

**ROUNDAABOUT THEATRE COMPANY**

**JUNO AND  
THE PAYCOCK**



**THROUGH THE ARTIST'S EYE**  
*Page To Stage Production Guide*

# THROUGH THE ARTIST'S EYE

## JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK

by Sean O'Casey

**John Crowley - Director**

**Rae Smith - Set and Costume Designer    Brian MacDevitt - Lighting Designer**

**Donald DiNicola - Original Music and Sound Designer**

### INTERVIEW NOTE

#### THE DIRECTOR'S VIEW

*Juno and the Paycock* is a play about an extraordinary period in Irish History. A civil war erupted right after the Irish War of Independence from English rule. It was a time when there is an incredibly passionate degree of commitment and belief in inventing what the future of the country is going to be. With this play, O'Casey quite brilliantly brings all of this to bear on one family and gives us a whole chunk of Irish history through the lens of one family's fortunes. A lesser dramatist would have given us great big epic scenes of what was going on in the streets. Instead, O'Casey looks at the cracks. He looks right up close and sees that in one family there is a metaphor for what was going on throughout the Irish society.

The play opens on the morning of just another day in the life of this family. Yet there is an awful lot of stuff going on under the surface. Juno, the mother has come back from the market with just one sausage and one piece of bread. That is all that's left and she can't even pay for it. It's on the tick, on never-never as it were. She's running up credit because they have no money. Meanwhile, her husband, the Captain, is down at the pub borrowing money for pints. Their daughter, Mary, is on strike and there is no strike pay. Their son, Johnny, can't work because he has been wounded in the fighting and there is no war veteran's fund. So, the precipice that they are poised upon and are ready to fall off at the beginning of the play is extreme. Their need for money is extreme. And suddenly, they are told they stand to inherit what in today's terms would be worth about

\$140,000. On the point of penury, when you have nothing to eat, that is an awful lot of money to have dumped on top of you.

Somehow, with that promise of money, O'Casey has created a metaphor for what was about to happen to Ireland when it had freedom dumped upon it - how it was going to deal with its newfound status. With this family's story, O'Casey shows us his view; for after we see the promise of a better future, it all falls apart for this family. The person who is left to deal with the fall-out is Juno. O'Casey leaves us, as he believed the war would leave Ireland, with nothing but dead sons and grieving mothers. That is why the play still has a resonance to this day in any place where one group of people are instigated to take up arms against another in order to achieve an ideological, abstract idea. Because somewhere, someone will have to pick up the pieces and it will not be the politicians and it will not be the people who pulled the triggers. --John Crowley

