

BART PLAYERS are delighted to present
for the **2010** Festival Season

By **Lennox Robinson**

Drama at Inish

Directed by Gillian Porter

**The Canon Lindsay Hall (St Bartholomew's Church Halls),
183 Stranmillis Road, Belfast
4th-6th March 2010, at 8.00pm**





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PRODUCTIONS

ESME STUART LENNOX ROBINSON was born in Douglas, Cork, on the 4th of October 1886.

He was the youngest of seven children born to Andrew Robinson, a stockbroker who, in 1892 at the age of fifty, quit the world of business and was ordained a Minister of the Church of Ireland.

His father's vocation required him to move his family to Kinsale, and later to Ballymoney, both in Co. Cork;

As a child, Lennox suffered from poor health and, as a result, his schooling was irregular. Later, as a young adult, he tried to earn a living by writing — with some success!

Then, one day in August, 1907, he attended the Cork Opera House, where he saw four one-act plays by the Abbey Theatre Company which was then on tour.

The effect on the young twenty-year old Robinson literally changed his life. He suddenly realised that material for plays could be found, not in the Unionist principles of his parents, but in the lives of ordinary people. He wrote a play, "The Clancy Name", and sent it to the Abbey which produced it the following year. 1908. It ran for three months, and it was the first of twenty- two plays that Robinson wrote for the Abbey. WB Yeats, one of the founders of the Abbey Theatre, was, so impressed by the work of the young Lennox Robinson that he invited him to become Manager of the Abbey in 1910. Robinson agreed, and held this position until 1914, when he resigned to devote himself to full- time writing.



But, a shortage of money forced him to seek paid employment: the British Army rejected him because of poor eyesight, although he later secured a low-paid job as a clerk in Dublin Castle.

His next employment was as an organiser for the Carnegie Trust, which had been set up by the Scottish born millionaire, Andrew Carnegie, to build about eighty public libraries in Ireland. This required him to travel extensively around counties Kerry and Limerick, which provided him with an opportunity to observe life in rural Ireland. This, in turn, provided him with material for more plays.

In 1916, he sent “The Whiteheaded Boy” to the Abbey. It was an immediate success, and, over the years, it provided Robinson with several thousands of pounds.

In April, 1919, he re-joined the Abbey which at this time was in severe financial straits, as Manager and Producer. Curfews by the Military Authorities severely restricted audiences, so Robinson retaliated by putting on “The Revolutionist” by Terence MacSwiney just after he had died on hunger strike.

Apart from writing and producing plays himself, he encouraged a

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newcomer to the theatrical scene, Sean O’Casey, whose plays attracted large audiences - as well as hefty revenues!!

Eventually in 1924, the new Free State Government intervened and provided a subsidy to the Abbey, thus making it the first State subsidised theatre in any English- speaking country In the meantime, Robinson was promoted to the Board of Directors of the Abbey in 1923, a position which he held until 1956.

Three years later, in 1926, he set up the Abbey School of Acting, and, for many years, he taught in it himself

In spite of his duties as Director, he found time to write a steady flow of good plays for the Abbey. Usually his characters were comical, scheming, small-town individuals who were obsessed with maintaining their status, as “respectable”.

He portrayed rural Ireland as it actually was — and not the way some people thought it should be!



Lennox Robinson

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Back: Michael 'The Boots' (Andrew Campbell), Constance Constantia (Sandra Ardill) and Helena (Lorna-Jayne Fletcher); *front:* Annie Twohig (Emma Townsend) and Lizzie Twohig (Barbara Jeffers)



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Bart Players Present

‘Drama At Inish’

by
Lennox Robinson

Directed by Gillian Porter

The action takes place in a hotel owned and run by the Twohig family in a small seaside town in Ireland, circa 1930 over a period of several weeks. The arrival of The De La Mare Repertory Company to play the summer season is much anticipated, but their effect on the locals is not.

**Act I – A private sitting-room in the Seaview Hotel,
Inish, during a morning in July.**

Act II - The same, early evening, ten days later.

