

Milltown Drama Society
Souvenir Programme
of the
Centenary Celebration
of the life and work of
M.J. Molloy

hosted by Jim Carney
featuring
panelist, music and a performance of

"The Paddy Pedlar"
in
Milltown Community Centre
on
Friday 11th April 2014

MÍLE BUÍOCHAS

*Milltown Drama Society wish to extend
heartfelt thanks to the following:*

MILLTOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Cover Design featuring MJ's typewriter, by Louisa McHugh (Milltown).



FÁILTE

I am privileged to welcome you here to Milltown Community Centre this evening for the MJ Molloy Centenary Celebration. On behalf of Milltown Drama Society, I wish to extend a very warm welcome to you and I sincerely hope you have a very enjoyable evening of music and drama, culture and chat.

When we gathered together in this building on a cold night last January our overwhelming desire was to re-establish Milltown's proud tradition of and association with amateur dramatics. It had been well over a decade since the last production and we were anxious to reignite the flame. Thankfully, a great many people felt the same way and so we take pleasure in welcoming you to the first production of the revived Milltown Drama Society.

It does not fall on me to recount the rich history of drama in Milltown. Over many decades plays have been performed in the CYMS Hall, local schools and other venues. Christy Molloy provided a detailed history of this in the excellent *Milltown Sketches*. We hope that MDS can begin a new chapter of Milltown drama. This evening is very much about looking to our promising future as well as celebrating our treasured past.

It also happens that 2014 marks the centenary of the birth of native Milltown playwright MJ Molloy (1914-1994). He is ranked with JM Synge and WB Yeats as a colossus of Irish drama and has left a treasure trove of plays, folklore and history as his legacy. His cottage stands on the edge of our village today, perhaps like something from a postcard of old Ireland, also reminding us of his part in the colourful tapestry of Milltown heritage. Tonight we invite you to join us in celebrating this extraordinarily gifted playwright, scholar, folklorist and gentleman.

Indeed, this special event would not have been possible without the very generous support of a great many people. Milltown Community Council and Milltown Parish Council were extremely supportive in financing the measures to improve the acoustics of the community centre; not just for one night but for the future. Milltown Development Association and Galway County Council also provided much needed funding to this end and to these organisations we are eternally grateful. We wish to take this opportunity to thank our very generous patrons who have helped to guarantee a future for Milltown Drama Society. They are listed at the back of this programme.

Of course, an event like this is nothing without performers and I wish to acknowledge the very hard work of our cast under the direction of Eleanor Sheridan, who drove the creative vision behind this evening's celebration. They invested many hours in honing their craft and I sincerely commend them for their work. My gratitude is also extended to the members of our expert panel and the beautiful music from the Molloy girls and friends. I owe a special word of thanks to the committee of Milltown Drama Society who have worked tirelessly to bring this event to fruition. Their energy and optimism was the driving force behind this Centenary Celebration. I am very grateful for their support. I wish to express a special thank you to the Molloy family for sharing the celebration of this significant year. Heartfelt thanks to this evening's compère Jim Carney for his infectious enthusiasm on this project over the past number of months. My gratitude goes also to Frank Glynn and Tony and Frances Murphy who provided invaluable assistance to me behind the scenes. It is impossible to thank everyone here so I refer you to the 'Thank You' page of this programme.

As the lights go down and the curtain rises on a very special night in Milltown, I wish to end by thanking you- our audience and supporters. We hope to see you at many an MDS production to come. Safe home and God bless.

Is mise le meas,

RORY HYNES - MDS CHAIRMAN



MJ MOLLOY

Michael Joseph Molloy (1914 - 1994) was born at Cartron, Milltown, where he lived for almost all his life. His father, a commercial traveller, was a Glenamaddy man. His mother, a schoolteacher, was a Claremorris woman.

After secondary school at St Jarlath's College, Tuam the young Joe Molloy went to study for the priesthood at St Columban's College, Dalgan Park, Co. Meath but at the age of 20, while studying philosophy, the classics and theology, he was stricken with bone tuberculosis; he was in considerable pain for nearly five years, through many operations, and he was forced to abandon his studies.

From a visit to The Abbey Theatre, to see two plays by George Bernard Shaw, M. J. Molloy was inspired to follow the life-path that would take him back to the Irish National Theatre as one of its leading names for two decades.