Slum housing in Cathedral Lane, Dublin, 1904

# THE WORLD OF THE PLAY

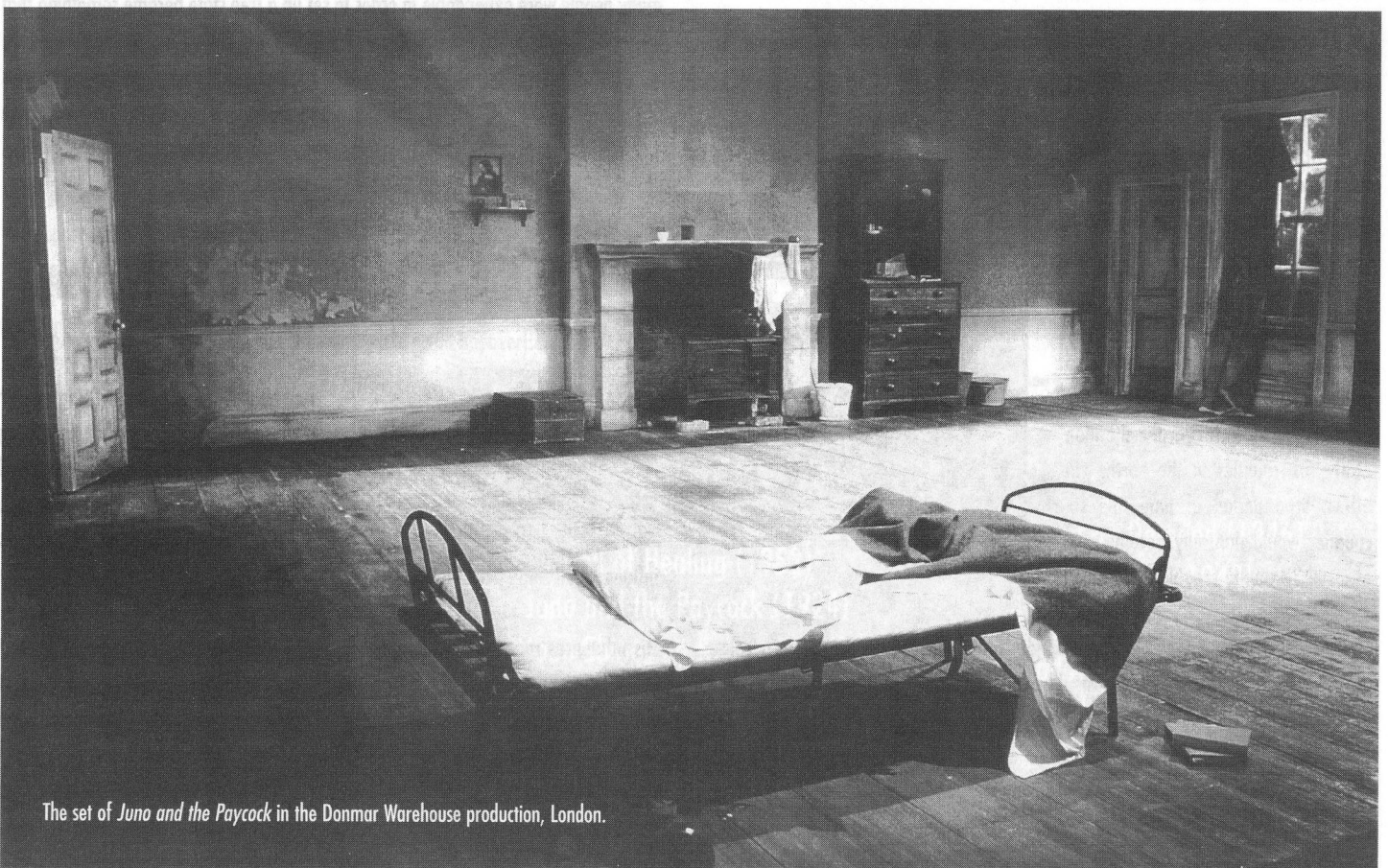
## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Within the tenements one has a very brilliant metaphor and an image of where Ireland was at the time this play takes place. The tenements were these Georgian buildings which were built for the English aristocracy when the English government had a seat of power in Dublin. When that was withdrawn, in 1801, the aristocrats began to move away because they felt there was going to be trouble in Dublin, and the landlords began dividing up the beautiful Georgian townhouses. After an unprecedented population boom, with two to three families living in each townhouse, they became so run down, they were second only to the slums of Calcutta. So what you see in the play is an image of the absolute epitome of English architecture, Georgian architecture; beautiful Georgian windows, cornicing, plasterwork and doors; flowering with absolute elegance and squalor poverty in front of it, living in it. As an image of country, it's pretty extraordinary. --John Crowley

## FROM THE SET DESIGNER'S PERSPECTIVE

To get inside the author's mind, and understand the geographical architecture of the play, it is important to do a lot of research. I began at the National

Photographic Archive in Dublin and looked at pictures of people and their living environments from the year the play takes place. I also looked at newspapers from the time and playbills from the original production of the play in 1926. Then I went to look at present day subsidized housing tenements in Dublin and took pictures of the faded glory of Henrietta Street, which I used to create the opening image. Finally, I went to a place called North Circular Road where O'Casey is supposed to have written some of *Juno and the Paycock*. It all makes sense when you are sitting in that room and you can hear a door slam at the top of the house and footsteps down the stairs to the front door and out to the street. If you are looking out the window you can see who is at the front door. If it were a mobilizer or someone who was armed, you could see that they had a coat with a gun in the pocket. So all the stage directions are to do with O'Casey's interior imagination of the place where he wrote. And when you are there you realize that the people in this play are real. All these things actually happened to people. It is like cutting off the front of the house and looking directly in, like surgery in a sense. You look directly in at the animal and you see how it functions. --Rae Smith



The set of *Juno and the Paycock* in the Donmar Warehouse production, London.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

## ON HISTORY

The Irish War of Independence arose after the Easter Rising in 1916, when the armed struggle against the English forces and the English occupancy of Ireland reached a greater degree of efficacy. Success was mainly achieved through the military genius of Michael Collins who during the War of Independence developed what we would now recognize as guerilla warfare. Instead of marching in the streets in uniform, he organized men into small pockets of highly trained hit squads who would hit the British soldiers fast and then run.

