

From *Inishfallen, fare thee well*, Book 4 of Seán O'Casey's autobiography

Things had changed, but not utterly; and no terrible beauty was to be born. Short Mass was still the favourite service, and Brian Boru's harp still bloomed on the bottles of beer. But the boys were home again from prison camp and prison cell... They've had their lesson, thought the sophisticated British Authorities, and from this out they will be pure and prim. The convicts, warned by the spitting and hissing of their departure to the prisons, hoped they'd steal quietly through the city to fireside and bed; but the people had changed utterly, and thronged their streets to cheer them... Was he out in Easter Week? became the touchstone of Irish life. And it was those who hadn't been out themselves who roared silence at anyone venturing to send a remark into a conversation led by a lad home from a prison or a concentration camp; for the lads, themselves, were exceedingly modest about it all, and were often embarrassed by their hangers-on, who forgot that most of Dublin, willy-nilly, was out in Easter Week; that there weren't many Dublin houses without bullet-holes in them; and that casualties were heavier among those who weren't out than among those who were.

JAMES SOBOL KELLY



Trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Theatre includes: A LITTLE NECK (Goat & Monkey Theatre), OTHELLO (Creation Theatre), FAUST (Punchdrunk), THE JUST, (Secret Centre) ROMEO AND JULIET (Elixir Theatre Co.), UNDER THE EAGLE (LS1), LOVE SUICIDES (La MaMa E.T.C.), THE WILD DUCK (American Repertory Theatre), A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company).TV: COSBY MYSTERIES (NBC-TV), MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERIES (Fox-TV). Film: TWELVE (Daniel Noah), SEMMELWEIS (Young Allies/Jim Berry), NOVAIA JISN (Ami Bukowski).

AUGUSTINA SEYMOUR



Born and raised in Luxembourg, Augustina studied English and German at Oxford University before training at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Theatre includes SARABAND (Jermyn St Theatre), CROWN MATRIMONIAL (ACT Productions/UK Tour), KING LEAR (TNT/American Drama Group Europe), LIVE LIKE PIGS (Royal Court), GASLIGHT (Frinton Summer Theatre), A TALE OF TWO CITIES (Guildhall School) and HEDDA GABLER (Oxford Playhouse). Short film includes POSTCARDS FROM LONDON (Underdog Productions).

SAM DOWLING

Sam Dowling is a Dublin-born playwright. He has written and produced nearly thirty plays or small-cast versions of classics for Praxis. His subject-matter has ranged from Irish history through the lives of writers and artists to re-working of themes from the Greek myths. For more detail see listing in playwrights' database at www.doollee.com

Praxis Theatre Lab & New World Theatre Club present



**Red
Countess
Green
Crow**

CONSTANCE MARKIEVICZ

A play by Sam Dowling
Revolution in Dublin 1905-1926

**Fri 23rd & Sat 24th
October 8.00 pm**

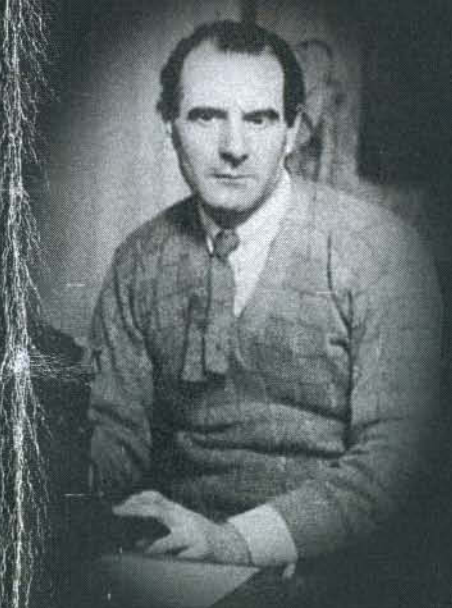
**Sat 24th October
Matinée 2.30 pm**

**At the
Check Inn,
7 route de Treves,
L-2632 Findel**

More details at : www.nwtc.lu



SEAN O'CASEY



Red Countess/Green Crow

by Sam Dowling

Cast

Seán O'Casey.....James Sobol Kelly
Constance Markiewicz.....Augustina Seymour

Production Crew

Steve Anderson, Mea Bateman, Alan Carlisle, Pamela
Carlisle & Angela Milne

With special thanks to Christine Probst, Amy McAllister,
Illona Linthwaite, and Edward & Philippa Seymour.