His plays included *Old Road* (1943), *The Visiting House* (1946), *The King of Friday's Men* (1948), *The Wood of the Whispering* (1950), *The Paddy Pedlar* (1953), *The Will and the Way* (1955), *Daughter from Over the Water* (1958), *A Right Rose Tree* (1958), *The Wooing of Duvesa* (1964), *Petticoat Loose* (1979) and *The Bachelor's Daughter* (1985).

A member of Aosdána, his lecture "The Making of Folkplays" was published in *Literature and Folklore: Ireland and Newfoundland* (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977).

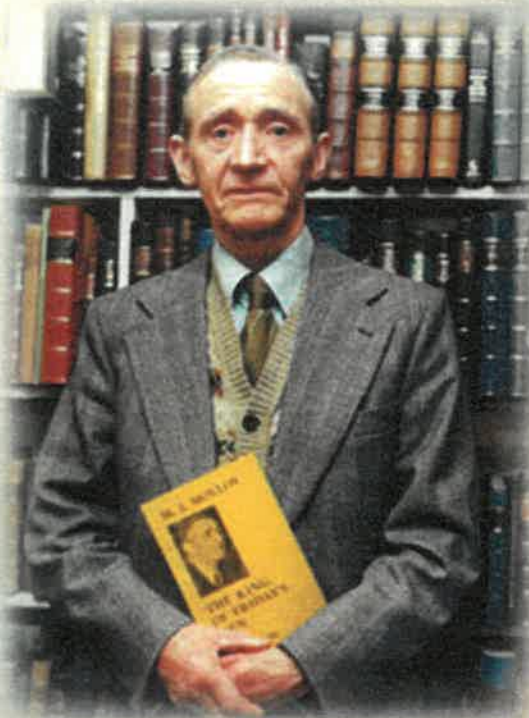
The late Professor Robert O'Driscoll of the University of Toronto, Canada once wrote: "M. J. Molloy was the greatest master of Irish Folk Theatre since Synge," and "his work was as significant as Synge's."

Among the leading professionals in Irish theatre who hold Molloy in the highest esteem is the founder and driving force of the Druid company, Garry Hynes, who produced a widely acclaimed and commercially successful revival of one of the Milltown writer's greatest plays, *The Wood of the Whispering*, in 1983. The lead role of Sanbatch Daly was played by the late, great Mick Lally, also a founder member of Druid along with Garry Hynes and Marie Mullen.

After M. J. Molloy's death in the month of May 1994, Garry Hynes wrote in *The Irish Times*: "The theatrical world he created was strange and unique. A world dominated by great baroque characters from the folklore of the West of Ireland."

Jim Carney

DRAMA IN MILLTOWN



Jim Carney. The CYMS Hall was a venue for the 1982-83 tour of the Druid Theatre production of Molloy's *The Wood of the Whispering*. Directed by Garry Hynes and starring Mick Lally and Marie Mullen, the play drew a huge audience. MJ himself was particularly impressed with Hynes' artistic vision.

There is long tradition of "taking to the boards" in Milltown. Before the CYMS Hall was built in 1939 plays were staged in local schools by well-loved thespians such as Denis Flannery, Joe Frawley and Michael Silke. The building of the hall was a major undertaking spearheaded by Fr Blowick and it became the entertainment centre of the parish, a place where plays, concerts and dances were regularly held.

Among the plays produced in the early days *The New TD*, *Professor Tim* and *The Rising of the Moon* and later on in the fifties and sixties many more productions showcased the acting talent of the area. Molloy's *The Paddy Pedlar* was staged in the fifties and the cast on that occasion were: Michael Egan, Jim Costelloe, Padraic Ruane, Kathleen O'Brien (Forkan), Mary Forde (Sheridan) and Kathleen O'Donnell.

The drama movement in the parish went into decline in the late sixties and in 1980 there was a production of *The Country Boy* produced by

**Milltown I.C.A.
Dramatic Society**
present

"A PROBLEM SOLVED"
(A 3-Act Comedy by B. A. Moran)

Also VARIETY CONCERT

**THE C.Y.M.S. HALL,
MILLTOWN**
Sunday, March 22nd
Doors open, 8.30 p.m.

ADMISSION - - - 3/-

There was a revival in the 1990s when one-act plays *The Marriage Plan* and *A Pound on Demand* were produced. This was followed by a production of Brian Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* but the drama tradition has unfortunately not significantly recovered until now.

It is hoped that the celebration of the birth of MJ Molloy and a consequent upsurge of appreciation of his work will inspire the present society to carry on the tradition of which we are so proud.