Within three or four years, the Irish had brought the British Empire to its knees and brought them to a bargaining point. Lloyd George brought the delegates of what was called the Provisional Irish Republic to England to debate terms for a truce.

Now, Eamon de Valera, who was elected President of the newly forming Irish Republic, did not go to these treaty meetings. Instead, he sent a delegation headed by Michael Collins.

There has been much debate ever since over why he did not go himself, but some believe it was because he felt he would not actually be able to get a treaty that the people would approve, and needed a scapegoat.

Lloyd George gave them the offer that the country would be partitioned and that the six counties in the north would remain under English jurisdiction, but the rest of Ireland would get to set up its own government as a free state. There would still be a relationship with England but essentially, for all intents and purposes, they got what they wanted, which was political and economic freedom. The treaty also provided for a foundry commission that would be set up to review the situation of the six counties in the north. In effect, in a period of time, the six counties would naturally become part of a full 32 county republic.

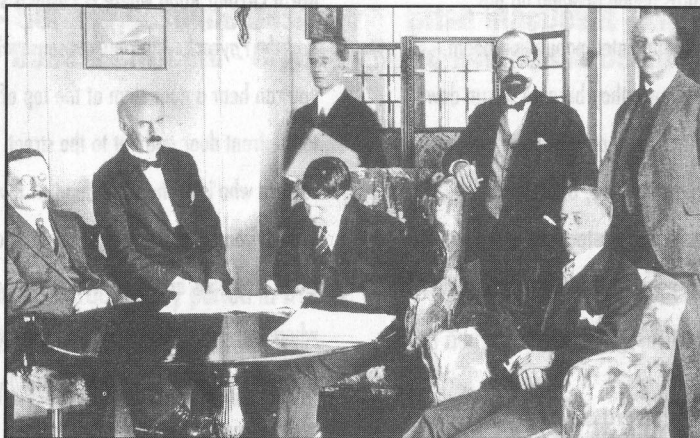
That was what was intended, but the foundry commission never got set up because the Irish Civil War began in earnest. When the delegation returned to Dublin and announced that they had signed the treaty, there was uproar. Lloyd George had made the delegation sign the treaty there and then, without consent of the Irish people, and there was no going back into discussion. There has also been speculation that Collins was put under pressure to accept the treaty within the hour or there would be full out war between the two countries, and without the anonymity he had given

up by joining the delegation, he would be powerless. In any event, for two to three weeks the country was debating not the issue of the six counties, but the fact that this treaty had been signed without consent.

Over the next few months the country slipped gradually towards civil war, with the "Die-hards" being the ones who rejected the treaty and the "Free-Staters" being the ones who believed that a free state was only a stepping stone toward the full republic that they all wanted. But I think that there is no doubt, and this is reflected in the play, that after years of bombs and bullets flying in the streets, the fact that the

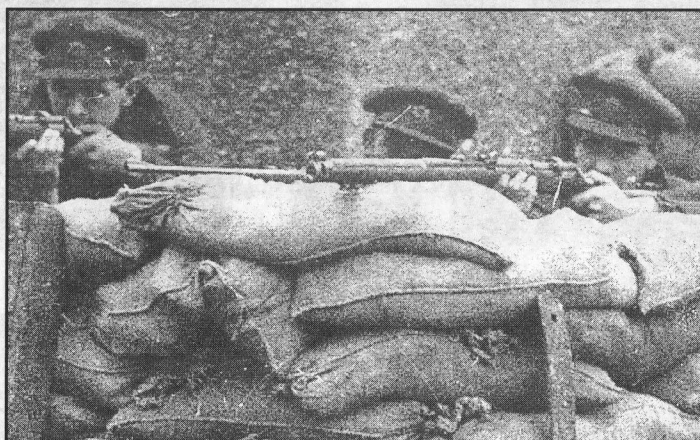
fighting stopped for a second and people could carry on with their lives for a while added a great deal of pressure and sympathy towards the acceptance of the free state. That is why the people who rejected the treaty were called Die-hards - that sort of poetic jargon phrase - the notion of them wanting to hold out for an abstract idea.

