



Love, Sex, Birth, Death and Salsa classes!

Three generations of women, one extraordinary year

16 - 30 November 2013

At The Rose Centre, School Road, Belmont

Wednesday - Saturday at 8pm

Matinée 2pm Sunday 24 November at 2pm

\$25 Adults • \$20 Concessions

Bookings 445 9900 or email info@rosecentre.co.nz

www.companytheatre.co.nz

LITTLE GEM BY ELAINE MURPHY

THE CAST

Amber - Jessica Walsh

Lorraine, her mother - Kirsty Hamilton

Kay, her grandmother - Orla McNeaney

**There will be one interval of 15 minutes.
Refreshments are available in the foyer.**

LITTLE GEM - The Play

Little Gem is set in present day Dublin. The action takes place over one year.

Kay (grandmother), Loraine (mother) and Amber (granddaughter) are each experiencing an emotional crisis.

Amber abuses alcohol and cocaine and has recently started dating the wayward Paul.

Lorraine has been separated from her partner Ray for many years. Ray occasionally drops into her life wreaking havoc. In her opening speech, on a difficult day at work, she is encouraged to seek therapy.

Kay's husband, Gem, has suffered a stroke and is emotionally and physically distant. He requires homecare and is unable to feed or dress himself.

In each of the women's monologues, an absent male partner contributes to the disconnection that they feel.

But amidst it all there is much laughter and hope. When Amber gives birth she calls the baby boy after her grandfather Gem. He is Little Gem. His birth brings the women together. At the end of the play we see a new togetherness as all three women will contribute to the care of the child.

LITTLE GEM – The Playwright – Elaine Murphy

This is Elaine Murphy's first play and it has already garnered a number of awards including the Stewart Parker Prize. (The Stewart Parker Trust Award or Stewart Parker Prize is an annual Irish award for best Irish debut play. The winners are announced annually at the Lyric Theatre.) The most recent laurel was the Carol Tambor accolade (A theatre prize given annually at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival) and the play will run at the renowned Flea Theatre in TriBeCa off Broadway in New York in January next year.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES ON LITTLE GEM

You know that thing that happens to you when you pick up a book, or listen to a song for the first time and you know within a few lines or the first few notes that it will be amazing?

Well, it was one of those feelings when I first discovered Little Gem. I devoured it in one read, laughing one moment and having a huge lump in my throat the next as the visions of how I would stage it flooded through my mind.

As you are about to sit down and see Little Gem I hope my vision, brought to life through my amazingly talented cast and the incredibly patient and diligent technical and set build teams, does this stunning play justice.

Have a wonderful evening.

Des Smith



DES SMITH – DIRECTOR

Des Smith was born in London in 1966 but his parents emigrated to County Mayo on the West Coast of Ireland where he grew up in a rural community.

In 2000 Des moved to New Zealand where his daytime revolves around technology. Soon after moving here Des became involved in local theatre and his first role was in Company Theatre's 2003 production of Alan Ayckbourn's Tons Of Money, so to be directing here over 10 years later feels a bit like turning full circle.

He has been involved in Shoreside Theatre, Mairangi Players, Dolphin Theatre and Ellerslie Theatrical Society.

Des has appeared on New Zealand TV Screens in TV Commercials, Shortland Street and most recently in Underbelly – Land Of The Long Green Cloud.

Directing had not been on the agenda for Des until he was cast in Conor McPherson's 'The Weir' by the Irish Theatrical Society in 2005. Sadly the theatrical society folded before the play made it to the stage, and failing to find anyone else willing to direct a play that Des had become passionate about, he decided to have a go.

Directing credits include: The Weir by Conor McPherson (2007); Shining City by Conor McPherson (2008); The History Boys by Alan Bennett (2010); Travels With My Aunt by Graham Green (2012).