Tony and Fran Murphy

A Milltown production of *A Problem Solved* - but who can solve this problem: what was the year?!

MDS PRESENT THE PADDY PEDLAR

Synopsis

M. J. MOLLOY



THE
PADDY
PEDLAR

The action takes place in the kitchen of a small cottage in the Galway Mayo border country. The year is 1840 and Ooshla, the central character, has opted out of a life of work and hardship, to live the life of a gentleman.

Having spent his niece's dowry, he now finds it necessary to resort to petty theft to keep himself fed, and well-supplied with poitin! His predicament is all the more pressing as it appears his niece and her young man will have to emigrate to America to forge out a new life for themselves.

Could an encounter with a Paddy Pedlar, carrying his mysterious bundle, result in the redemption of Ooshla, and a reprieve for the young couple?

Cast (in order of appearance)

Ooshla:	JOE HYNES
Thady:	EAMON BLAKE
Honor:	HANNAH RHATIGAN
Sibby:	MARION GREENE
Matthias:	MICHAEL SHERIDAN
The Paddy Pedlar:	GARY CURRAN

Crew

MDS would like to express sincere thanks to:

Adrian Molloy:	Set construction
Mary Kelly, Louisa McHugh & Gerry Greene:	Set design
Maureen Hynes & Patricia Waldron:	Costumes
Michael Sheridan & Gerry Greene:	Props
Gerry Greene:	Videographer
Benin Tierney:	Sound
Liam Sheridan:	Lighting

All sound and lighting equipment provided by Blacklight.



CAST

DIRECTOR: Eleanor Sheridan

Eleanor was involved in previous plays in Milltown during the 1990s and developed this love of all things dramatic through performing with Dunmore Musical Society and Dunmore Amateur Dramatic Society. It was with great pleasure and not too slight trepidation that she took on the role of director of the revived Milltown Drama Society's first offering *The Paddy Pedlar*.

Attempting to do justice to Molloy's poetic evocation of an Ireland full of great tales and characters, she hopes you enjoy the performance.

JOE HYNES

Joe became involved in Milltown Drama in the 1990s: he had roles in *The Marriage Plan* and *Philadelphia. Here I Come!* He reprised the role of SB O'Donnell in Dunmore Amateur Dramatic Society's production of *Philadelphia. Here I Come!* to great acclaim playing opposite Eleanor Sheridan as Madge. He also played the Doc in D.A.D.S production of *West Side Story*. Tonight, he plays Ooshla Clancy and is delighted to see the revival of drama in Milltown this year.

EAMON BLAKE

Eamon takes on the role of Thady, Honor's sweetheart in the play. He hails from a family with strong connections to Milltown drama over the years. A graduate of NUI Galway and NUI Maynooth, this is Eamon's first main role after a more modest part in St Jarlath's Operatic Society's production of *Grease* in 2004.

HANNAH RHATIGAN

Hannah has been in many productions with Tuam Youth Theatre and in the St Jarlath's Opera and was cast in several leading roles. She is currently studying Music Performance in Galway. She is also an accomplished traditional musician with many awards to her credit. She is greatly looking forward to her role as Honor and wishes all members of the cast and crew the very best of luck.



MARION GREENE

Marion's dramatic debut was in *The Marriage Plan* in 1996 and she was later cast as Madge in the Milltown production of *Philadelphia. Here I Come!* Tonight, she assumes the role of down-on-her-luck mother Sibby in this production of *The Paddy Pedlar*.

MICHAEL SHERIDAN

Michael puts his own unique stamp on the part of Matthias. He is renewing his acquaintance with drama having done some acting with Milltown Youth Club in the past. Well-known as an ardent supporter of Arsenal, he missed several Champions League games in pursuit of his craft.

GARY CURRAN

Tonight, Gary takes on the role of the eponymous Paddy Pedlar. This is his first time to tread the boards and the people of Milltown and Ballindine, where he works as a G.P., eagerly await his performance!

“PLANXTY JOE MOLLOY”

MJ Molloy drew on the rich tradition of music and song so integral to the Galway/Mayo region in many of his plays. We are delighted to add a musical dimension to this celebration which we hope you will enjoy.



