

# DRUID THEATRE'S ECONOMICS: THE FIRST DECADE

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## **Abstract:**

This article considers the relationship between Druid Theatre's productions and its administration during the company's first decade by investigating the links between three features: the company's fundraising practices; Druid's infrastructure development in terms of personnel and physical space; and the organisation's programming choices. Druid's artistic partnership with Irish playwright Tom Murphy is also examined as it assisted in launching Druid's international touring when Murphy's *Conversations on a Homecoming* was the first Druid production to travel outside of the United States/United Kingdom festival circuit.

**Keywords:** Druid Theatre, Tom Murphy, Ireland, funding, Irish theatre.

Druid Theatre commenced production in the summer of 1975 with a repertory of three plays: J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, Brian Friel's *The Loves of Cass Maguire* and Kevin Laffan's *It's a Two Foot Six Inches Above the Ground World*. At that time, the company staged its work only in Galway, in the west of Ireland. By the end of Druid's first decade, the company had developed a rigorous touring schedule both within Ireland and internationally. How did

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Druid grow from a company that presented theatrical entertainments for Galway's local audiences and visiting tourists into an international touring organisation presenting productions in Scotland and England, which were followed by invitations to tour to America and Australia? I contend that this success arises from the strong relationship between Druid's productions and its administration. To make this argument, I consider three aspects of Druid's first decade. Although I discuss each strand separately, the links between them will become readily apparent. First, I investigate Druid's fundraising practices, which were just as innovative as their productions. Second, I examine Druid's infrastructure development to reveal the growth of the company in terms of personnel and physical space. Third, I explore Druid's programming from two perspectives: I look at how Druid experimented with its offerings to determine what worked best in the company's physical space in Galway, and I consider Druid's touring in relation to the organisation's search for funding opportunities. I also discuss Druid's work with Irish playwright Tom Murphy who served as the company's Writer-in-Association during the mid-1980s. This partnership helped launch Druid's international reputation when the touring production of Murphy's *Conversations on a Homecoming* was the first Druid production to travel outside of the United States/United Kingdom festival circuit.

### **Funding/Box Office**

After four years of productions and the opening of Druid's performance space in 1979, the fundraising ingenuity of the company's co-founder and Artistic Director, Garry Hynes, was noted in an *Irish Times* column, which stated: "Garry Hynes [has] resorted to the most imaginative means to raise money, short of going out into the streets with a begging bowl" (Pro-Quidnunc 11). Those "imaginative means" began with the company's initial performances. Ireland's Arts Council is the primary funder of cultural activities in

the country. The Arts Council requires that a company demonstrate the ability to stage a body of work of proven quality before it will subsidize an organisation's activities. However, this stipulation creates a predicament for new companies because they cannot meet this criterion: they aren't funded until they produce work, but they can't produce work without funding. Druid's inability to secure money from the Arts Council necessitated the company's search for supplementary funding. Since Druid originated during Galway's summer tourist season, the company approached Ireland's tourist board, Bord Fáilte (now known as Fáilte Ireland), which allocated £350 to support Druid's activities (Burke 5).<sup>1</sup> But the diversification of the company's income streams was not limited to Bord Fáilte.

With the success of its first shows, Druid secured a small Arts Council grant of £1,500 in 1976. In subsequent years, Druid augmented this funding with box office income and more "imaginative means" such as donation appeals in its programmes, the sale of original production artwork, and programme advertisements.<sup>2</sup> When the company converted a warehouse space into a new and larger theatre, they raised money through such activities as a "Sponsor a Seat" campaign and a benefit jazz concert. An Taibhdhearc na Gaillimhe, Galway's Irish language theatre, donated the proceeds of a performance to the cause.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Druid procured thank-you advertisements in *The Galway Advertiser*, a local newspaper. The placement of these advertisements is significant as it demonstrates the company's skill with fundraising strategies. Druid publicly pleased current donors and courted future ones by visibly acknowledging the altruistic nature of their benefactors.