LITTLE GEM - THE CREW

Director - Des Smith

Production Manager - Sherry Ede

Director's Assistant - Joan Miller

Set Design - David Blakey

Lighting Design - Scott Thomas

Sound Design - Terry Smith

Lighting and Sound Operation - Sean Miller

Set Construction - Phil Davis, John Sala, Richard Parmee, Tony Sandy

Set Dressing - Ruth Chapman, Cathie Sandy, Joan Miller

Stage Manager - Jonathan Wilce

Assistant Stage Manager - Emily Johnson

Wardrobe/Make Up - Annamarie Connors, Cathie Sandy

FOH Manager - Sherry Ede

Bar Manager - Alastair Fletcher

Programme/Photos/Publicity – Sherry Ede

Box Office, Front of House & Bar Staff – Members of Company Theatre

BACKSTAGE CREW

Set Design – DAVID BLAKEY



David Blakey has designed sets for Ellerslie Theatrical Society, Howick Little Theatre and Mairangi Players. He writes: 'I am very fond of plays and stages that allow you to build images in your mind, and I always try to avoid being too prescriptive. I wanted to design Little Gem as soon as I read it, and I knew that the stage would have to be simple - a space in which you will imagine the rooms, streets, shops, and all the other places that the actors inhabit. My thanks to Des and his cast for building the scenery in your minds every night, and to Company Theatre's skilful, helpful, innovative and cheerful set build team.'

Lighting Design – SCOTT THOMAS



Scott Thomas has designed many shows for Company Theatre. We applaud his passion, his dedication, his inspiration and overall his patience as he works together with each Director to create a vision. Company Shows that Scott has designed for: Little Gem (2013), It's Just Sex (2013), Calendar Girls (2013), The Mousetrap (2012), Pride and Prejudice (2011), Four Flat Whites in Italy (2011), Improbable Fiction (2011), Who Wants to be 100 (2010), Music Hall (2010), Relatively Speaking (2009), Murdered to Death (2009), Allo Allo (2008), Someone Who'll Watch Over Me (2008), Boeing Boeing (2008), Funny Money (2007), Take a Chance on Me (2004) & Money and Friends (1998)

Sound Design - TERRY SMITH



Terry has been utilising his Diploma in Music Production skills for over a decade. He has sound-designed and engineered for dozens of musicals and plays and many Company Theatre productions of which 'Little Gem' has been an enjoyable addition.

The Ha' Penny Bridge - ANNAMARIE CONNORS



Annamarie Connors trained in Fine Arts, Special Effects Make-Up and Fabrication, and has had many careers from Creature Technician, Undertaker, Mould-Making Product Specialist, Costume, Set and Make-Up Designer, and even did a brief stint in an actual office! (That didn't go well...)
Today, she is the owner, operator and designer of The Resurrection Workshop, a small business that specialises in bringing discarded and salvaged goods back into a new form of life. She can be found via tps://www.facebook.com/ResurrectionWorkshop, where she is attempting to bring back the term 'Artisan'.

BIOGRAPHIES

JESSICA WALSH (Amber)



Jessica is originally from Dublin and has been living in New Zealand for four years. She attended the Gaiety School of Acting in Dublin and performed numerous roles in plays and showcases in Ireland.

Since her arrival here, she has performed in the Auckland Fringe Festival's 'A Midsummer Mess' and Short & Sweet's 'The Blue Balloon'. She has played Cecile Volanges in the production of 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' & Perdita in the Shakespeare production of 'The Winter's Tale'. Her most recent production was in Ellerslie Theatrical Society's One Act Play Season (2013), 'How I Disappear' by Bruce Brown.

Once she heard there was an Irish play being done in Auckland she knew she was meant to be in the cast.. She has found it extremely enjoyable playing and developing all the different characters. The challenges have been doing justice to such a unique play.

She hopes the audience enjoys 'Little Gem' as much as she enjoys performing it.

KIRSTY HAMILTON (Lorraine)



Kirsty graduated from Toi Whakaari the New Zealand drama school in 1992. Since then she has played Grace in the New Zealand feature film 'Saving Grace', Rosalind in 'As You Like It', Mouse in 'Roimata', Valerie in 'The Weir', Maria in 'Twelfth Night', Juliet in 'Romeo and Juliet', Charlotte in Harold Pinter's 'Party Time', amongst other roles in film, TV, and theatre.

She was the SGCNZ (Shakespeare Globe Centre of New Zealand International) Artistic Fellow alongside Rawiri Paratene at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London in 2007. She graduated from European Act, a three month acting and screen writing intensive in 2009 through the London Actors Centre, RADA and the Paris International Centre for Performing Arts.

In 2012 she earned her Master's Degree in Script Writing at Victoria University in Wellington. She is currently raising funds to make her first three short film projects. She aims to gain entry into the Master's program in screen production at the University of Auckland in 2014/15 to major in Directing in order to work towards a full time international career as a screen writer/director.

