

Straymaker and The Abbey Theatre
in association with Miroirs Étendus
and Once Off Productions present

straymaker



Elsewhere

A New Opera By Michael Gallen

Libretto by Michael Gallen,
Annemarie Ní Churreáin and Carys D Coburn

Directed by Tom Creed

Conductor Fiona Monbet

IMAGE BY ROS KAVANAGH



funding
theatre



COMPANY

Singers

Daire Halpin
Amy Ní Fhearraigh
Adrian Dwyer
Sarah Shine
Carolyn Holt
Fearghal Curtis
Aaron O'Hare

Ensemble Miroirs Étendus

Sarah Van der Vlist
Constant Madon
Joséphine Besançon
Cyprien Noisette
Romain Louveau
Sarah Margaine
Elsa Moatti
Tess Joly
Marwane Champ

Concept/Composer Libretto

Aurélie Martin
Michael Gallen
Michael Gallen
Annemarie Ní Churreáin
Carys D. Coburn

Director

Tom Creed

Conductor

Fiona Monbet

Vocal Director

Romain Louveau

Set and Costume Designer

Katie Davenport

Lighting Designer

Sinéad McKenna

Choreographer

Shawn Fitzgerald-Ahern

Associate Director

Eoghan Carrick

Associate Set and Costume Designer

Laura Fajardo Castro

Associate Lighting Designer

Matt Burke

Sound Engineer

Chris LeDantec

Line Producer

Cally Shine, Once Off

Production Manager

Brendan McLoughlin,
Showscope

Technical Manager

Mark Fennell, Showscope

Company Manager

Morgan Steele, Once Off

Assistant Company Manager

Sinéad Gallagher, Once Off

Stage Manager

Zoe Reynolds

Assistant Stage Managers

Molly Foley

Síle Mahon

Costume Supervisor

Monica Ennis

Wardrobe Maintenance

Edie Dawson

Hair & Make Up

Tee Elliott

Set Construction

Ger Clancy

Showscope

Chief LX

Sarah Timmins

Eoin Winning

Chief AV

Laura Rainsford

Audio Assistant

Kate Crook

Audio Supplier

One Louder Sound

Lighting Supplier

QLX Lighting

Transport

Trevor Price Transport

Typesetting & Printing

Aine Delaney

of Parts

Surtitles

Maeve Sheil

Sidney Uzik

Marketing

Ciara Gogarty

Publicity

Jenny Sharif

Ticketing

Iain Synott, Once Off

Publicity Photographer

Shawn Fitzgerald-Ahern

Production

Ros Kavanagh

Photographer

Producers

Maura O'Keeffe

Cally Shine

FOR STRAYMAKER

Director

Michael Gallen

Producer

Maura O'Keeffe

FOR ABBEY THEATRE

Artistic Director

Caitriona McLoughlin

Executive Director

Mark O'Brien

Producer

Jen Coppinger

Communications

Christine Monk

John Tierney

Muireann Kane

Jack O'Dea

Costume

Donna Geraghty

Furniture and Props

Eimear Murphy

Production

Rob Furey

Anthony Hanley

Danny Erskine

Stage Management

FOR MIROIRS ÉTENDUS

Director

Emmanuel Quinchez

Administrator

Claire Séité

Artistic Co-Ordinator

Sofia Surgutschowa

Production Manager

Flora Laborde

Production Assistant

Romane Vanderstichele

FOR ONCE OFF PRODUCTIONS

Director

Maura O'Keeffe

Senior Producer

Orla Flanagan

Administrator

Catherine Finn

Associate Producer

Sadhbh Barrett Coakley

Associate Producer

Cally Shine

Company Manager

Morgan Steele

Assistant Producer

Sinéad Gallagher

Assistant Producer

Iain Synott

Acknowledgements to *Elsewhere* original co-collaborators: Sinéad O'Kelly, Julia Macarez, Michèle Pierre, Conleth Stanley, Eavan Gribben, Simon Cullen, David Grealy, Grace Halton, Rob Furey, Veronica Foo, Sara Cregan, Anne Delmotte, Emma Morwood, Aoife Miskelly, Othman Louati, Sylvain Devaux, Bertrand Laude, and Juliette Adam.



