



Sole Purpose Productions
April 2013 - March 2014



Sole Purpose Productions is a professional theatre company that exists to use the discourse of imagination to investigate and illuminate social and public issues. We aim to produce new theatre that contributes to social change, explores the dynamics of human relationships and promotes good relations. We bring art to the heart of the social, economic and creative life of communities locally, nationally and internationally.

We bring professional theatre on contemporary and relevant issues to working class and marginalised communities as well as mainstream theatre audiences. We value imagination, creativity, participation, access and inclusion. We aim to engage in cultural productions in the widest sense, continually expanding our artistic horizons.

Welcome to Sole Purpose Productions' annual report for 2013 - 2014. This was a momentous year for all arts organisations in Derry Londonderry given that we were the inaugural holders of the title, UK City of Culture. The year presented many opportunities and exciting challenges and Sole Purpose Productions played an important role in the celebrations. 2013/14 saw the company mount one of their most ambitious productions yet, **Pits and Perverts** by new writer Micheál Kerrigan, with script development from Patricia Byrne, was truly one of the highlights of the City of Culture year. In December 2013, **Don't Say A Word** by Patricia Byrne toured to Enniskillen and was then performed for the first time in a men's prison in Sligo. **The Maidens' City: A Herstory of the Walled City** by Anne Crilly, which was so successful in March 2013, was remounted for March 2014, to great acclaim. The **Theatre Lab** programme continued to expand, especially the LGBT strand which was celebrated by a night of **Rehearsed Readings of LGBT Plays in Development** during Foyle Pride in August 2013. We were delighted to welcome Louise Stephens Alexander from The Royal Court Theatre in London as a special guest facilitator for the Theatre Lab in November. In March 2014 we staged a rehearsed reading of **The House** by Edie Shillue, a short drama that explores issues around sex trafficking, this was followed by an interactive theatre workshop. The highly successful Theatre Lab Programme has been instrumental in developing all of these productions and projects.

So once again, a busy year! I would like to thank Patricia and Nicola, my fellow board members, Jim and Pauline and all the actors, volunteers, writers and production teams who have helped make this year such a success.

Maoliosa Boyle, Chairperson

Who we are



Patricia Byrne - Artistic Director Patricia is a co-founder and Artistic Director of Sole Purpose since its inception in 1997. She is a producer, director, writer and performer. The company have toured all over Ireland and Scotland and have taken productions to New York, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the Writing on the Wall Festival in Liverpool. Her one woman play, *Don't Say A Word*, directed by Shauna Kelpie, that looks at a situation of domestic violence, was nominated for an Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award in 2008, and was performed in the Scottish Parliament in 2009. In 2012 she received The Noel Walsh Freedom Award for making a significant contribution to LGBT rights and furthering the equality agenda through theatre work.



Nicola Schnurr - Administrator Nicola has been the administrator with Sole Purpose since 2008. She has 20 years experience of arts administration, having worked in Edinburgh for the Imagine Children's Theatre Festival and in Derry Londonderry for the Foyle Film Festival.

Board of Directors

Maoliosa Boyle - Chairperson Maoliosa is the Manager of the Void Gallery in Derry Londonderry and has a wealth of experience in running and managing a successful arts organisation. She has exhibited her own work extensively in group and solo shows in Ireland and further afield and has created stage installations for contemporary dance and theatre productions.



Jim Doherty - Secretary Jim has a background in 'live' arts and worked at the ICA London for twelve years. He is interested in International politics, peace agreements and reconciliation. Between 2005 and 2012 he coordinated the political and historical programme at the Gasyard Feile, Derry's biggest community arts festival. He has also worked on the Foyle Film Festival (selection and jury) and Foyle Pride.



Dr Pauline McClenaghan - Treasurer Pauline is the Executive Director of the Lifestart Foundation, a parenting education and family support charity. She has published papers and spoken at conferences on social inclusion and education. She is particularly interested in how theatre can be used to address social issues.