BIOGRAPHIES CONTINUED

ORLA McNEANEY (Kay)

Orla is originally from County Armagh, Ireland and has been performing since she was 11 years old. She has a Degree in Acting from the University of Ulster, Magee, Ireland. In Ireland she featured in an Irish soap called **'I Fought the Law'**, also in corporate videos and various short films **'Bug Coffee'** and **'The Box'**.



After a 3 year break from acting to concentrate on her Marketing career, Orla is treading the boards in her first production in New Zealand.

She says "It was not only hard to dust off the cobwebs after three years but I think I've thrown myself in the deep end with the part of 59 year old Kay, in **'Little Gem'**!"

She has really enjoyed the challenge and has found herself learning something new about herself and the character every day of rehearsal.

She now realises that it is inevitable, she will turn into her mother one day! Orla hopes the audience falls in love with **'Little Gem'** as much as she has and gets ready to laugh and cry all at the same time.

THE HA'PENNY BRIDGE MURAL



The Ha'penny Bridge mural seen in the play is a pedestrian bridge built in 1816 over the River Liffey in Dublin, Ireland. Originally called the Wellington Bridge (after the Duke of Wellington), the name of the bridge changed to Liffey Bridge, and somewhat surprisingly, the name remains to this day.

However, due to its distinct shape as well as the original toll of one halfpenny, (later, one penny, two farthings) the more popular title of Ha'penny Bridge stuck in the minds of the Dublin people. The toll itself was dropped in 1919; before this, turnstiles lay on either side of it.

This image of a bridge (a crossing over) seemed somehow appropriate given the theme of the play and the changes that take place in the characters' lives.

Next at Company Theatre



An Ideal Husband by Oscar Wilde

Directed by Steven Arnold

29 March - 12 April 2014

AUDITIONS

Sunday December 1st at 2.00pm, in The Company Room, The Rose Centre, School Road, Belmont.

Full details on our website on the AUDITIONS page at

www.companytheatre.co.nz

For a copy of the script email Richard on info@rosecentre.co.nz

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See the website for AUDITIONS, CLUB NIGHTS, FUNDRAISING NIGHTS and BOOKINGS information.

www.companytheatre.co.nz

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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Company Theatre's Little Gem

Anyone with an Irish background is sure to love Company Theatre's latest production, *Little Gem*, running at The Rose Centre, Belmont from Saturday November 16 for just two weeks.

This new, award winning play by Irish playwright Elaine Murphy first appeared at Dublin's Fringe Festival in 2008 and has been in continuous production around the world.

It tells the story of three generations of Irish women, a daughter, mother, and grandmother across one year in their lives, each from their own perspective and is set in Dublin, today.

Director Des Smith who hails from County Mayo, Ireland, says,

"This is a truly beautiful, funny and moving piece of theatre and will have you laughing one moment and reaching for the hankies the next."

Opening night on November 16 is a special performance for anyone in Auckland who is Irish. Tickets are available for just \$20 and there'll be live Irish music in the foyer before the show. A cash bar will be running with Guinness and quality wine by the glass. Mention the Auckland Irish Society when booking on 445 9900.

Two of the three actresses who star in the production were born in Ireland. Jessica Walsh, who plays the granddaughter Amber, is from Dublin, and attended the Gaiety School of Acting in Cork for two

years. She has been living in New Zealand for four years.

"Once I heard there was an Irish play being done in Auckland I knew I was meant to be in the cast. I have found it extremely enjoyable playing and developing all the different characters for such a unique play. I hope the audience enjoys *Little Gem* as much as I enjoy performing it!"

Kirsty Hamilton, who plays the mother Lorraine has an extensive theatrical background. She was the International Artistic Fellow alongside Rawiri Paratene at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London in 2007. She graduated from European Act, a three month acting and screen writing intensive



Talented trio: Orla McNeaney, Kirsty Hamilton and Jessica Walsh star in *Little Gem*.

in 2009 through the London Actor's Centre, The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and the Paris International Centre for Performing Arts. She has a Master's degree in script writing and would like to move into directing in the future.

Orla McNeaney, who plays the

grandmother, grew up in the small village of Keady, County Armagh, in Northern Ireland.

For more details go to www.companytheatre.co.nz or phone The Rose Centre to book on 445 9900. Tickets just \$25 (\$20 for seniors).



Taken from the 40th Anniversary Book compiled by Scott Thomas