKeever (*In The Window*) is back with a new one-woman drama about identity, love and the power of friendship. Set in a creative writing class in Belfast, this poignant dark comedy looks at what happens when things don't go the way we want in life.

We meet Brenda, Maureen and Joanna, who each week get to know each other through their stories. But it's clear that it's the things they're leaving out, that really tell the tale. And when the truth turns out to be shocking, they have to decide what really matters most – Truth, Love or Promise.

*"...the charm of McKeever's stage presence...writes as sharply as she acts...storytelling confidence of Charles Dickens...great skill...endearing...warm-hearted show"*

- Independent

*"That was astounding!  
Humour and pathos cheek by jowl.  
That was pure O'Casey or Shakespeare."*

- Jim Lockhart

*"A masterclass in writing,  
performing and timing."*

- Cathy McCullough, Director, John O'Connor Writing School Festival

**Friday 12 July, 8pm**

**BIRR THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE**

€15 (INCL. REFRESHMENTS ON ARRIVAL)



# CHANGING ROOM

**POP-UP PLAY** (Approx. 15 Minutes)

**Presented by Borderline Productions**

A hilarious comedy about a woman who gets trapped in a shop changing room when the dress she is trying on suffers an embarrassing zip malfunction. A darkly comic tale of compulsion, family secrets and misleading clothes sizing. We are excited to welcome back Scripts alumni playwrights **Robert Webster** and **Jacqueline Corrigan** who developed this richly comic script at the 2022 festival.

**Saturday 13 July, 2pm** MICHELLE'S BOUTIQUE, MAIN STREET, BIRR  
NO CHARGE – BOOKING RECOMMENDED



# SUGAR

**Written and performed  
by Michael Patric**

*Sugar* is written and performed by Michael Patric (*An Cailín Ciúin*, *Smother*, *Frontier*) and directed by Geoff Gould. A comedy with a big heart set in Mallow sugar factory prior to its closure. Danyl Sweetnam describes his last days as an Irish Sugar employee. As much as he tries to stay on topic, he can't help veering off towards "the craic" and taking us on a journey of hilarious shenanigans. "You must have the craic. I don't trust any fella who can't have d'aul craic."

It's 2006 and Danyl is finding the going tough. His marriage is falling apart, his job is in jeopardy and then there's a family bereavement. Rather than letting it all defeat him though, Danyl decides to laugh his way through it. Contrary to the stereotypical Irish male who finds it difficult to talk about his problems, Danyl will tell it all to anyone, anywhere, anytime. His fear, his grief, his family and even his sex life. He has a deep love and respect for his work colleagues. They have taught him the value of laughing at the serious stuff. He will tell us with pride how they fought against the company to win a fair redundancy settlement in the Labour Court. Indeed, this fight mirrors his own personal fight with tragedy and loss. "If you can keep smiling at all, you have hope."

**Saturday 13 July, 8pm** BIRR THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE  
€15 (INCL. REFRESHMENTS ON ARRIVAL)



## WORKSHOPS



### EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY THE ROLE OF AI IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

In association with Ofaly Local Enterprise Office



Are you ready to revolutionise your creative and marketing endeavours with AI? What's in Store? Unlock the potential of generative AI to enhance your marketing strategies within the creative industries. Dive into practical skills that will streamline your marketing efforts and business operations daily.

**Who Should Attend?** This course is tailored for artists and marketing professionals in the creative sector looking to harness the power of AI tools.

**Your Learning Journey:** Facilitated by MarketingCoach.ie, an award-winning consultancy, led by Muireann Fitzmaurice. Muireann is dedicated to helping businesses, big and small, craft impactful marketing strategies that drive growth and amplify their message.

**Thursday 11 July, 2-5pm, LOETB €10**

### PLAYING WITH TIME

with Rian Smith, The Abbey Theatre



The workshop will first offer some fundamentals on character and story structure, before engaging in writing exercises about how time relates to playwriting, how considerations around time shape how the play is told. The workshop will end with a general Q&A on dramaturgy and the Abbey. Suitable for emerging and advanced playwrights; bring your favourite notebook and a pen!

*Rian Smith is a dramaturg and writer, currently working at the Abbey Theatre as Literary and New Work Associate. He has worked in various theatre and film departments, in Ireland, the UK and New York. He is a graduate of the National Film School at IADT, having majored in Screenwriting.*

**Friday 12 July, 2-5pm, FREE WORKSHOP (Limited places, booking essential) LOETB**

### PROMOTING FEMALE WRITERS IN ASSOCIATION WITH MINDING CREATIVE MINDS

with Pamela McQueen



It's no secret that despite huge efforts from many stakeholders, it can prove challenging for female writers to sustain a career. In this workshop, Dramaturg Pamela McQueen will **host a discussion and share practical tips** on how to develop a sustainable career as a female writer.