The company's aptitude for fundraising is evidenced by the array of sponsors who supported Druid's 1980 visit to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe where they presented four shows: Garry Hynes's original revue based on Oscar Wilde's life, *The Pursuit of Pleasure*; an original play that explored Ireland's relationship with England during the reign of Elizabeth I called *Island Protected by a Bridge of Glass*; and two one-

act plays by Galway-born playwright Geraldine Aron, *Bar and Ger* and *A Galway Girl*. This trip to Scotland marked Druid's first performances outside Ireland and necessitated a £6,000 fundraising drive. Perhaps the most interesting supporter was the Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs, which served as the major sponsor with a donation of £2500. That amount provided nearly 50 per cent of the necessary funds.

The CRC's support is significant as it points to two features of the organisation. First, it demonstrates Druid's adherence to a fundamental fundraising rule: "If you don't ask, you can't get." Therefore, income generation is possible only if it is requested, but a request does not guarantee the receipt of funds. This tactic differs from an "ask and you shall receive" approach, which indicates that there is a certainty that the grantee's request will result in a successful outcome. The second feature reveals the Irish government's willingness to support Druid's artistic mission abroad. Although the rationale behind the CRC's sponsorship is unclear, it may have been a form of cultural diplomacy, eagerness to aid in the presentation of a new and exciting theatre outside Ireland's borders or, perhaps, art for art's sake.

The fact that Druid raised the remainder of the necessary capital through local donations, at least one benefit performance, and business sponsorship, reveals the support of the local community. The financial supporters of Druid's venture to Edinburgh were not disappointed. The company received two awards for its productions: a Scotsman Fringe First for *Pursuit* and *Island* and a Radio Forth award for *Island's* original music, which was written and performed by local traditional Irish music band, De Dannan. Upon Druid's return to Galway, the company's international success was honoured by a mayoral reception (Smyllie 9). This celebration of Druid's work seems to underscore the prestige of international touring in the eyes of Galwegians.

The company's new international reputation warranted increased attention of Druid's activities at home in Ireland. For instance, Northern Ireland's *Irish News* noted: "Druid is a small but dynamic company.

Somebody should invite them up. After Edinburgh there'll be no stopping them" (*Druid Theatre* T2/69[45]). The interest in Druid's activities extended to Ireland's capital where performances of *Island* were scheduled as part of the 1980 Dublin Theatre Festival. However, Druid pulled *Island* from the programme when the Festival refused to meet Druid's guarantee of £1,350. Quoted in an *Irish Times* column, Garry Hynes remarked that "even though we wrote to Dublin in April, we didn't hear a word from them until the middle of August. By this time, with the Edinburgh commitment made and secured, we simply didn't have the extra money to go to Dublin" (Finlan 9). Commenting on the irony of the situation that Druid Theatre's successful productions could be enjoyed internationally but not at home, the columnist illustrated the link between art and administration: "And so, Dublin festival-goers were denied a chance of seeing this remarkable group of professionals from the west who scored such a splendid success at Edinburgh" (Finlan 9). The following year Druid's *Island Protected by a Bridge of Glass* appeared at the Project Arts Centre, Dublin.

I think it is worth noting that Druid's 1982 interpretation of *The Playboy of the Western World* heralded many firsts for the company. It served as Druid's inauguration at the Dublin Theatre Festival at which the *Irish Times* hailed it the "definitive" *Playboy* (Nowlan 8). A few weeks later the production initiated Druid's touring to Northern Ireland with stops at Derry's Guildhall and Belfast Civic Arts Theatre, the latter as a part of the Belfast Arts Festival. Prior to these performances, Druid's *Playboy* played the 1982 Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The trip was made possible with support from such entities as Western Rent-a-Van and Sealink, which provided transportation, as well as Irish Shell and further assistance from the Cultural Relations Committee, Department of Foreign Affairs.

Together with clever fundraising tactics, Druid utilised strategic pricing techniques to sell tickets. When the company added lunchtime theatre to its repertoire in August 1975, only one month after its inception, ticket buyers were enticed by the inclusion of a sandwich in the ticket