The setting is outside linear time and place, but here is a rough indication:

Part 1: A classroom, Dublin, 1912
Part 2: Liberty Hall, Dublin, 1913-14
Part 3: Liberty Hall, Dublin, Easter Monday 1916
Part 4: Constance in Aylesbury jail, Sean in Dublin, 1917-18
Part 5: Outside the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, 1926

Context *(Names in bold type are mentioned in the play)*

The years following the Great Famine in Ireland saw a revival of interest in Irish culture. Douglas Hyde founded the **Gaelic League** in 1893, in the belief that Irish people should know the Irish language. The **Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)** promoted the Irish sports hurling and Gaelic football. The Irish Literary Theatre was founded in 1898 by **W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory** and others, later to become the Irish National Theatre Society based at the **Abbey Theatre**. The first play staged there was **J M Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen*** in 1903.

Arthur Griffith founded **Sinn Féin** (Ourselves Alone) in 1905 with the policy of 'national self-reliance'; however, he did not believe in the use of physical force. The **Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB)** had existed in the 19th century as a sister organisation of the American secret society *Clan na Gael*, but began to grow more militant in its aims. In 1912 the IRB formed an army under **Eoin MacNeill**, the Irish **Volunteers**. **Cumann na mBan** (Women's League) was formed as a women's military auxiliary to the Volunteers. At the start of World War I in 1914 the Volunteers split into two factions, the majority following **John Redmond**, the Irish Parliamentary Party leader, who believed the Volunteers should join the British Army for the duration of the war. A small minority remained with MacNeill, believing that Irishmen should not be used as cannon fodder.

In 1910, the slums of Dublin housed one third of the city's population. The population density here sometimes rose to as many as 100 occupants to a single room. The average wage among slum-dwellers was between five shillings and three pounds per week.

Jim Larkin formed the **Irish Transport & General Workers' Union (ITGWU)** in 1908. The **Irish Citizen Army** was formed in 1913 during the **Lock-out strike**, to protect striking workers from police violence.

The **Easter Rising** was planned by the **Military Council** of the IRB after WWI broke out, under the leadership of **Pádraig Pearse**. It was planned as a surprise attack for Easter Sunday, but when they failed to enlist support from Germany and a boat delivering weapons was intercepted by the British before it could unload, Eoin MacNeill issued a countermand to his Volunteers cancelling all manoeuvres. The Military Council overruled MacNeill and the Rising went ahead a day later than planned, but far fewer Volunteers turned out to fight. There were 1,250 rebels against 17,000 British troops and police, including a gunship on the Liffey.

After a week of fighting, Pádraig Pearse surrendered to the British, and 16 rebels were executed soon after, most of them at **Kilmainham Gaol** in Dublin. The executions provoked public outrage, particularly those of Joseph Plunkett, only hours after his marriage, and of **James Connolly**, whose wounds were so serious he had to be strapped into a chair to be shot. Public opinion turned round to hero-worship of the rebels, which fuelled the War of Independence or Anglo-Irish war of 1919-21 following the illegal establishment of the **Dáil Éireann** (House of Representatives of Ireland).

The **Irish Free State (Saorstát Éireann)** was founded 1921 after Michael Collins signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty which included an **oath of allegiance** to the British Crown. **Éamon de Valera**, then President of the Dáil, refused to accept anything less than complete independence, and the **Irish Civil War** of 1922-23 ensued, eventually won by the pro-Treaty side. In 1926, de Valera, Constance Markiewicz and others formed a new political party, **Fianna Fáil** (The Warriors of Destiny), and began a legal case to challenge the requirement to take the oath, but this collapsed and in 1927 they did take the oath in order to remain in politics, although Markiewicz died before she could do so.

Seán O'Casey's play ***The Plough and the Stars***, set during the Easter Rising, premiered at the Abbey Theatre in 1926. A riot was organised for the third performance, led by nationalists and widows of the rebels, who considered the play an insult. They stormed the stage, made speeches of protest and threw stink bombs until the police were called.

JAMES CONNOLLY by Constance Markiewicz

You died for your country my hero-love
In the first grey dawn of spring;
On your lips was a prayer to God above
That your death will have helped to bring
Freedom and peace to the land you love,
Love above everything.

You died for your country and left me here
To weep – No ! my eyes are dry
For the woman you found so sweet and dear
Has a sterner destiny –
She will fight as she fought when you were here
For freedom I'll live and die.
On your murdered body I'll pledge my life
With its passionate love and hate
To secret plotting and open strife
For vengeance early and late
To Ireland and you I have pledged my life
Revenge for your memory's sake!