O'Casey as a writer was very critical of men who tended to hide behind ideologies, by which I mean whether it is political, religious or a social creed, a way of dealing with the world through jargon, or through illusion. What O'Casey saw was a case where feelings were running very high about the future of a country, and the notion of the importance of a life was becoming arbitrary. The question of how many people were expendable in order to set up a free state became something that was actually debatable. But O'Casey was a pacifist and did not feel anyone should die for a political cause. As far as he was concerned, a principle, however high minded, isn't actually worth a single life. --John Crowley



The delegates in Hans Place on the day after the signing of the Irish Civil War treaty.

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A Free State barricade near the main Republican position in O'Connell Street.

influences all come from his reading.

His influences range from Shakespeare, in the sense of Johnny seeing that ghost inside the room - a direct reference to Macbeth - to his love of Ibsen which, apart from Mary reading three Ibsen plays, is Juno leaving and shutting the door behind her defiantly, as a reference to *A Doll's House*. Certainly there was a degree of social realism that he was after, which he found in Ibsen in terms of his style. Also, O'Casey was very fond of vaudeville theatre, which you can see in some of the scenes between Captain and Joxer.

## ON THE PLAYWRIGHT

O'Casey was self-taught. He didn't start writing this play until he was forty-four. And he was still laboring, mixing mortar and cement by day when he was writing this play. It was only after this play and its success that he was able to retire from his laboring job. So, O'Casey's

As a piece of playwriting, I can think of no other play that moves from the extreme of comedy to the extreme of tragedy with the speed at which this one does. It spins on a ha'penny within scenes. In Act II, you have this party going on and everyone is having a laugh and they are singing songs and suddenly there is a mumble on the stairs and they realize Mrs. Tancred is off to her son's funeral. She comes in and the scene goes from high comedy and party time to the depths of the awfulness of how inappropriate it is to be having a party while this woman is grieving for her son. It goes from something incredibly funny to very, very dark in the space of three minutes in stage time. That kind of tragic comic element that O'Casey uses is quite brilliant and is very true to life. I think that makes it a great play.

Ultimately, O'Casey is interested in people, not in historical movements. He is interested in the way history works through people and how they deal with momentous moments in history. All you need to do is follow the story and you'll have gotten a chunk of history which you can pull apart as you choose to. --John Crowley



A Free State officer searches a suspected Republican in a Dublin back street.

old and his widowed mother was left to bring up the children herself in the Dublin slums, perhaps the most squalid of the English-speaking world. Handicapped by weakness of his eyes, bitter half-starved poverty (he lived for months at a time on dry bread and tea) and no education, he only learned to read at the age of twelve. But this learning opened up such a magic world for him that from his four shillings a week salary he began buying books rather than food.

He worked from the age of 12 at the commonest of pick and shovel labor. He was first a hodman for bricklayers, then a railroad brakeman, and was a full-fledged bricklayer when he began to have his plays produced. He educated himself largely on Shakespeare, and has said "I would make it a penal offense for any man to write a play without being able to declaim two or three of Shakespeare's plays by heart, from beginning to end."

By the late 1950's, O'Casey's reputation had grown to the point where the newspapers frequently carried critical acclaim for his work and reverent interviews by pilgriming visitors. Each of his birthdays became the occasion for articles through all the English-speaking world in praise of the gallant, grand old man who seemed to have more sense and vigor in his speech as he approached eighty, than perhaps he ever had.

Particularly there was a great spate of such articles on O'Casey's 80th birthday in 1960. His photographs showed him a picturesque man, silver-haired, wizened, peering brightly through steep-rimmed glasses, always wearing an Aran sweater, a knotted skullcap and usually smoking a pipe.

When he died on September 18, 1964, at the age of 84, in his modest little cottage at Torquay, the world mourned the passing of a man who had written great plays, and whose life itself was a great story.

Excerpted from *Research Notes* compiled by Package Publicity Service, Inc.

## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

When "Purple Dust" was produced in 1957, *Newsweek Magazine* called Sean O'Casey "the world's greatest living dramatist." But whether or not he was at that time the champion of them all, he had from 1926 onward been regarded as at least one of the great world literary figures, and he had been canonized as a genius by critics of the caliber of George Bernard Shaw.

He was born in Dublin in 1880, the thirteenth child of an impoverished family, of whom eight children died in childhood. His father died when he was three years

## O'CASEY'S PRINCIPAL WORKS

Bedtime Story (1952)  
 Behind the Green Curtain (1962)  
 The Bishop's Bonfire (1955)  
 Cock-A-Doodle Dandy (1949)  
 The Drum of Father Ned (1959)  
 The End of the Beginning (1937)  
 Figaro in the Night (1962)

Hall of Healing (1952)  
 Juno and the Paycock (1924)  
 The Moon Shines on Kilyenamoe (1962)  
 Namie's Night Out (1924)  
 Oak Leaves and Lavender (1947)  
 The Plough and the Stars (1926)

A Pound on Demand (1946)  
 Purple Dust (1943)  
 Red Roses for Me (1943)  
 The Shadow of a Gunman (1923)  
 The Silver Tassie (1929)  
 The Star Turns Red (1946)  
 Within the Gates (1934)



A wounded Free State soldier keeps curious civilian spectators back in a safe area not far from the Republican headquarters.

## THE COSTUME DESIGNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The characters in this play are real people in real clothes. There is no way their clothing should ever look like costume. It should look like something you would actually wear. The period is 1925. That is your starting point. Then you have to work out the ages of each character and what their influences are.

A young women, such as Mary Boyle, at that time would probably be dressing in what you would call the teens - 1918, 1920 - type of costume. Nobody would be as fashionable and up to the moment as some one who was terribly rich living in Paris or London. For a young women who was very poor and wanted to look fashionable, it would have been enough to have her hair cut short and wear A-lines or mid-calf length skirts. That would be quite shocking enough, because young women, no matter how poor they are, have aspirations to look fashionable and gorgeous. So, she would make as well as she could.

Mrs. Tancred, who lives upstairs, would probably look more Victorian than the others. She is about 60, so she was born in the beginning of the Victorian era and would have been a young woman about 1880 or 1890. That perhaps would be her period of costume. She is a widow and her son has just been killed so she would be all in black, a fashion the Victorians created for mourning. And, she would be wearing a corset, as people only stopped wearing corsets about 1929, 1930.

A lot of the time when you are looking at period costumes, you have to keep in mind that they didn't have much in the shops. So, for example, in 1936, all the men were wearing blue serge suits because blue serge was the only color that was around. When I went to Hungary in the 80's, everyone seemed to be in grays and maroons and browns. You begin to pick up all these clues that tell you about the period, which is fascinating.

For this play, ours is a much more Sepia world. Mainly because we started looking at photographs and films of the Civil War. Also, in our families we found some photographs

of people from the period. For instance, Jim Norton and Dearbhla Molloy, who play Mr. and Mrs. Boyle, were born and brought up in Ireland. Members of their family would have been alive during the Civil War, so they could bring family photos and trace the same physicality or a similar way of standing and walking and looking and thinking.

The text gives you clues as well. Like the thing about the men's suits - laborers wore suits to work at that time. The Captain puts on his moleskin trousers, which laborers used to make suits because it was so durable. The interesting thing about the Captain though, is that he actually doesn't work as a laborer, he only talks about it. Also, his aspirations to be a sea captain are built on a total fantasy. That is a nice thing to play with as a costume - when he gets some money he buys himself a nice sea captain's hat to look the part of something he never was. Now that he can afford it, the fantasy gets greater.

Joxer, meanwhile, is a man who is poor - you can't tell where he gets his money from, if he gets his money from anywhere. He is a scavenger, so he has probably been wearing the same suit for about two years and he probably sleeps in that suit. So, he should look like he smells.