price. Later, lunchtime shows that were moved to evening performance times offered a free glass of wine with every ticket purchased. In another example, tickets were discounted and sold in a three-play package, while students could purchase unsold tickets at a discounted rate the evening of the performance for only 50p. And in autumn 1981, the company offered *Double Double Bill*, an evening's entertainment that literally involved two double bills. Audiences could see Beckett's *Endgame* followed by *The Pursuit of Pleasure*, or the Neil Jordan/Joe Comerford movie *Traveller*, which was paired with the one-man show *Hancock's Last Half-Hour*. The cost of a ticket to one double bill was £3 (or £1.50 per ticket), or all four shows could be attended for £5 (or £1.25 per ticket)—but only if purchased by a certain date. This created a sense of urgency in consumers and encouraged them to purchase tickets as soon as possible.<sup>4</sup> Druid's approach seems to have been a pioneering effort in terms of local theatre ticket sales, which prompted one newspaper to remark: "Is this the age of supermarket theatre? If so, audiences won't complain ("Druid's" 7). It appears that any apprehension the writer felt about Druid's business-like pricing packages was assuaged by the consistent quality of the company's work and that ticket buyers would be pleased to receive a bargain. The writer's term "supermarket theatre" correlates to the pricing strategies of commercial companies. For instance, around the time Druid presented the *Double Double Bill*, an advertisement in the *Connacht Tribune* announced that a local grocer was offering two free pints of milk with every £10 purchase ("McInerney's" III). The same issue, which cost 30p, advertised a Halloween party and buffet at Sullivan's Royal Hotel in Gort where the price of admission was £2.50 ("Sullivan's" IV). Using a similar approach, Druid was trying to sell theatre tickets. This example also points out Druid's promotion of theatre as event. After the success of Druid's production of J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in the early 1980s, Garry Hynes was asked about the company's future. Her response demonstrated Druid's commitment to "try to continue to present theatre that is exciting, that provides some

sort of experience for the audience" (Comiskey 14). That experience was not limited to the audience member's attendance at the theatre the evening of the performance. It began as soon as the prospective audience member became aware of Druid's unique and exciting pricing structure. Such uses of theatre as event have been essential to the development of the company whose founding was in itself an event that regularly provided English-language theatre in Galway when no other existed.

Before continuing, I would like to mention that Ireland's Arts Council is still effectively the solitary source of public funding for theatres in Ireland. In a 2008 marketing brochure, Druid revealed that the company received only 5.4 per cent of its annual budget from the Arts Council in 2008 ("So What" 2). While that information was juxtaposed with the fact that Druid Theatre was the third highest funded company in the country behind the Abbey Theatre and The Gate Theatre, respectively, it makes clear that Druid faces the same concerns as an established company that it did as a fledgling theatre in the mid-1970s ("So What" 2).<sup>5</sup>

## **Infrastructure—Human Resources and Physical Space**

In conjunction with its fundraising and box office efforts, Druid acknowledged the importance of solidifying its infrastructure by hiring personnel with specific duties and by securing a permanent performance space. Initially, Druid utilised the ensemble concept with company members responsible for more tasks than merely acting, costuming, or directing. While this was inevitably an artistic choice, it provided an additional benefit: decreased labour expenses. Garry Hynes, Druid's co-founder and Artistic Director, administered the company in addition to her directorial responsibilities, while co-founders Marie Mullen and Mick Lally provided production assistance along with their duties as actors. The ensemble model is expressed by the company's early production programmes, which focus on the work

produced and not on the ensemble members. Instead of traditional biographical information, the programmes champion the playwright, production, and company information over individual life stories. This created a cohesive company identity and stretched the company's resources by eliminating the need to print extra information.

In 1980, after four and a half years, Druid began to develop its organisational structure in a number of ways. For instance, Garry Hynes began delegating her directing duties. In addition, Deirdre Murphy, who had an administrative employment history but not a theatrical one, was appointed as Druid's first-ever full-time Administrator, a post funded by the Arts Council. It is unclear whether Druid created the position due to Arts Council funding requirements or whether Druid created the position as a result of its own initiative and request for Arts Council funding. Regardless of the motivation behind the post's origins, the instalment of a full-time Administrator created a clearer separation of organisational tasks. The following year, the company continued its division of duties by engaging a Production Manager. By that time, the production programmes not only included biographies of actors but demarcated between those with prior Druid performance experience and newcomers. However, even as Druid progressed in terms of its human resources development, the company balanced its delineation of duties with the ensemble method. This was evidenced in two 1981 newspaper articles. In the first, an interview with Ray McBride, the Druid actor remarked that: "We read [Sam Shepard's] *Buried Child* a couple months ago but it wasn't really suitable for us. Then we decided on this one [Shepard's *Geography of a Horse Dreamer*]" (*Druid Theatre* T2/70[76]). In the second, an article on new Druid actor Keith Casburn, it was mentioned that Casburn believed "Druid should be getting more money from the Arts Council. This would give Druid an opportunity to hire a stage crew to do the stage work" (*Druid Theatre* T2/70[123]).