**Saturday 13 July, 3pm BIRR CASTLE €10**



## WORKSHOPS



### TIME FOR ACTION

with David Horan

David Horan will lead a playwriting workshop encouraging participants to explore the 'fourth dimension' of time in dramatic writing. Looking both at how audiences experience time when they watch a comedy or drama unfold, and also how the playwright shapes narratives in time, this three-hour workshop aims to show playwrights how they can create the most explosive, dynamic and compelling scenes to hold audiences riveted.

*See page 11 for David Horan biography.*

**Sunday 14 July, 10am-1pm, BIRR CASTLE €25**

### WHERE THE STAGE MEETS THE DIGITAL AGE

with Niall Austin

In a world where technology is rapidly evolving, integrating digital tools into live performances can expand creativity and ensure that the arts remain relevant and appealing, especially to younger, tech-savvy audiences. From hybrid 'eGaming / Storytelling' to AI Generated Scripts, this interactive, 'hands-on' workshop for both emerging and advanced theatre-makers, explores the relevance of emerging digital technologies into Arts Practice and Performance. A number of new innovations will be demonstrated to outline emerging skills for storytellers wishing to craft the tales of tomorrow and re-write the rules of theatre.

*Niall Austin is an award-winning Writer and Technologist, whose work is steeped in the art of storytelling. His new show '7 Deadly Sins' is a hybrid Theatre / eGaming experience, premiering at the Civic Theatre in July 2024. Previous work includes play's 'Inferno21', 'PL-AI' and 'Deep Fake', writing and composing Ronnie Drew's last album, and creating games and interactive installations for the Olympic Movement, Coca-Cola, Heineken and Yoko Ono.*

**Sunday 14 July, 2-3.15pm, BIRR CASTLE €10**



### LIGHTS UP - CHILDREN'S THEATRE-MAKING WORKSHOP

with Lisa Daly

Get ready to move, act, dance, sing, write, and perform! Join us for an imaginative workshop filled with games, storytelling, and purposeful play. Come play along as we bring stories to life.

Suitable for 6 - 10 year olds. Limited spaces available. Children should wear comfortable clothing and bring a water bottle.

**Thursday 11 July, 10.30am-12.30pm**, BIRR THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE €10

### FAMILY YOGA

Led by Lisa Daly, certified *Cosmic Kids Yoga Teacher*

For children ages 2-6, and anyone older who is ready to use their imagination and go on a yoga adventure! Kids' yoga helps to build strength, balance, coordination, confidence and so much more.

**Saturday 13 July, 10.30-11am** FREE WORKSHOP (No charge, booking recommended)

BIRR LIBRARY BRING A YOGA MAT OR TOWEL. CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

### THE MONSTER MAKING MACHINE

Presented by The Sketchcan Caravan

This playful multi-media performance invites the audience to watch and wonder as 2D cardboard shapes become characters inside The Monster Making Machine. As each character emerges from the Machine, they take to the stage to reveal a special talent, perfect for a mini monster circus. But there is trouble ahead, the star of the show gets stuck in the machine and needs help getting out. The story is told through mime, movement to music, puppetry, animation and poetry.

A short workshop follows the performance, giving children an opportunity to play with materials and concepts seen in the show and to model ways adults can engage their children in creative activities. Suitable for children aged 2-8 years and their grown-ups. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Saturday 13 July, 11.30am-12.30pm**

€10 (1 adult/2 children €25)

BIRR THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE



# Scripts

Ireland's Playwriting Festival

We are delighted to partner with **Birr Theatre & Arts Centre** who are supporting the mentoring side of our programme this year under their new Theatre Residency Programme. After a week of mentoring and editing guided by Eugene O'Brien, our selected *Scripts* Playwrights' plays will go from page to stage, directed by Jim Culleton and performed in a staged reading by some of Ireland's leading actors. The winner will be chosen by our esteemed judging panel, Selina O'Reilly (The Abbey Theatre) and David Horan. Delving into this year's theme, *Time*, these three plays follow characters that are finding connections in unexpected moments, from dark to uplifting, they lead us to question how a moment in time can have a ripple effect on the human experience. Followed by a talkback session.

**Sunday 14 July, 4pm**

BIRR THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE, €15

Read more about our writers and production team on [ScriptsIreland.com](http://ScriptsIreland.com)

# NURTURED NEW WORKS FESTIVAL FINALE

Directed by Jim Culleton • Music by Lauran Beth

Writing mentorship by Eugene O'Brien

## PLAYWRIGHTS



### ÁINE RYAN

#### MISTER NIGHT

A night at a bed and breakfast in an Irish coastal town takes a sinister turn, when the peculiar owner keeps interrupting a young woman during date preparations.