Pictured left to right: Niamh, Breffni and Deirbhile Molloy

Breffni, Niamh and Deirbhile are grand-nieces of MJ Molloy. They are accomplished classical and traditional musicians and play a wide variety of musical instruments. Deirbhile, the youngest, is currently studying for her Junior Certificate in the Mercy Convent, Tuam. Niamh continues a proud line of educators in the Molloy family as she studies to become a national school teacher in St Pat's, Drumcondra. Breffni is a third year music student in University College Cork and has composed a piece of music entitled 'Planxty Joe Molloy' in honour of this occasion. The girls are delighted to be part of tonight's celebrations and wish MDS every success for the future.

MEET THE PANEL

Jim Carney: Host and Panel Chair

Jim Carney is a native of Parkroe, Milltown. He was educated at Milltown N.S. and Tuam C.B.S. A journalist and sports broadcaster, he worked as a news reporter for the Irish Independent, RTE Sport and for *The Tuam Herald*, where he still writes today. He has published a book of poetry, *Echoes from a Darkened Alley*, published in 1972. He was a member of Tuam Theatre Guild and of the Meitheal Theatre Company Tuam in the 1980s. In 2012 he conducted an interview with Druid Theatre founder and artistic director Garry Hynes at the 35th annual Clifden Arts Festival and in 2013 he was chairman of a discussion panel for a major tribute night at the Mall, Tuam in honour of playwright Tom Murphy.

Dr. Riana O'Dwyer

Dr Riana O'Dwyer was Senior Lecturer in English, School of Humanities, National University of Ireland, Galway until retirement in 2012. During her academic career, she lectured internationally at universities in Japan, USA, Spain, Portugal, Italy and spent periods as Visiting Scholar at Cambridge University and the University of Texas at Austin. She has lectured and published on Irish studies, modern Irish drama, James Joyce and Irish women's fiction, which comprise her central areas of research interest. Riana has a particular interest in the theatre of local playwrights Tom Murphy and MJ Molloy.

Ms Lelia Doolan

Lelia Doolan is a celebrated Irish producer, commentator and former artistic director of the Abbey Theatre. She has worked on several Molloy plays, most notably the 1973 Abbey production of *The King of Friday's Men*, which MJ himself rated highly. In 2010 Ms Doolan was honoured by the Galway Film Fleadh and the Irish Film and Television Academy (IFTA) with the prestigious Galway Hooker award. A fearless broadcaster and commentator on social, cultural and political issues. Lelia is a great friend of cultural events in Milltown.

Jarlath Molloy

MJ's nephew Jarlath Molloy joins the panel this evening and adds a family dimension to the discussion. He will share reminiscences of his uncle on behalf of his two sisters Ann and Mary and the wider family. Jarlath's late father Christy, himself a wonderful folklorist, was a significant figure in Milltown and penned the local history *Milltown Sketches*.

MDS COMMITTEE 2014

The MDS committee was formed in January 2014 from interested parties at a well-attended meeting called to revive drama in Milltown. The committee set three clear aims very early on: to establish a vibrant drama society in Milltown, to transform the main hall of the community centre into a performance venue and finally and most-pressing, to mark the centenary of the birth of local playwright MJ Molloy.

Meetings were held on Wednesday nights where fundraising, publicity, planning and performance issues were discussed and progressed. The MJ Molloy Centenary Celebration marks a significant milestone for this fledgling society and the seed is sown for Milltown Drama Society to grow and develop over the coming years.



Back, left to right: Jane McGuinn (Secretary), Helen Sheridan, Ray McGrath, Rory Hynes (Chairman), Saranna Leonard (Assistant Treasurer), Anne Concannon (Treasurer)

Front, left to right: Sinead Sheridan, Patricia Waldron, Marion Greene, Siobhan Molloy and Eleanor Sheridan (Creative Director)

Missing from photo: Ollie Turner and Marie Simpson

GET INVOLVED

Very early in 2015, MDS will begin work on their next production. The committee invites you to get involved whether behind the scenes or under the lights on stage! Keep an eye on our Facebook page, the parish newsletter and the Milltown notes of *The Tuam Herald* for more information.

CONNECT WITH US

'Like' us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/milltowndramasociety

Email: milltowndramasociety@live.com

PATRON'S PAGE

*We are most grateful for the generosity
and community spirit of our MDS Patrons*

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THE CELLAR BAR, TUAM
COFFEE.IE, FLANNERY'S COFFEE SUPPLIES, MILLTOWN
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MJ MOLLOY

1914 - 1994

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“The French say *adieu* and the Spaniards say *adios*.
Both mean the same thing- *to God.*”

- MJ Molloy, signing off a letter to Garry Hynes shortly before his passing