However, there is at least one shortcoming of the ensemble method: the limited skills of those involved. This is evidenced in relation to the 1982 production of *The Playboy of the Western World* that Druid opened



in Galway and toured extensively, including performances at that year's Dublin Theatre Festival where the show played at the Olympia Theatre. Maelíosa Stafford, starring as Christy Mahon, was also the lightning designer. At least one critic was unimpressed, writing that Stafford's lighting was "undeveloped" (*Druid Theatre* T2/72[20]). Nevertheless, this illustrates the tie between the company's administration and artistry.

In addition to the growth of the organisation administratively, Druid also acknowledged the importance of having a permanent performance space. During its first season, larger productions were presented in the evening at the Jesuit Hall, a rented 200-seat auditorium at a local secondary school. In August 1975, with the introduction of lunchtime theatre to its repertoire, Druid utilised an event room in a local hotel, which seated approximately 40 audience members. Eventually, Druid leased and renovated the event room and, therefore, secured a permanent performance space known as the Fo'castle Theatre. However, within a few years, the company was faced with a difficult decision: they could either expand or they would eventually stagnate. The Fo'castle's limitations, such as inadequate rehearsal facilities and very limited seating, forced Druid to search for a larger space. The result was the commencement of a long-term lease on the premises of a warehouse that Druid converted into a theatre.<sup>6</sup> One local paper observed that:

This was a tremendously welcome development for Druid, as the company felt that if 1978 ended without a larger premises being located, the company would have to seriously consider closing, in view of any possibility for expansion. ("New Home" 1)

In addition to extra seating, the new space provided a rehearsal room, a lobby, and dressing rooms. The opening of Druid's new theatre was a defining moment in the company's history and was the next stage of Druid's infrastructure development allowing theatregoers a sense of

the company's continuity and stability, which increased audience numbers. However, in time, even the new theatre's seating became inadequate. That limitation and a change in Arts Council policy would affect Druid's programming and prompt the organisation to branch out into touring, which I examine after looking at Druid's programming at home in Galway.

## Programming—In Galway

At the time of Druid's inception, no other professional theatre company existed outside Dublin in the Republic of Ireland. In addition to the presentation of evening performances, the company attempted to diversify programming with the institution of a number of other activities. For instance, Druid introduced lunchtime theatre to Galway just one month after the commencement of its evening performances of the Synge, Friel, and Laffan plays. The company's awareness of the unusual nature of this event was offset by its marketing tactics. First, each ticket purchased procured a free sandwich and admission to two short one-act plays. Second, the company performed only on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. This allowed both Galway's office workers and tourists an opportunity to see the productions. Druid continued to present lunchtime theatre performances and eventually began using them as a testing ground for evening productions and plays that could be toured.

In September 1976, just over a year after introducing Galway's citizens and tourists to lunchtime theatre, Druid produced *Off Obie*, a collection of one-act plays by American playwrights John Guare, Leonard Melfi, and Terrence McNally, which began as a lunchtime offering. It appears that a subsequent production of Melfi's *Birdbath* marked Druid's debut performance outside of Galway when it was presented at Dublin's Project Arts Centre. During the company's run in Dublin, Druid's performance space in Galway was used by the Tuam Theatre Guild, which presented Tom Murphy's *The Sanctuary Lamp*. An announcement of the Guild's visit states that the production was "presented by Druid"

(*Druid Theatre* T2/68[4]). This wording suggests one of two things: either Druid loaned the space to the company outright or Druid received payment (perhaps via a percentage of the box office income or space rental charge) in exchange for the Guild's use of the theatre. Either way, Druid ensured their space was used during their absence, which provided local and visiting audience members with further evidence of the organisation's intention of its prolonged existence.

