

The Abbey Theatre returns to Limerick to open Lime Tree

Opening of brand new 510-seater theatre an important cultural milestone for Limerick

Alan Owens

SPEAKING to the assembled audience of invited guests and dignitaries before Sean O'Casey's superb *The Plough and the Stars* officially opened the Lime Tree Theatre in Mary Immaculate College, Abbey Theatre director Fiach Mac Conghail promised that the national theatre would "be here more often" in future.

The production, selected by theatre manager Louise Donlon to officially open the new state-of-the-art theatre, marked the first main stage Abbey production in the city in over 30 years.

"It is with a great sense of pride that the Abbey is here opening the Lime Tree," said Mr Mac Conghail.

Admitting that the Abbey's link with Limerick was "sporadic", he nonetheless pointed to the fact that the national theatre had produced Yeats' *Caitlín ní Houlihan* in Limerick in 1916.

"We want to be here more often and I can see more productions coming from the large stage of the Abbey to Limerick," he said, referring to the Lime Tree's opening.

"Irish audiences deserve to see large scale theatre and there is only so many venues around Ireland that can take large scale theatre and finally Limerick has that," Mr Mac Conghail added.

Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Jimmy Deenihan TD, and Professor Michael Hayes, president of Mary Immaculate College, along with Mayor of Limerick Cllr Gerry McLoughlin and board chairman Brendan Lane opened the new theatre before the production, the 93rd performance of *The Plough and the Stars* by the Abbey since they went on tour last July.

It will run until



Minister Deenihan opens the Lime Tree Theatre with Louise Donlon, Professor Michael Hayes, Cllr Jerome Scanlon, Mayor Cllr Gerry McLoughlin and Fiach MacConghail. Pictures: Alan Place/Press 22

Saturday in the theatre.

Mr Deenihan praised universities for playing their part in developing "multipurpose facilities that can be used both educationally and also within the cultural and community context", noting that the Lime Tree and Mary I was "one of the finest examples of this".

"The key to the success of a theatre in a third level setting lies in the commitment of the institution, the local community and the arts sector. It is already clear that the Lime Tree Theatre is in receipt of this commitment," he said.

MIC president Professor Michael Hayes said the theatre was intended as "your space".

"It is of critical importance to Limerick city, at whose very heart we are situated,



Gemma Carcaterra, Laura Ryan and Sheila Deegan attending the Plough and the Stars for the Lime Tree's official opening

that the economic, social, cultural and civic capital of MIC is put at the disposal of all members of our shared community," he explained.

To that end, as

well as ambitious programme of touring work, a programme that strongly features local companies, including the Cecilians and Limerick Panto Society, has been assembled.

Over 8,000 tickets have already been sold for shows at the theatre, which Ms Donlon said will be "an amazing addition to the cultural infrastructure of Limerick".



Marie Healy, Laura Kearney, Donall O'Keeffe and Emma Foote at the Plough and the Stars



Ann O'Gorman, Ethel Murphy and Elizabeth Mulvin at the Lime Tree in Mary Immaculate



John, Sandra, Breda and Mike Finn at the gala opening of the Lime Tree Theatre



Angela Meleady, Myles Breen and Bridy Breen at the Plough and the Stars

Limerick communities prepare for Pride of Place

Shane O'Riordan

Limerick's iconic Thomond Park Stadium will be the venue for a glittering Oscars-style ceremony this Saturday night, November 3, for the annual Pride of Place

Limerick City and County Councils, sponsored by IPB Insurance and presented by 2FM DJ Will Leahy.

Ten Limerick communities, five from the city and five from the

Garryowen Community Committee, Riverview Housing Estates in Kilmallock, Doras Luimni, Lough Gur and Knockainey.

Pride of Place is an initiative of the local

success and continues to grow in terms of prestige and popularity.

Manager of Limerick Local Authorities, Conn Murray, said the Pride of Place competition is

together can achieve," said Mr Murray.

"It also highlights the role and commitment of local authorities in supporting groups who take on initiatives to improve

Limerick is delighted to be hosting such a prestigious night. I would like to wish all the communities and groups participating in the 2012 competition the best of luck."

LA Fes Lin

Niamh D

A Limerick been short Los Angeles festival pilot script "House" will place in later this year. Conor the En Limerick the comed early Nov hope of previous where "Another also took pilot scrip 2011.

"I'm thrilled to chosen as this competi thrilled v last year chosen as encouragi major cha decided to as a caree I'm very I did. I s under so people inc Isaacs an which wa experience Conor.

Conor studied by University and UCD decided t marketing manager Gate Brev to attend t Cinematic University California. However



Conor Ryan Festival

Wa bui

Gerard F

GARDAI members in West remain v scam artis contractor to defraud Abbeyfeale

The inc to light a man, who arrangeme insulation home, rec from a per