Basically, Sean O'Casey is telling a story about real people in a real time that really happened. He is writing about his family and friends and all those around him and the kind of impact, emotional and psychological, that the Civil War and the troubles that Ireland had at the time. Now, our actors will be telling us this story from the reality of their own situation. They might have Irish ancestry, but they will be telling it in the present to us in the present. That is my job as designer, to create a space for that to happen. --Rae Smith

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Juno Boyle	Dearbhla Molloy
Captain Jack Boyle	Jim Norton
Johnny Boyle, the son	Jason Butler Harner
Mary Boyle, the daughter	Gretchen Cleevely
Joxer Daly, a drinking buddy	Thomas Jay Ryan
Charles Bentham, the boyfriend	Liam Craig
Jerry Devine, another suitor	Norbert Leo Butz
Mrs. Tancred, the lady upstairs	Roberta Maxwell
Maisie Madigan, a neighbor	Cynthia Darlow
Needle Nugent, Sewing Machine Man	Edward James Hyland
Mobilizer	George Heslin
Furniture Man, Coal Vendor, Policeman	John Keating
Irregular	Michael LiDondici
Neighbor	Kelly Mares

## PRODUCTION GUIDE FOR

### Juno and the Paycock

**Margaret Salvante**, Education Director

**Philip A. Alexander**, Program Manager

**Megan Waltz**, Education Assistant

**Tim McCanna**, Marketing Assistant

## ACTIVITIES: EXPLORING POINTS OF VIEW

### Before the Play

In many families, different family members hold different points of view or personal philosophies. For example, the mother may belong to one political party, while the father might belong to another party. Or a parent may have strict religious beliefs, but the child has a more free-and-easy life style. The television series *All in the Family* is one example of a family with several points of view: the father was a close-minded conservative and the son-in-law was a "bleeding heart" liberal. Watch an episode of *All in the Family* to see how these characters with different points of view relate to one another, (if you can't watch an episode, see if you can find another example of a family with strong beliefs in fiction or in real-life). Keep these questions in mind as you observe the family:

- What do the characters do and say to demonstrate their ideals?
- How do the other characters express their disagreement with each other? What do they say or do to demonstrate their difference of opinion? Do they confront each other directly, or work behind each other's backs?
- Do you find yourself agreeing with one character more than the others? Which character do you think expresses the point of view of the show's creators?

### During the Play

As you watch the performance of *Juno and the Paycock*, pay attention to how each member of the Boyle family represents a particular point of view. Ask yourself the following questions as you watch the play:

- How does Mrs. Boyle's (Juno) point of view differ from her husband's (Captain Boyle)?
- How do the children's points of view differ from their parents'?
- When the characters say, "a principle's a principle," what do they mean? Does this phrase mean the same thing when different characters use it?

### After the Play

Create a work of art that portrays a family with members that represent different points of view. You might want to draw a picture with captions or word balloons, or maybe you'd like to write a short scene or story. As you create your family portrait, think about the following things:

- What is the best way for your characters to depict their beliefs, through their actions or through their words?
- How do your characters' beliefs come into conflict with each other?
- Are the characters able to resolve their differences, or does one point of view seem to dominate?
- Is there one point of view that you want to stress over the others?

### Sources:

Coogan, Tim Pat and George Morrison, *The Irish Civil War*. London: Seven Dials, 1999.

Simmons, James, *Sean O'Casey*. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1983.

Koslow, Jules, *The Green and the Red*. New York: Golden Griffin Books, 1950.