In the years after Druid's first productions, the company attempted to broaden its programming. For example, a programme for the lunchtime production of George Bernard Shaw's *Village Wooing* includes a listing for "other events during the season [including] Traditional Music Sessions and Children's Theatre" (*Village* T2/28[1]). However, the following month's lunchtime programme for *An Evening at Coole: The Writings of Lady Gregory* incorporates an announcement of the traditional music sessions, but the children's theatre listing is absent (*An Evening* T2/29[1]). On other occasions Druid showcased a local artist's weaving exhibition and incorporated the Neil Jordan/Joe Comerford movie *Traveller* into its evening offerings. Given that Druid was initially organised as a producing organisation, some attempts at broadening its programming did not come to fruition; however, Druid's willingness to invest in research and development allowed the company to determine what, if any, additional activities it could incorporate into a usual season of lunchtime and evening shows. This experimentation also acted as a catalyst for its regular programming. For instance, it is reasonable to assume that any traditional music sessions presented at Druid in 1979 precipitated De Dannan's work on the company's original production of *Island Protected by a Bridge of Glass*. Druid's testing of activities beyond its usual presentation of evening and lunchtime performances resulted in some successes and some disappointments and may have been one factor that prompted another of its supplementary endeavours: touring. Druid's tours may have also been stimulated by the link between art and administration. This was noted in a 1982 newspaper article: "The Druid Theatre Company in Galway has started

a lunchtime run [...]. It's their first lunchtime production for a while due to a heavy schedule and financial restrictions which haven't been helped by a pittance of a grant from Galway Corporation [...]. As a result, the company may now have to do more touring and give fewer performances at their home theatre" (*Druid Theatre* T2/71[97]). The small amount of hometown subsidy combined with a change in Arts Council funding ensured Druid's focus on touring, which I will now examine.

### Programming—Touring

In January 1979, nearly four years after the establishment of the company and directly after Druid began refurbishing its new theatre, Garry Hynes was interviewed for an article in the *Evening Press*. In it Graham Sennett writes that:

She also recognises that Druid needs a hand in getting their work more widely known and not just in Galway. They did a lunchtime season at the Project in Dublin two years ago [with Leonard Melfi's *Birdbath*] and also played Listowel during the [1978] Writers' Week [when they performed *In the Glens of Rathvanna*, which included excerpts of Synge's writings along with the presentation of his *The Shadow of the Glen* and *The Tinker's Wedding*]. Despite good notices in Dublin, they lost money but broke even on the Listowel venture. 'We can't afford to lose money [...]. If we're to spend it'll have to be in Galway but we'd welcome another chance in Dublin.' (Sennett 6)

Hynes' comments reveal the delicate balance between theatre as art and theatre as business. She wants to introduce Druid productions to audiences outside Galway, but only if it is financially feasible.

Despite the fact that Druid had performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1980, the company's commitment to touring began

in earnest with a production of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, which Hynes relocated to a mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish estate. After a successful run at the Druid Lane Theatre in December 1981, the company was invited to perform it at the January 1982 opening of Sligo's Hawk's Well. The Hawk's Well was the first purpose-built theatre located west of the River Shannon and was funded by Bord Fáilte, the Arts Council, the Sligo Corporation, and the Donegal/Leitrim/Sligo Tourism Board.<sup>7</sup> Druid's appearance at the opening suggests that, by that time, the company was perceived as something more than a local company and, perhaps, that the quality of the performance was what Hawk's Well programming should aspire to in the future.<sup>8</sup> Later that year, a production of Dario Fo's *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* established Druid in its regional touring. In 1982, the company's touring reputation and circuit were solidified with what would become known as Druid's quintessential production of *The Playboy of the Western World* and its tour that included three visits within the festival circuit (Edinburgh, Dublin and Belfast) as well as stops in Sligo, Cork and Derry.<sup>9</sup> The company's visit to two of the three Aran Islands spawned an Irish television documentary *Back to the Cradle*, which furthered Druid's national profile. In addition, this extension of the organisation's touring network to places which lay outside any regular touring circuit became known as Druid's Unusual Rural Tours, or URTs for short.