Michael Gallen
Image: Shawn Fitzgerald-Ahern

'THE MAKING OF THIS OPERA HAS THRIVED UPON THE SAME SPIRIT OF COLLECTIVE ACTION AS THE EVENTS IT REIMAGINES'

In January 1919, the staff of the Monaghan Asylum barricaded the hospital gates, raised a red flag and established an independent Soviet commune. Exhausted by the hardships of the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, these 'front-line' workers overcame sectarian divides to strike for more humane working conditions and gender pay equity. Under the guidance of visionary union leader Peadar O'Donnell, they conceived of a form of 'lock-in' strike that would allow them to gain leverage over the asylum authorities without compromising the welfare of the more than 700 hospital residents.

O'Donnell included both staff and patients in the planning and operation of the Soviet, all wearing identical uniforms. In the course of a dizzying fortnight, this unlikely collective of revolutionaries held off the advances of the Royal Constabulary; spurned the entreatments of Archbishops, politicians

and the press, and even found the time for football matches and dances, presenting a powerful vision of what a care-centred society could look like.

I first came across the story of the "Monaghan Asylum Soviet" in 2016, and was taken aback by the nuanced and compassionate thinking behind this radical event, and that it had taken place so close to my homeplace. There was something in this story that corresponded with what, at my core, I want to talk about and bring to life in my work.

The idea to create an opera around this story grew from a single preoccupation. How must it have felt to have been a resident at the Monaghan Asylum during those astonishing events of 1919 - to have been given a momentary sense of worth and inclusion - and to subsequently endure decades of anonymity and repression in institutional care?

There are stories that need music to be truly told, and I felt that in making *Elsewhere* I might be able to encapsulate all of the thrill, humour, hope and heartbreak that makes this history so unique. In the opera, the events of 1919 unfold through the visions of Celine, a patient who, decades later, remains 'locked in' to the moment of the Soviet, believing herself to be its leader.

My search for the voices of *Elsewhere* has been a person-centred one. In 2019 I spent two months working at the Hôpital Psychiatrique de Malévoz in Switzerland. I ran workshops with the residents there but primarily spent my time listening, and learning to appreciate the deep reserves of humour and compassion that make humans a resource for one another even in the most challenging circumstances. It was through the many conversations had in Malévoz that Celine's voice began to manifest for me; a person possessed with great intelligence and empathy who - like many others - falters in the attempt to communicate herself in a way that conforms to the majoritive idea of 'normality'.

In the two years since, my co-librettists (poet Annemarie Ní Churreáin and playwright Carys D. Coburn) and I have carefully woven two stories together; the fascinating history of the Soviet and the tale of a woman who must dig unimaginably deep within herself to find her freedom and autonomy.

The world in which Celine abides is drawn from the cadence of murmured litanies, the hum of ETC machines, the gentle loping of the border accent... At times she also succeeds in bringing a raucous and riotous vision to life, whirling the characters and musical forces around her into a frenzy of wildness and colour. I found a great creative freedom in conjuring the diverse personalities that populate Celine's "elsewhere", using aspects of traditional and contemporary music - even the cabaret-kitsch of her nemesis, the "Inspector of Lunatics" - to deliver the energy and mood needed for their work routines, medical procedures, games, negotiations, and revolts.

The making of this opera has thrived upon the same spirit of collective action as the events it reimagines. As I write, the whole Straymaker family is busy working in our hive in Monaghan: a sublime, indomitable cast of performers and a deeply imaginative production team all being imbued with ferocious energy by director Tom Creed, conductor Fiona Monbet and producer Maura O'Keeffe. We are making an opera that is deeply rooted in our own creative culture - at the margins, on a border, at the edge of a continent - and which I believe is all the more ambitious and contemporary for it. *Elsewhere* is at times thrilling, challenging, hilarious, devastating - all of these have their place in this almost-unbelievable story. It is an honour to be bringing it to life on the Abbey stage - the imagined future of a forgotten past.