### CONOR MONTAGUE

#### DELUSIONAL DISORDER

Will a poet's freedom be determined by a therapist imprisoned by her past? A tense dialogue which explores perceptions of reality, societal prejudice, childhood trauma and the relative merits of Rich Tea and Chocolate Hobnobs.



### DEE ROYCROFT

#### AN ANGEL IN CENTRA

Cora and John-Joe can't stop running. Running for their lives, or someone else's life. A short play about beating hearts, angels and the interconnectedness of everything.



## MENTOR



**EUGENE O'BRIEN** mentors our selected playwrights throughout the festival. Eugene won the Irish Times Theatre Award, the Stewart Parker Award and the Rooney Prize for Literature for his play *Eden* and his play *Heaven* was awarded an Edinburgh Fringe First and Irish Times Theatre Award last year. He also wrote the TV series *Pure Mule*, winner of five IFTAs and films *The Flag*, *Tarrac* and the screen version of *Eden*. He published his first novel *Going Back* in 2022.

## DIRECTOR



**JIM CULLETON** is the Artistic Director of Fishamble: The New Play Company, for which he has directed productions on tour throughout Ireland, UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US. His productions for Fishamble have won Olivier, The Stage, Scotsman Fringe First and Irish Times Best Director Awards. Jim has also directed for the Abbey, the Gaiety, the Belgrade, CoisCéim, Amnesty International, Little Museum of Dublin and Fighting Words. He has directed audio plays for Audible, BBC, RTÉ Radio 1 and RTÉ lyric fm.

## JUDGING PANEL



**SELINA O'REILLY** is a theatre producer and arts administrator currently working as the Literary and New Work Assistant with the Abbey Theatre. Selina has been with the theatre since 2020 and manages all events, workshops and writer development programmes run by the department. Prior to this, Selina worked as a producer namely with Rough Magic Theatre Company, Barabbas... the Company and Calypso Productions and has produced over 25 professional productions. She holds a BA in Theatre and English from St. Mary's University, in Twickenham.



**DAVID HORAN** is the Artistic Director of Bewley's Café Theatre in Dublin where he is leading PERCOLATE, a new development programme for playwrights which draws support from a panel of expert voices. He is also a freelance director and an award winning writer.

## ACTORS



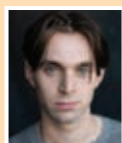
Andrew Bennett



Jolly Abraham



Janet Moran



Cillian Leneghan

## THE PRIZE

- Private Consultation and Dramaturgical Support with The Abbey Theatre
- Scholarship: Fishamble Playwriting Course
- 2025 Birr Theatre & Arts Centre Theatre Residency





# Scripts

Ireland's Playwriting Festival

Since inception in 2013, *Scripts* has established collaborative links with key organisations including The Abbey Theatre, Fishamble Theatre, Listowel Writers Week, Irish Writers Centre, RTÉ Drama on One, Culture Night, Waking The Feminists and lots more. As well as winning a PPI Radio Award for Drama with Midlands 103, *Scripts* has created incomparable opportunities for playwrights, actors, directors and producers to continually strive for excellence in the craft of Playwriting and Drama. We are delighted to be working with Minding Creative Minds as our wellbeing partner this year. We look forward to continuing these relationships and exploring further friendships with like-minded lovers of new work.

## SCRIPTS AT A GLANCE

THU 11	10.30am	<b>Lights Up</b>
	2pm	<b>Embracing Technology</b>
	8pm	<b>The Dead House</b>
FRI 12	2pm	<b>Playing With Time</b>
	8pm	<b>Truth, Love or Promise</b>
SAT 13	10.30am	<b>Family Yoga</b>
	11.30am	<b>The Monster Making Machine</b>
	2pm	<b>Changing Room</b>
	3pm	<b>Promoting Female Writers</b>
	8pm	<b>Sugar</b>
SUN 14	10am	<b>Time for Action</b>
	2pm	<b>Where the Stage Meets the Digital Age</b>
	4pm	<b>Nurtured New Works</b>

## TICKET OFFERS

Pick a bundle and immerse yourself in *Scripts*!

### ONE-A-DAY €50

Thur: The Dead House  
Fri: Truth, Love or Promise  
Sat: Sugar  
Sun: Nurtured New Works

### SUPER SCRIPTS SUNDAY €40

Two Workshops & Nurtured New Works

### SCRIPTS SCHOLAR €100

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