Associates

2013-2014

Abby Oliveira is a writer, performer and poet. She played roles in *Herstory* and *The House* as well as appearing in Theatre Lab and many other plays for Sole Purpose Productions.

Alan Wright is a composer and musical director who has worked with the Millennium Forum and other organisations. He took part in the *Pits and Perverts* workshops and as a composer for the LGBT Theatre Lab.

Alex Wilson played Jim in *Pits and Perverts*. He was also the Assistant Stage Manager and worked with Sole Purpose on *Galatea* and *A Wee Taste*.

Anne Crilly is a film maker and lecturer at the University of Ulster. She wrote the script for *Herstory*.

Carmel McCafferty is an actor on stage, screen and radio. She appeared in *The House* and LGBT Rehearsed Readings and Theatre Lab.

Conor Maguire is an actor and director. He played Sean in *Pits and Perverts*. Amongst other roles, he played Brendan Behan in *The Confirmation Suit* at The Apollo Hammersmith and at the 2014 Belfast Book Festival.

Debbie Caulfield is the stage manager of *Pits and Perverts*, *Don't Say A Word* and *The House*. She was also Production Manager for *Herstory*. Debbie is also a writer and performer.

Edie Shillue wrote the script for *The House*. She works with international and refugee committees in a range of settings.

Gemma Walker is an actor, she played various roles in *Herstory* and Monika in *The House*. She has also played many other roles in previous Sole Purpose Productions.

George Row is a photographer and website developer. He provides ongoing IT support for Sole Purpose.

Glen Tilley is an actor who appeared in Theatre Labs and the LGBT Rehearsed Readings.

Hanna Slatne is the Dramaturg with Tinderbox Theatre Company. She has facilitated Theatre Lab and the *Pits and Perverts* Script Development Workshops.

Helen Quigley is a highly talented costume maker and set designer. She worked on costumes for *Pits and Perverts* and *Herstory*.

Jason Davies is an actor. Originally from Wales, he played David in *Pits and Perverts*. He has appeared in many TV productions including Channel 4's *Pirates*, and in films including *Angels and Insects* and *Poirot*.

Kieran Ferris is a graphic designer based in The Void Gallery. He designs the print and publicity for Sole Purpose Productions.

Kieran Griffiths is an actor, writer, director and producer. He acted in many of our Theatre Labs.

Lisa Fitzpatrick is Head of the Theatre Studies Department at the University of Ulster. She facilitated the LGBT Theatre Lab.

Lenny Nelson is a musician, technician and set builder. He was the technician for *Don't Say A Word*.

Louise Stephens Alexander is the Assistant Literary Manager with The Royal Court, London. She facilitated our Theatre Lab in November 2013.

Michael Johnston is an actor. He played Gene in *Pits and Perverts*. He has also performed roles for Blue Eagle Productions and in the Camden Fringe.

Micheál Kerrigan is a former teacher, lifelong gay activist and socialist. He is the writer of *Pits and Perverts*.

Niall Cranney is a Technician at An Grianan Theatre in Letterkenny. He was the lighting designer for *Pits and Perverts*.

Nicky Harley is an actor who performed in various roles in *Herstory* and played the neighbour in *The House*. She has also been involved in previous Sole Purpose projects as an actor and director.

Orla Mullan is an actor and singer. She played Candida in *Pits and Perverts*. She has numerous stage and TV credits including *Beauty and the Beast*, *Bastien and Nastienne* for the Welsh National Opera and *Cinderella* for the Millennium Forum.

Patrick Buchanan is an actor. He played Rhys in *Pits and Perverts*. Film and TV work includes BBC's *Scapegoat*, *Jump* and *A Belfast Story* with Colm Meaney. He is also the face of Jameson's whiskey!

Paul Rooney is a sound engineer. He worked on sound for *Pits and Perverts*.

Sorcha Shanahan is an actor. She played Katya in *The House*. She has numerous stage, screen and radio credits including roles with Blue Eagle Productions and BBC Radio Ulster.