*There will be a short interval between Act II,
Scene 1 and Act II. Scene 2 and light refreshments will
be on sale in the foyer.*

Act III - The same, a week later, morning

The first performance of ‘Drama at Inish’ took place in Dublin’s Abbey Theatre on 6th February, 1933, directed by the author. It was subsequently produced in the Ambassador’s Theatre, London and in New York, under the title ‘*Is Life Worth Living?*’

Cast

John Twohig	Billy Miskimmin
Lizzie Twohig	Barbara Jeffers
Annie Twohig	Emma Townsend
Eddie Twohig	Garvan Tohill
Peter Hurley	Clem Bell
Christine Lambert	Wendy Pyper
Hector De La Mare	Con McAlister
Constance Constantia	Sandra Ardill
Helena	L - J Fletcher
Michael	Andrew Campbell
John Hegarty	Andrew Devonshire
Tom Mooney	Barney Gadd
William Slattery	Robert Bell

Director	Gillian Porter
Set Design	Alan Marshall
Stage Manager	Caroline Mercer
Set Build	Ian Hastings
Costumes	Carmen O'Hagan
Photography	Terry McDermott
Lighting	Ivor Agnew
Sound	Mike Patterson
Tickets	David Sloan
Publicity & Art	James Burns
Tech support	John Little
Front of House	Christine Olver
	Ann Sloan
	St Bartholomew's
	Mother's Union

Con Mc Alister (Hector De La Mare) first performed with Barts two years ago as St. Ledger Alcock in the highly successful 'The Big House'. He joined us for 'Heil Belfast' for several memorable cameos, including singing 'Wee Willies Lost his Lunchbox' and also that of 'Fireman Pat'



Sandra Ardill (Constance) – first acted with Barts in their 2000 festival play 'Summer'. She has acted with Theatre Three and won several Best Actress awards. Sandra re-joined Barts for 'Heil Belfast' and impressed as the stern pedagogue, Miss Watchman, and the flighty tart Betty and is delighted to take the part of the melodramatic Constance for this year's festivals.

Barbara Jeffers (Lizzie Twohig) needs little or no introduction to Barts regulars as she has been as happy to play bit minor parts such as the 'Fairy Queen' in *Mother Goose* as her many leading roles such as Cass in *The Loves of Cass Maguire* or the revolting Miss Shepherd in *The Lady in The Van* and Maud in last years 'Born in The Gardens' collecting a clatter of Best Actress Awards along the way



Billy Miskimmin (John Twohig) –a very senior citizen of Bart Players, having appeared in many previous productions he has been dragged screaming back on stage for this Production. He is retired, plays golf and sings in Belfast Cathedral. In his spare time he is Company Secretary of a number of Companies he helped set up some time ago. He says: 'Being on stage is a release from the norm, and although hugely time-consuming, I would recommend it to anyone!'

Lorna-Jayne Fletcher (Helena) Lorna-Jayne, a new recruit to Bart's Players just two years ago as Annie Daly in 'The Big House' is now a regular, having played Percy French's young wife in 'Percy', a saucy Russian spy in our summer theatre offering, 'Running Riot' and several parts including a WWII mum in 'Heil Belfast'.



Garvan Tohill (Eddie Twohig) has performed with Barts before, notably playing the young George Gibbs in *Our Town*. Recently he has been actor/director with One Act plays at Belvoir Players for which he has won several awards. His other interests include *"my love for cats and my fascination with the elusive Dung beetle's bedside manner."*

Andrew Campbell (Michael) is our Treasurer and also active with Belvoir Players. Andrew has performed in several productions with Bart's such as "Confusions" and "Our Town", and festival plays including "The Last Night at Ballyhoo". Recently he won an Adjudicator's Award for his performance as "Billy" from "Five Kinds of Silence" at the Castlereagh One Act Drama Festival.



Wendy Pyper (Christine Lambert) - Wendy gained her degree in Drama & Theatre Studies at London's University of Surrey and she performed in "off West-End" theatre including musicals. Wendy has played a variety of roles from Cinderella to Lady Macbeth but found her favourite character so far as Audrey in the Ulster Operatic Company's production of

'Little Shop of Horrors' for which she won an AIMS awards for Best Comedienne. Wendy made her debut with Barts as the young Beannie Swann in 'Heil Belfast' and is very excited about her first festival experience with the company.