Druid's touring was augmented by the demise of the Irish Theatre Company, which provided professional touring productions to rural areas. Founded in 1974, the Company ceased operation when the Arts Council withdrew its support of the organisation, possibly due to perceived mismanagement or overspending of funds. The 1982 Arts Council report stated that "[o]n a grant of £287,000 in 1981 the ITC was able to mount only three tours over a period of twenty-six weeks" (Ireland 19). As early as 1980, the Arts Council began decentralising its grants. The ITC was granted a final £85,000 in 1982 and was replaced by the National Touring Agency (Ibid. 21). The ensuing increase in funding decentralisation allocated Druid nearly £20,000 in 1983 for

touring, which the company took full advantage of by offering tours of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals* and M.J. Molly's *The Wood of the Whispering*. The last few years of Druid's first decade would benefit from this funding with major tours that extended its touring network including invitations to perform outside of the Ireland/United Kingdom network. *Playboy* and Irish playwright Tom Murphy's *Conversations on a Homecoming* were presented at the 1986 Pepsico SummerFare Festival in New York State. Later, *Conversations* served as the company's first play to break out of the United Kingdom/United States network when it appeared in Australia in early 1987 followed by a presentation of *Playboy* in December of that same year. The relationship between Druid and Murphy as the company's Writer-in-Association is significant to the development of Druid's international touring; therefore, I would like to examine it before concluding.

## Druid and Tom Murphy

Shortly before Druid's tenth anniversary, the company began a creative venture with Tom Murphy that bolstered both Murphy and Druid's international reputations. As Garry Hynes, Druid's Artistic Director, noted in 2007:

In the 1980s [...] we became very conscious in Druid that we needed to engage with new writing, engage with it in the level of working with an established writer, not just through presenting new work by young writers. ("Tom Murphy" podcast)

Her differentiation between "established" and "young" is very telling as Druid had presented the World Premiere of Geraldine Aron's *Same Old Moon* in 1984 as part of Galway's Quincentennial celebrations, just one year prior to the premieres of Murphy's plays. For the company, however, it appears Murphy's name was more recognisable than Aron's

outside Ireland. Although Murphy and Aron aren't terribly far apart in age (Murphy was born in 1935, and Aron was born in 1941), Murphy's first play premiered in 1961, while Aron's first play was produced in 1975. In addition, Murphy was a returned Irish émigré, while the Galway-born Aron spent most of her adult life in South Africa. At the time of their association, both Druid and Murphy were similar to some extent in terms of their international recognition. Druid had not toured outside Ireland and the United Kingdom, and Murphy had not premiered a play outside of the same environs.<sup>10</sup> Their respective artistic sensibilities constructed an Irish theatre that blended tradition with innovation: Murphy with his content and approach, Druid with its production aesthetic.

Tom Murphy's affiliation with Druid as its Writer-in-Association resulted in a productive period for both the playwright and the organisation. The artistic union of Murphy, who is well-known for the incessant re-working of his scripts, and Druid, which is known for the frequent reconsideration of its productions, began with Druid's production and subsequent Irish tour of Murphy's 1968 play *Famine* in early 1984. Murphy then rewrote his 1972 two-act play *The White House* into a one-act entitled *Conversations on a Homecoming*. One other new work was generated by the Druid/Murphy partnership: the critically-acclaimed *Bailegangaire*. Starring the well-known Irish actress Siobhán McKenna in her last stage role, the play received its Galway premiere in December 1985, toured to London in early 1986, and returned to Dublin that May. Simultaneously with *Bailegangaire*'s London production, *Conversations* toured Ireland. In summer 1986, *Conversations* along with *The Playboy of the Western World* were staged at the Pepsico SummerFare Festival in Purchase, New York. These performances served as Druid's introduction to the international touring circuit outside of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The outcome of the Murphy/Druid partnership proved more beneficial for Druid than for Murphy. This was remarked upon in *Variety*'s review of the New York production, which deemed

*Conversations on a Homecoming* "more impressive as the U.S. introduction to the company than the U.S. premiere of Murphy's 1985 play" ("Shows Out" 86). The *Variety* writer praised the acting, directing, and set design but critiqued the script saying: "The play takes too long to get going and when it does the destination is too much a forgone conclusion" ("Shows Out" 86). However, the production was suitably well received to be invited to the January 1987 Sydney Festival in Australia, which further expanded Druid's international touring. The triumph of the show at home and abroad implied that Druid could not continue as a small, local company. This fact prompted a local newspaper reporter to nostalgically note: "It has become a hard fact of life for audiences that Druid has to be shared with the world" (O'Sullivan 13). The comment also seems like a foreshadowing of Druid's present day success and focus on international touring.