Shauna Kelpie has a wealth of experience in theatre and film. She directed *Don't Say A Word*.

Stuart Marshall is a set designer who has worked with the Lyric Theatre, the Grand Opera House and Bruiser, among others. He designed the set for *Pits and Perverts*.

Rehearsed Readings of LGBT Plays in Development

On 22nd August, as part of the Foyle Pride Festival, we held an entertaining evening of **Rehearsed Readings of LGBT Plays in Development**. These are pieces of work that have been developed through our LGBT Theatre Lab scriptwriting workshops.

The evening began with **Mad About You** by Damian Friel. Damian first worked with Sole Purpose in 2011 when he played the role of Eli in **Galatea** by Lawrence Aronovitch, reprising the role for a successful Northern Ireland tour in 2012. Since then he has been attending Theatre Lab and working on his own writing. His play was about two young gay men who meet in a psychiatric hospital.

Then we were treated to a 20 minute stand up comedy act by Claire Dooher, her first time ever venturing into this area, and what a find! She was brilliant and had the audience rolling in the aisles. Then followed a short piece by Mary Baird called **Willing and Hopefully Able**, a comedic and heartwarming story about an elderly woman who rings Lesbian Line for advice on how to proceed with a sexual relationship with her female friend. The evening was rounded off with **Lesbian Style** by Hilary McCollum, a series of monologues and dialogues looking at lesbian lives.

The whole evening was a great success and brought forth previously untold poignant, moving and humorous stories from the LGBT community. Two of the writers had never written a script before and the performers were a mix of those who had never acted before, some who had done some acting and a few professional actors.





“What a brilliant night. What a range of emotions – near to tears, sweet smiles, raucous belly laughter. That was a night of drama that lifts the lid off all the crappy snarls of oppression that loops around and strangles human love. Giving new voices a space to speak, shout and be heard is a real gift to this City. Brilliant work!”

Hilary Sidwell,
former Human Rights Officer, WHSSB



The whole experience of being involved in the LGBT Plays in Development was great for me in terms of confidence. The fact that I worked alongside mainly LGBT actors gave me a sense of belonging to the community. The actors themselves and of course Sole Purpose helped me see that I have a talent for writing and it's something that I want to continue in the future”

Damian Friel, writer/performer



Pits and Perverts by Micheál Kerrigan

Pits and Perverts by Micheál Kerrigan tells the story of a young man who leaves Derry at the height of the Troubles. He moves to London where he comes out as a gay man and becomes involved in the lesbian and gay support of the 1980s miners strike. Two miners from South Wales come to stay with Sean and his partner not realising that they are a gay couple. As events unfold many assumptions and prejudices are challenged and a new understanding is reached in each others lives. This entertaining and poignant play is based on real events in Thatcher's Britain.

Micheál first worked with Sole Purpose in 2011 when he played Georgie in Lawrence Aronovitch's **Galatea**. This gave him the confidence to write about his own experiences. He attended many Theatre Lab workshops and with the help of his friend Mary Connors and the professional assistance of Patricia Byrne, the script developed. Sole Purpose and Micheál spent a very constructive week workshopping the script with Hanna Slattne, Dramaturg with Tinderbox Theatre Company, and professional actors from Derry and Belfast.

Pits and Perverts was produced and directed by Patricia Byrne. The wonderful cast of local actors - Conor Maguire, Michael Johnston, Orla Mullan, Patrick Buchanan and Alex Wilson were joined by Welshman Jason Davies, whose father was a miner. The crew who worked tirelessly to bring this fantastic production to fruition included set designer Stuart Marshall, lighting designer Niall Cranny, sound design by Paul Rooney, costumes and props by Helen Quigley. Our fantastic stage manager Debbie Caulfield, was assisted by Alex Wilson.

Pits and Perverts was a huge success, with standing ovations every night and excellent reviews. It brought tears of laughter and tears of sadness to the audience, it transported them to a time of struggle and fortitude, it reminded the audience that the power of community can achieve great things.

