

THEATRE FESTIVAL

Audiences set for a treat with Curious Incident

Preview

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

By Simon Stephens

The Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, October 6 to 10

Rating ****

Reviewed by **Lily Killeen**

This multi-award winning production is coming to the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre as one of the most anticipated performances of the Dublin Theatre Festival.

An adaptation of the book of the same name, author Mark Haddon rejects the common description of the story as being about a boy with Asperger's syndrome. Haddon prefers 15-year-old protagonist Christopher Boone's own description of himself as "someone who has

of an achievement for his character and certainly something he considers "brave".

The play is narrated by Siobhan (Geraldine Alexander), Christopher's teacher from the special needs school he attends. She brings the audience into the play within the play – the vessel that carries the overall story – while also playing multiple key roles in Christopher's life.

Acting as his conscience and guide, Siobhan coaxes Christopher through the frightening and traumatic points in his journey, while also guiding the audience through the narrative.

Adapted for the stage by Simon Stephens, the play achieves an element of theatrical drama while remaining true to the compassion and significant subject matter of the book. The set comprises a black box that features a grid made up of almost 800 LED lights. These lights, combined with clever projections, screeching music and strobe lighting, give an insight into the chaos of Christopher's mind.

One of the aspects of Christopher's behavioural problems is that he refuses to be touched by anyone at any time.

This creates a heartbreaking struggle for his parents, played by Stuart Laing and Gina Isaac, who want to protect him, but who crave his affection in return for their love.

So taxing is the part of Christopher that the character cannot be performed by the same actor twice in one day. It is Ashby's passion and commitment to the character that brings the play across the line, revealing Christopher as an unlikely hero at the end of a lengthy two and a half hours.

Chris Ashby as Christopher Boone in Curious Incident

Behavioural Problems".

Christopher (Chris Ashby) embarks on a detective mission after finding his neighbour's dog violently murdered on the front lawn. His investigation unveils family secrets that take him on a journey to London, something

Bee's story a sweet, moral musical

BEES!

The Ark

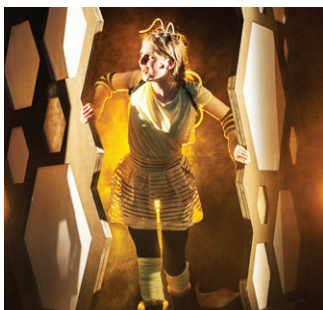
Run concluded

Rating ***

Reviewed by **Sara Keating**

There are puns aplenty in this musical from Will-Fredd Theatre, which charts the journey of Mel, a sweet honey bee, who is trying to find her colony. She is helped along on her journey by Marsha, a solitary bee who makes an exception to her isolation, and Luke, a rapping bumble bee.

There is a swift, slick execution to Sophie Motley's production,



Mary-Lou McCarthy in BEES!

but the environmental awareness weighs a bit too heavily at the end.

A musical with a moral purpose that a schools' audience in particular would enjoy.

Ireland post-bailout proves a compelling drama

Bailed Out!

By Colin Murphy

Directed by Conall Morrison

Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire, until today

Rating ****

Reviewed by **Tom Lyons**

Playwright and journalist Colin Murphy combines the discipline of sticking forensically to primary sources with the verve of a good story in his new play about the Irish financial crisis. Bailed Out! begins in the aftermath of the infamous bank guarantee

and portrays how our economy plunged into the death-spiral that forced Ireland into the bailout.

A striking aspect of the drama is how powerless Irish politicians were, post-guarantee. The key decision-makers are now Jean-Claude Trichet, the governor of the European Central Bank; and Timothy Geithner, the US treasury secretary. Both Trichet and Geithner are depicted accurately as the men who are really calling the shots while Ireland's elected leadership try to be heard, or flounder. The phrase "democratic deficit" springs to mind.

Dramatic tension is ratcheted up by Ireland's rising bond yields, which tick ever upwards on a display on the stripped-back stage.



Peter Hanly plays the late finance minister

Former taoiseach Brian Cowen, played by Denis Conway, provides most of the lighter moments in a play that knits together Dáil speeches, letters, radio interviews and books about the crash. The late Brian Lenihan, played by Peter Hanly, struggling first with pressure and then with illness, gives the play heart, without straying

Where no theatre has gone before

Corps Diplomatique

Conceived and directed

by Halory Goerger

Project Arts Centre

Run concluded

Rating: ****

Reviewed by **Stephen Bourke**

As a genre, sci-fi is instinctively epic, which is a perfectly good reason for anyone writing for the indoor no-frills arena of contemporary theatre to shy away from the vastness of space.

But with space enjoying a ratings bump at the moment, it's about time a play considered how human art might look to alien visual organs. After all, TV broadcasts are already going to be the first contact any intelligent life form will have with Earthlings.

In Corps Diplomatique, a troupe of amateur actors go into the heavens as cultural emissaries to bring raw human creativity to the galaxy, unconstrained by the straitjacket of cultural nous.

At a leisurely pace, five Francophones in jumpsuits undock from the International Space Station and drift off in the 'Jean Vilar' module, an intergenerational spacecraft and performance art space. The astronauts were chosen for their sterility, as each following generation is to be grown in vitro. None are accomplished artists,



Corps Diplomatique: brilliant satire

but plan to spend a lot of time practising.

The clock spins forward nine and a half years, and when it stops they're at each other like squabbling flatmates, barely at Mars, and no closer to putting on a show. Goerger and Boulogne huff chemicals from a dangling tube and slump against the bulkheads. They've barely used their theatre in years.

The crew degenerates with every new generation and attempts to wipe the slate only amplifying the cultural stains which can't be

scrubbed from the ship's computers, leading to the tragic-comedy of the final show, a quarter of a million years later.

Halory Goerger's script is whip-smart, even in translation. His cast (and co-creators) deliver a superbly droll and deadpan bit of theatre which, gradually, brings out the audience from polite sniggering to throaty guffaws.

With sly digs at everything from Mars One to the Catholic Church, Corps Diplomatique is a brilliant satire about life, art, and procrastinating on an infinite deadline.