Michael Gallen



Julia Macarez (viola)
Image: Shawn Fitzgerald-Ahern



Fiona Monbet



Tom Creed
Images: Shawn Fitzgerald-Ahern



Special thanks to

Instrument Hires from Fiachra Ó Cinnéide, Alex Petcu,
Caimin Gilmore and Niall McClean, Monaghan Music and
Piano Centre
Mary-Lou McCarthy and Cuan Gallen
The Gallen and Beirne families
Somhairle MacConghail, Shirley McClerkin and all at
Monaghan Arts Office
Déirdriú McQuaid, Creative Monaghan
Darren McQuillan, David Maine and the staff and Board of
Management at Íontas Arts and Community Centre
Castleblayney
Katie Sanderson
Sinead Moclair
Darren McCreesh
Niall Doyle
Neil Murray
Olga Barry
Louis Roden
Nora Hickey M'Sichili, Centre Culturel Irlandais
Paris Gabriel Bender and the staff and residents at the
Hôpital Psychiatrique de Malévoz
Prof. Brendan Kelly, TCD
The Monaghan Museum
The Gaasthuismuseum, Geel
The staff at St. Davnet's Hospital, Monaghan
Dr. Niamh NicGabhann, UL
Kathleen Tynan, Andrew Synott and the Royal Irish Academy
of Music
Dearbhla Collins
David Adams

Shane Mac an Bhaired
Daire Hall
Dublin City Arts Office
Meath Arts Office
The Blayney Blades
The National Concert Hall
Don Black & all at Wesley House
Fergus Shiel
Diego Fasciati
Robert Read
Mary Sheehan
Florentina Burcea
Damian and Catherine Gribbin
Bailey Gibson and Sons
Gavin O'Sullivan and Irish National Opera
Eamonn Fox
Eoin Heaney
Brian Daly
Jason Coogans
Ciaran Murphy
Gavin Mooney
Ian Thompson
Mel & Nora-Kate Mercier
Nathan Snow
Gemma Reeves
Irish Chamber Orchestra
Bridget Webster and Sarah Latty, Coisceim
Ilona McCormack
Eva Scanlan and Laura MacNaughton, Fishamble
John Crudden, the Gate Theatre

STRAYMAKER SUPPORTERS



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017-2022



ABBAY THEATRE SUPPORTERS



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



An Rann Tarsamhacha, Culture,
Éalasan, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Heritage, Gaeltachta, Sport and Media

PROGRAMME PARTNER



CORPORATE GUARDIANS



Bloomberg

RETAIL PARTNER ARNOTTS

GOLD AMBASSADORS



McCANN FITZGERALD Goodbody



HOSPITALITY PARTNER THE WESTBURY

THE DOYLE COLLECTION - DUBLIN

IT PARTNER



SILVER AMBASSADORS

interpath  ODGERS BERNDTSON

RESTAURANT PARTNERS



Rosa Madre
Restaurant

HAWKSMOOR

PLATINUM PATRONS

The Cielinski Family
Deirdre and Irial Finan
Sheelagh O'Neill
Carmel and Martin Naughton

DIRECTORS' CIRCLE PATRONS

Tony Ahearne
Pat and Kate Butler
Janice Flynn
Susan and Denis Tinsley
Elizabeth and Masoud Papp Kamali
in memory of Lloyd Weinreb R.I.P.
Donal Moore R.I.P.

SILVER PATRONS

Frances Britton
Tommy Gibbons
Andrew Mackey
Eugenie Mackey
Eugene Magee
Gerard and Liv McNaughton
Andrew and Delyth Parkes

Thank you to all the above
supporters for your continued
support of your national theatre.

Your generosity is key to creating
a home for Ireland's theatre
makers, players and dreamers
in the national theatre. Support
experiences like the one you've
just seen at the Abbey Theatre
today by making a donation to the
productions of tomorrow.

Scan the QR code to donate.