We were delighted that Mike Jackson, a founder member of the Lesbian and Gay Support the Miners Group, travelled from London for the opening night of **Pits and Perverts** in The Derry Playhouse on the 3rd October. He also gave a talk on the history of the LGSM as part of the Civil Rights weekend.

Pits and Perverts was supported by the City of Culture Company, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Big Lottery Fund, The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, The Rainbow Project and Derry Trades Union Council.

“Pits and Perverts is wonderful, embracing so much important detail, so much historical truth, the pain and the joys. A masterpiece expression of all that LGSM was about.” Mike Jackson, Co-founder, Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM)

SOLE PURPOSE PRODUCTIONS AND THE RAINBOW PROJECT
PRESENT

PITS AND PERVERTS

BY MICHEÁL KERRIGAN

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY PATRICIA BYRNE

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN COMMUNITIES STAND TOGETHER...

3RD + 4TH OCTOBER
THE DERRY PLAYHOUSE

6TH OCTOBER
AN GRIANAN THEATRE
LETTERKENNY

8TH + 9TH OCTOBER
THE LYRIC NAUGHTON STUDIO
BELFAST

11TH OCTOBER
THE ALLEY THEATRE
STRABANE

ALL SHOWS 8PM
TICKETS £10 / €10
CONTACT VENUE TO BOOK





“A master-class in how even the biggest ideas and sincerest emotions can be acted out in small spaces. Encompassing everything from homophobia to working class stereotyping, socialism to Thatcherism, religion to high art, the play can be at times, deeply humorous, at other times, startlingly poignant and touching.”
Peter McGoran, *The Gown*

