

30 hours for WYA



30 Hours for Waterford Youth Arts

Local theatre fans will have the rare - nay, unheard of - opportunity to catch seven new one-act plays featuring leading members of Waterford's theatrical and creative community at Garter Lane on 31st January. They're all coming together to devote '30 hours to Waterford Youth Arts' - an organisation that many have reaped the benefits of at some stage in their lives.

The plays will all have been created in the 30 hours preceding curtain up at Garter Lane. But it won't be a bit manic, according to volunteer actor and WYA board member Vinnie O'Shea. Well, maybe just a small bit...

"I took part in last year's event so it's not a complete baptism for fire of me but it will still be a crazy experience, albeit a very good one. I have no idea yet who I'll be working with. Last year it was Eimear Cheasty as our writer and Edward Denniston as our director. We did put a fair bit of work in but we had a great craic as well. There's nothing like performing, sure you're hyped up to the nines by the time you come off the stage."

"I'm not an actor, not at all. I would have been involved with Waterford Youth Drama, as it was then known, when I was a teenager. I loved being involved but I was never much of a performer, I much preferred being backstage. I kept my hand in over the years, I acted in a show produced by a friend of mine, Joe Meagher, Brecht's The Threepenny Opera. And I also do a bit of DJing on Open Tempo fm (Vinnie's show Eklektoplasm goes out every second Thursday, 8-10pm).

"I like the idea of being involved with the '30 hours'. You get a good mix of theatre professionals and then amateurs like myself but most have either come through the ranks of WYA as a young person or else worked with the organisation as a director or writer. It's great to get some of the old members back, for one night only, particularly those individuals who have gone on to make a career in the arts. And there are quite a few of them - there's been some amazing talent come through the doors of Waterford Youth Arts over the years."



Vinnie O'Shea

All casts and crews involved in '30 hours' will be first brought together on Friday, 30th January 'to get the ball rolling' and then it's non-stop creativity until the curtain falls 30 hours later.

"You do sleep a little bit. How it comes together is that a couple of actors will be grouped with a writer and a director in advance and we'll all meet up on the Friday afternoon. We're all asked to bring along a couple of objects that we can tell a story about. It doesn't matter if the story is true or made up, it's just to plant some seeds or ideas with the writer and director.

"The actors can then head home and the writer and director put their heads together and come up with a coherent script - or at least a concrete idea for it - for early on Saturday morning. Saturday we all get together for a workshop and rehearsal and then by the time we get to Garter Lane at around tea time on Saturday night for a tech rehearsal, we will have something that looks like a play.

"In all, there'll be seven groups of actors working with writers and directors, at various locations, on Saturday, 31st and what audiences will get out of that is a night of fresh, new theatre that has been created in a very unique way. There'll also be some singing and poetry between the plays so it will be a great night's entertainment for their few bob."



Actor Paul Dillon.

Based at The Arches in Barrack Street, Waterford Youth Arts is a charitable organisation with an ethos of providing access to the arts for all young people, promoting youth social inclusion, self-expression and youth development with an open door, Arts-For-All policy. Through workshops, classes, small performances, exhibitions and larger productions during the year, young people can find a space to explore creativity and develop their talents. Since it began 30 years ago, the organisation has worked with over 10,000 young people.

“At the moment we running 76 workshops hours per week in Art, Creative Writing, Dance, Drama, Film, Music and much more to young people aged from 3 to 19 years and about 250 would attend workshops on any given week. But people need to be aware that the service has been under real pressure because of cuts in recent years. Yet we are still always trying to come up with new and creative ways both to generate funds and also to keep the costs down for families who would like to send their kids to Waterford Youth Arts workshops.

“The organisation is always looking at ways of expanding what’s on offer, broadening our horizons and the latest addition are our samba workshops. We also assist young people to learn film making skills and become involved in film production through our workshops and through occasional/funded projects, like the series of short historical documentary films about the Barrack Street and Ballybricken areas.

“WYA has charitable status so, if we get the revenue in from the 30 Hours event, it will all go back into the organisation, keeping workshops reasonably priced for all children and helping to develop and expand the programme even more.”

At time of going to press, the 30 hours for WYA Team are:

Writers - Martina Collender, Anna Jordan, Alec McAllister, Eimear Cheasty, Darren Skelton, Jamie Flynn, Edward Denniston.

Directors - Jim Nolan, Shauna Farrell, Jessica Carri, James Rockett, Vicky Dunphy, Ben Hennessy, Raymond Keane

Theatre Actors - Gerry Kane, Vinnie O'Shea, Trish Murphy, Aibhilin Ryan, Andrew Macklin, Emer O'Brien, Karina Thompson, Jacqui Kelleher, Natasha Everitt, Becky Phelan, Ollie Breslin, Ciara Kavanagh, Beki Moore, Deirdre Halpin, Beth Quinlan, Clare Smith, Joanna Corcoran, Shane Flynn, Dylan O'Brien, Ciaran Murphy, Lynda Gough, Freddy Quinlan, Conor Halpin (Snr), Anita O'Keeffe, Karla Kelly, Paul Dillon

Choreographer: Libby Seward

Film Crew: Ken Coleman, Keith Currams

Film Cast - Louis Quinlan, John J Hearne, Nick Kavanagh, Robert Browne.

Singers / Musicians - Niamh Dalton, Brian Walsh, Phad Hennessy.

Support Crew - Richard Collins (Lighting), Dermot Quinn (Sets), Collette Delgano Rockett, Amy Power (Production Manager), Damien McDonnell (Stage manager), Mari Lynch, Jack Quinlan, Paul McDonald (Sound).