## The First Decade as Indicator of the Future

Druid's tours are a good example of the interplay of the three strands I have presented. Artistically, Druid's increased focus on touring was at least partially encouraged by the Arts Council's increased decentralisation of funding upon elimination of the Irish Theatre Company's grant in 1982. Perhaps Druid would have enlarged its touring network anyway, but this part of its artistic policy was certainly stimulated by additional funding. Furthermore, Druid's touring illustrates a connection between the company's artistic work and its administration, which hinges on income streams and infrastructure development.

Another example of the interconnection between Druid's administration and Druid's artistic work was its initial use of an ensemble, which lessened production expenses while creating a cohesive company. Moreover, the combination of the new and larger performance space and the company's ensemble allowed for the quick remounting of productions as evidenced by the two-week event entitled *Three by Five*: five performances of Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* followed by five performances of Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and ending



with five additional performances of *Hound*. Also, the roles of Administrator and Production Manager allowed Druid to continue productions at the theatre in Galway while another show was on tour. Finally, the company's alliance with Irish playwright Tom Murphy aided in expanding Druid's international reputation and global touring network.

Druid has always emphasised its art, but that art has been shaped by the company's administration. Conversely, its administrative components have been influenced by its artistic drive. For instance, Druid's need to evolve drove its hunt for larger physical spaces. From its fundraising practices to its physical and personnel development to its touring, the aspects of Druid's artistry and its administration have constantly intermingled and affected one another. The combination of art and administration also enabled the company's growth from its local beginnings to its burgeoning international reputation a decade after its founding.

## Notes

1. Burke also mentioned Druid's difficulty in garnering the Bord Fáilte funding. Burke reported that Bord Fáilte denied Druid's initial request for £500. After an ensuing article in the *Irish Press*, the tourist board capitulated and funded the fledgling company albeit with a smaller amount than Druid requested originally.
2. The first instance I found in the Druid archives of artwork sale was the company's 1978 production of Georg Buchner's *Woyzeck*. This production marked the company's last show at the Fo' Castle site before renovations began on converting a warehouse space into a permanent theatre (*Woyzeck* Ms. T2/26[1]).
3. It is interesting to note that the status of both institutions has changed since the 1970s. Although an amateur theatre company, An Taibhdhearc was the only permanent theatre company in Galway at the time of Druid's inception. Therefore, Irish-language theatre was inherently viewed as Galway theatre as referenced in a newspaper editorial, which stated that: "One of Druid's great problems is that people automatically link 'Galway Theatre' and 'Taibhdhearc' and through some strange mental alchemy decide they won't go to Druid because it's in Irish and they won't understand" (*Druid Theatre* Ms. T2/68[8]).

4. It is significant that Druid kept its double bill productions separate from the offerings it did not originally produce. Druid produced *Endgame* specifically for the *Double Double Bill* and remounted *The Pursuit of Pleasure* as the Beckett play's companion piece. The accompanying double bill of the film *Traveller* and the one-man show *Hancock's Last Half-Hour* were presented by artists outside of the Druid ensemble. This allowed Druid to introduce new artists to the community while maintaining an independent artistic brand on their own productions.
5. The exact amount detailed in the pamphlet was €857,540, which means that Druid's total 2008 budget was €15,884,333.
6. Druid secured a low-cost rental agreement from a local business, Thomas McDonagh and Company. This arrangement still exists at present, and Druid publicly thanks the McDonagh Company in all production programmes.
7. The River Shannon is the major physical barrier between western and eastern Ireland.
8. Previously, in April 1981, Druid participated in the opening of Limerick's Belltable Arts Centre (formerly the Confraternity Theatre) although the honour of the opening performance was bestowed on the Abbey Theatre's production of Brian Friel's *Faith Healer*.
9. Druid toured a revival of this production of *Playboy* in February/March 1985 with visits to Clifden, Castlebar, Kiltimagh, Ballaghderreen, Ballinamore, Shercock, Carlow, Callan, Clonmel, London's Donmar Warehouse and, upon its return, Limerick's Belltable Arts Centre.
10. Murphy's only play to premiere outside of Ireland or the UK was *She Stoops to Folly*, which was produced by California's South Coast Repertory Theatre in 1995. Interestingly, his papers indicate that *Folly* was offered to Druid for production after he withdrew it for consideration from the Abbey Theatre (Murphy, Ms. 11115, uncatalogued letter).

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