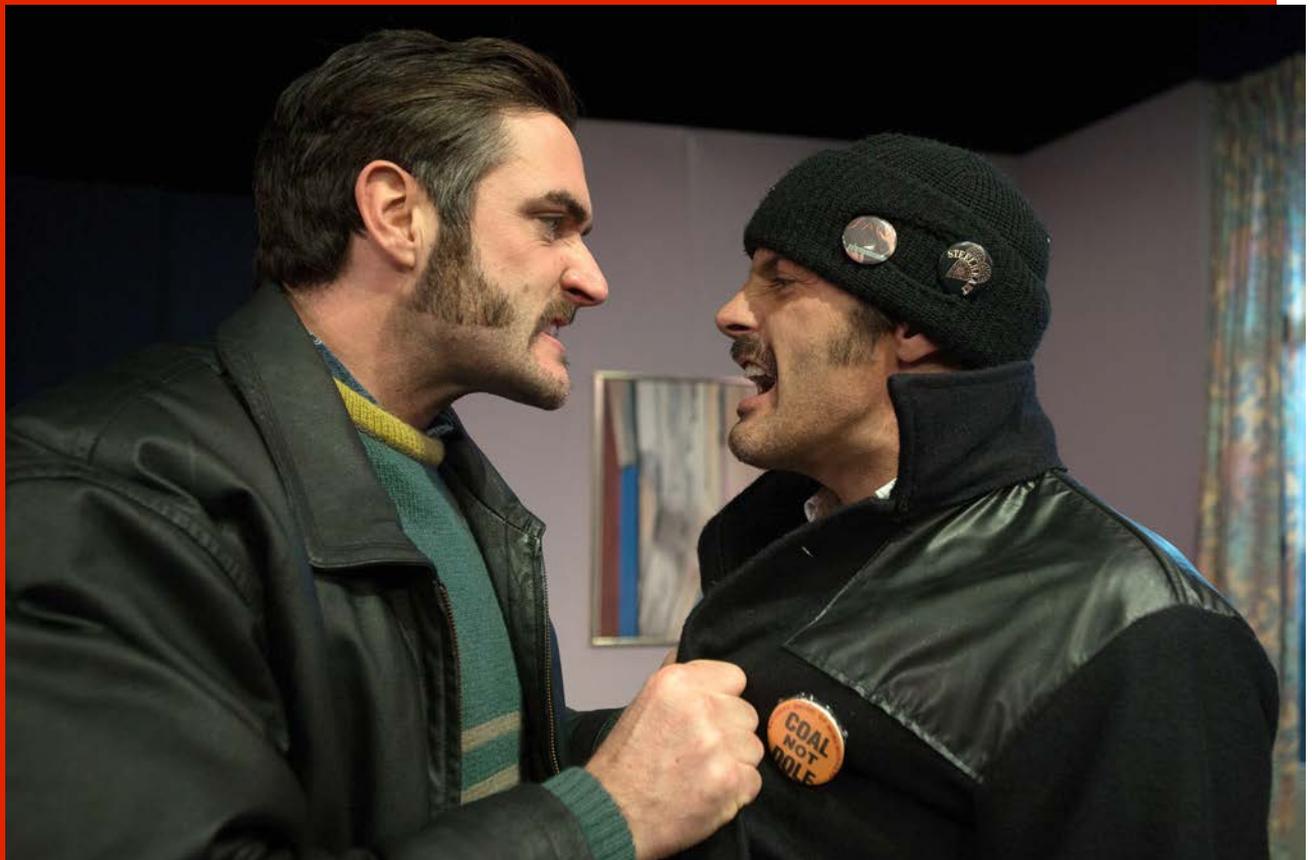


“Calamity follows calamity, with brilliant, hilarious results”
10 Belfast Telegraph

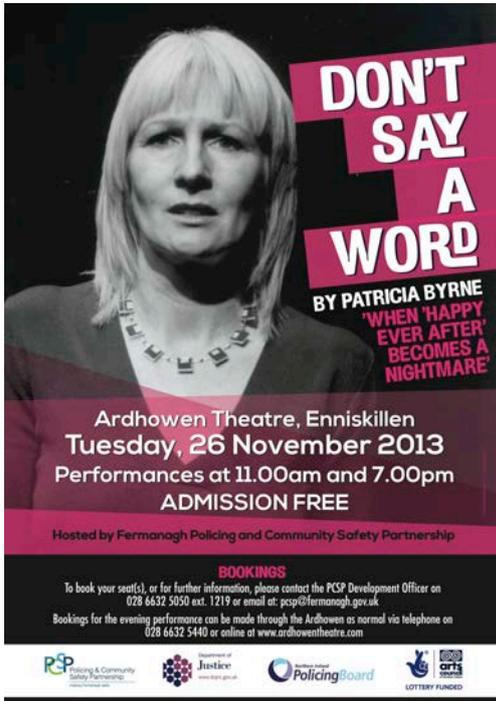


"Kerrigan's play successfully demonstrates how the little people of history can and do make a difference, even when momentous happenings are unravelling around them. Pits and Perverts does its audience a service by resurrecting a little-known story from a generally ugly, inglorious period of modern British history, and showing that the basic instinct of ordinary human beings is more often than not to be kind and charitable to one another, if only their social and political circumstances will allow them."

Terry Blain, Irish Theatre Magazine



Don't Say A Word by Patricia Byrne



Don't Say A Word by Patricia Byrne, now in its ninth year of touring, was performed in Enniskillen, Sligo and Cavan in November/December 2013. This hard hitting one woman play on domestic violence was performed by Patricia Byrne and directed by Shauna Kelpie, stage management was by Debbie Caulfield. The performances took place in partnership with the Fermanagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the Sligo Traveller Support Group.

There were two performances at the Ardhowen Theatre in Enniskillen on 26th November, for students from the Health and Social Care Department at South West College, school groups and social workers, as well as members of the public. The performances were followed by a panel discussion.

On the 3rd December, we gave a performance at the Northside Community Centre, Sligo. The audience was mainly made up of women from the Travelling Community. This was followed by a short Q&A session with a representative from the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service. The next day we staged the play in Loughan House Men's Prison. The audience were a specific group of men from the Travelling Community and Ethnic Minorities.