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Gillian Porter – Director. Gillian, is currently Chairman of Bart Players and has produced many plays, pantomimes and farces for us and many of these have won at Festivals over the years. Her last Lennox Robinson play was 'The Big House'. This production had an ingenious set which was swirled around on castors between Acts and was whisked off into the wings when the House was burnt down aided by spectacular effects combining sound, lighting and smoke mechanics so realistic that the safety curtain was inadvertently lowered at Bangor festival! Nevertheless the play went on

to win at the AUDF finals in 2008.!

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Emma Townsend (Annie Twohig) Emma joined Barts just over four years ago and played the slightly hysterical Shirley Hornet in both 'Sailor Beware' and its sequel 'Watch it Sailor' in 2007. followed by the gaoler's daughter in 'The Wind in The Willows' She directed 'Busybody' for Barts in 2008 and played the lovelorn Nicolette in last summer's farce 'Running Riot'



Andrew Devonshire (John Hegarty) first came to the attention Of Barts last year when he played the part of Felix in our summer farce 'Running Riot' and has since played in 'Heil Belfast' He has written an adaptation of Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' – so watch this space for news of a possible production.....

Clem /Robert Bell (Peter Hurley/ William Slattery) Clem has been with Bart's since the rest of us were in nappies and is our Secretary.. Stage manager for many recent productions incl. *Watch it Sailor*. He played Gipsy in *The Wind in the Willows*, Miss Shepherd's Brother in *The Lady in The Van* and his rich accent was highly commended in *The Loves of Cass Maguire*.and won Best Supporting Actor at the AUDF Finals for his role in *Summer*



Barney Gadd (Tom Mooney) joined Bart's six years ago as Blind Pugh in *Treasure Island* and played several parts incl. Howie Newsome in *Our Town*, Badger in *The Wind in The Willows*, the Russian spy Bruschnik in 'Running Riot', Rev. Brown in 'The Big House' and the narrator Will Thompson in 'Heil Belfast'. He is delighted to be performing this role as long as it does not interfere with his supporting the Ulster rugby team at Ravenhill.

Carmen O'Hagan – Costumes

Carmen's valuable expertise at getting the right period look, craftwork ability, attention to detail and her eye for a bargain is again utilised in this production set in rural Ireland around 1930. She has done the costumes for festival shows such as 'The Big House' and 'Born in The Gardens', summer shows 'Busybody' and 'Running Riot' and our recent family show 'Heil Belfast' – Phew (to mis-quote her husband, Denis)



St. Bartholomew's Church

Welcome to St. Bartholomew's Church Hall this evening! I do hope you enjoy this production of 'Drama at Inish'.

Here's a church-based Drama Society putting on a play like this during *Lent*, of all seasons! So forget gloomy Christians and dreary Sunday services - at the heart of being a Christian is something quite serious, but always to be tempered with joy, and open to plenty of humour. So: enjoy yourselves this evening!

And if what I have said above prompts you to want more about St. Bartholomew's and what makes us tick, then there's more information at:

<http://www.stbartholomew.connor.anglican.org> or
<http://www.mylocalnews.ie>

or come along and join us one Sunday!

We're also doing a series of short Lent Wednesday evening services (beginning at 19.30) with speakers giving presentations on practical expressions of Christian ministry - including care of creation, theological education and reconciliation.

Yours (with a slight grin)

Ron Elsdon (Rector)

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The Bart Players

THANKS

We wish to acknowledge with grateful thanks, the kind help and assistance we have received from so many sources in connection with all aspects of this production.

In particular we mention:

Belvoir Players – various props

J J Tohill

81st Scouts & Beavers

St. Bartholomews Church Choir & Mother's Union

Ivan Martin – U105

Alana Fearon South Belfast News

Arts Council of N. Ireland

. . . . and others too numerous to mention, including many friends in other Am-Dram Societies

Bart Players Summer Season

We are producing '**Strike Happy**' by **Duncan Greenwood** and directed by Brendan Fegan , as part of our 2010 summer season at the following venues:

Courtyard Theatre, N'abbey	8.00pm, 6th – 7 th	August
Portrush Town Hall	8.00pm, 18 th – 21st	August
Canon Lindsay Hall, Stranmillis	8.00pm, 16 th – 18 th	September

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