<http://www.albemarle-london.com/juno.html>

### Additional Resources:

*Irish Rebellion and Civil War*

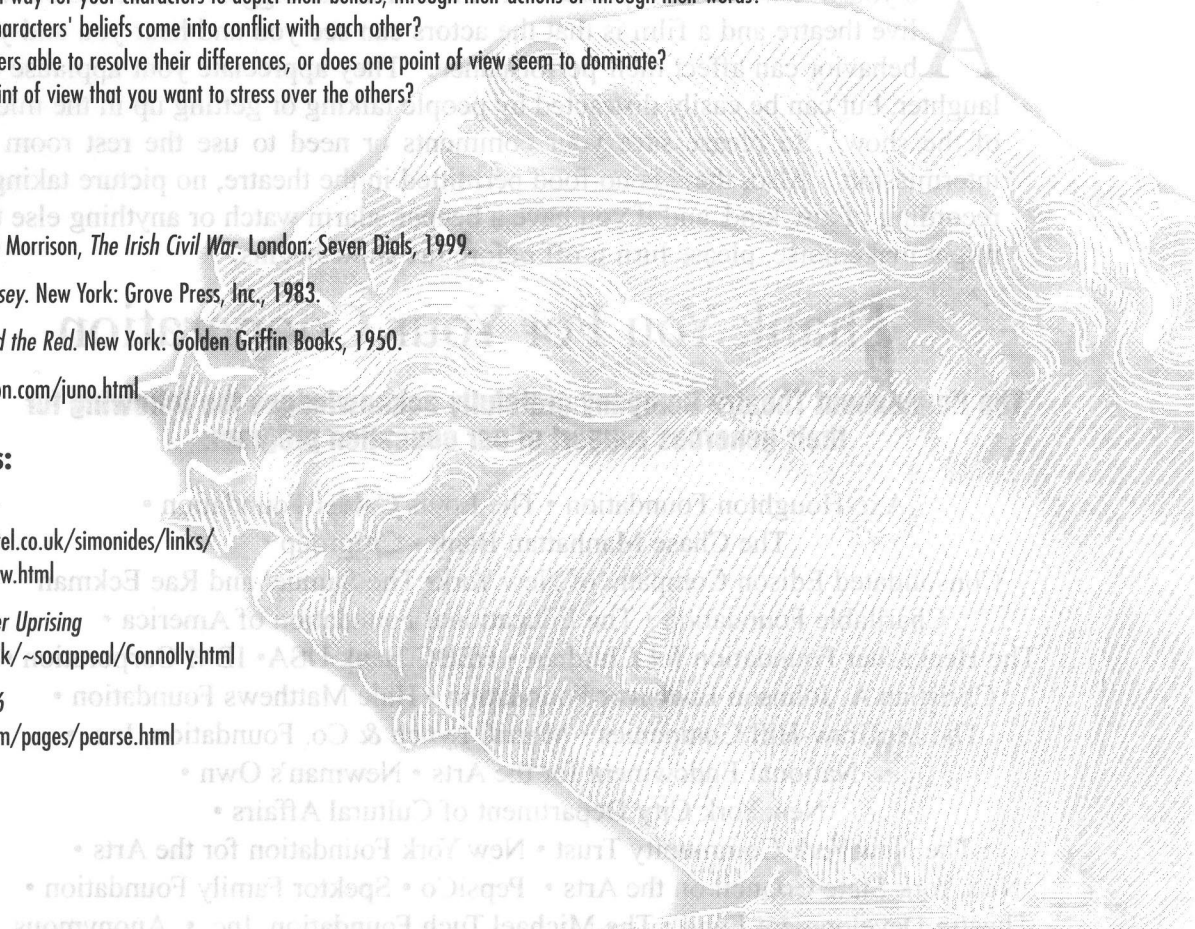
<http://www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/simonides/links/wars/irish-reb-cw/irish-reb-cw.html>

*Connolly and the 1916 Easter Uprising*

<http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~socappeal/Connolly.html>

*Patrick Pearse: Hero of 1916*

<http://www.thewildgeese.com/pages/pearse.html>



**www.roundabouttheatre.org**

Be sure to check out Roundabout's website for more information on this production, the rest of our season and all of Roundabout's activities.

# WHEN YOU GET TO THE THEATRE

## What To Look For

**T**he lower lobby of the Gramercy Theatre has a number of resources for your convenience. There is a refreshment counter where you can buy soda or a snack, but please remember that you will not be permitted to take these items into the theatre with you. The lobby is also an art gallery, so you might want to have a look at the paintings we have on display.

## Ticket Policy

**A**s a student participant in **Page To Stage** or **Theatre Access**, you will receive a discounted ticket to the show from your teacher on the day of the performance. You will notice that the ticket indicates the section, row and number of your assigned seat. When you show your ticket to the usher inside the theatre, he or she will show you where your seat is located. These tickets are not transferable and you must sit in the seat assigned to you.

## Audience Etiquette

**A**s you watch the show please remember that the biggest difference between live theatre and a film is that the actors can see you and hear you and your behavior can affect their performance. They appreciate your applause and laughter, but can be easily distracted by people talking or getting up in the middle of the show. So please save your comments or need to use the rest room for intermission. Also, there is no food permitted in the theatre, no picture taking or recording of any kind, and if you have a beeper, alarm watch or anything else that might make noise, please turn it off before the show begins.

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