"The play was very informative and real. It was inspiring, very well laid out. I work mainly with men and showing this play to them has shown some of them, if not all, that behaviour they may have took for granted, or seen as normal, is anything but."

Martin Mongan, Men's Development Worker,
Sligo Traveller Support Group.

"It opened my eyes to what goes on behind closed doors"
Audience member

The Maidens' City: A Herstory of the Walled City

by Anne Crilly

One of the highlights of our 2013 City of Culture programme, **The Maidens' City: A Herstory of the Walled City**, returned to the city walls in March 2014. This dramatised walking tour brings to life the varied and vital roles that women in this city have played over the years. Key female characters such as Eleanor Marx, Mrs Pankhurst, Cecily Jackson and Amelia Earhart come together with the shirt factory women and women who fought for civil and women's rights. Written by Anne Crilly, Herstory is produced and directed by Patricia Byrne. Abby Oliveira, Gemma Walker and Nicky Harley once again reprise their original roles ably assisted by Debbie Caulfield as production manager.

There were four one hour tours in total, one a day on the 22nd, 23rd, 24th and 26th March, plus a seated indoor performance on the 20th March in Alexander House care home, for elderly residents and women from the local Chinese community.

The tour which took place on the 24th March was booked by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland for a group of visiting European artists as part of the Corners Project, an intercultural artist's platform, designed and driven by a partnership of cultural institutions at the edges of Europe. The other tours were open to members of the public. The Maidens' City was supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

"Loved everything! Fantastic actors, information, concept, the list goes on!"

"It was performed perfectly, really engaging and interesting"

"I loved the female perspective and the fact that the history of the city was presented to us in terms of drama. This is much better than standard tours"

"Been on the tour before, but enjoyed it even more this time!"



Sole Purpose Productions presents

Back by popular demand!

The Maidens' City

A Herstory of the Walled City
Dramatised walking tours
By Anne Crilly (University of Ulster)
Produced by Patricia Byrne
and Debbie Caulfield

Performed by
Abby Oliveira
Nicky Harley
Gemma Walker

It's history, but not as you know it!

Tour information and bookings
email: solepurpose@mac.com
www.solepurpose.org
Tel: 028 7127 9918

The House by Edie Shillue

SOLE PURPOSE PRODUCTIONS AND NORTHWEST ACT NI PRESENT

THE HOUSE by Edie Shillue

Produced and directed by Patricia Byrne

What's happening on your street?

A rehearsed reading of a play on sex trafficking



Wednesday 5th March 2014, 12.30 - 2.30pm

The Derry Playhouse

Free event. Lunch will be provided.

Book at solepurpose@mac.com 028 7127 9918



On the afternoon of Wednesday 5th March, Sole Purpose Productions, in association with Northwest ACT NI, presented a rehearsed reading of a new play on human trafficking.

The House written by Edie Shillue and produced/directed by Patricia Byrne, is a short piece that centres on a normal house in a normal street. However, inside the house, things are anything but normal. Accompanied by an interactive theatre workshop and discussion, this event was invigorating and informative and explored what actions we could take to tackle human trafficking.

The cast was made up of Carmel McCafferty, Nicky

Harley, Gemma Walker, Abby Oliveira and Sorcha Shanahan. Patricia Byrne facilitated the interactive theatre workshop which included the writer Edie Shillue along with Emma Johnston, Helen Henderson and Donna McFeely of Northwest ACT NI. The House is a play that Edie has been developing with the help of Sole Purpose Productions' Theatre Lab programme. Northwest ACT NI are a local group of committed citizens who want to see the crime of human trafficking eliminated within our communities.

Sixty people attended this lunchtime performance, which was followed by an interactive theatre workshop where the audience were asked to suggest various scenarios for what happened next to the characters. These were acted out by the cast and generated an interesting and enlightening conversation.

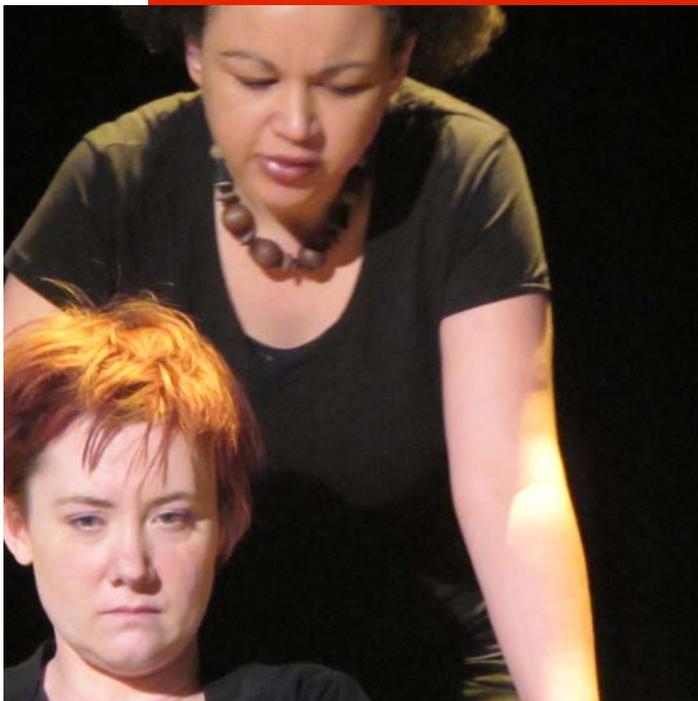


*“Excellent, thought provoking,
educational and enlightening”*

*“It gave me a passion to do
something, to create change.”*



*“Excellent medium for bringing across
information, and making the audience
aware of the human impact”*



Theatre Lab

2013/14 was another great year for our scriptwriting workshops, **Theatre Lab**. The first of the year took place on April 27th in The Derry Playhouse, facilitated by Patricia Byrne and Shauna Kelpie. We had five writers and four actors. Then on 11th June Patricia facilitated a two hour LGBT Theatre Lab taster session with The Rainbow Project Foyle Centre Youth Group. The aim of this workshop was to introduce the group to the concept of Theatre Lab with a view to participants joining in the next LGBT Theatre Lab in July and contributing to the Rehearsed Readings of LGBT Plays in Development in August. There were ten participants between the ages of 16 and 25.

On 20th July we held our third LGBT Theatre Lab which was facilitated by Patricia Byrne and Bronagh Diamond, script reader with the Outburst Queer Arts Festival. This workshop was held in preparation for the Rehearsed Readings in August. There were three writers and twelve others who were interested in acting. The writers went on to have their work performed at the Rehearsed Readings.

On November 30th, to round off a very successful year of the 2013 Theatre Lab programme, and to celebrate the UK City of Culture, we held a very special Lab in The Derry Playhouse with guest facilitator Louise Stephens Alexander. Louise is a former Literary Officer with the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh and is currently the Assistant Literary Manager with the Royal Court Theatre in London. The Royal Court is renowned as Britain's national company dedicated to new work by innovative writers. We had eight writers, with a wide variety of scripts. Four professional actors acted out the scripts. It was a brilliant day and a privilege to have Louise's expertise available to us.

The next LGBT Theatre Lab took place in The Playhouse on February 15th, facilitated by Patricia Byrne and Lisa Fitzpatrick, Senior Lecturer in Theatre Studies with the University of Ulster. Five writers took part and seven others came along to try out acting. This was the first time a musical piece, *Music Hall Girl* by Helen Clarke, was included. We brought in a composer, Alan Wright, and a singer, Orla Mullan, to work through the piece, with wonderful results!

All the Theatre Labs were successful and demonstrate the need for this kind of work, plus Sole Purpose Productions' commitment to the nurturing and development of new writing and new writers.



“As a first time playwright, I have found the Sole Purpose Theatre Labs invaluable. Pat Byrne is full of encouragement and I’ve appreciated the sense of solidarity from the other writers and actors. Seeing my words acted out in the Theatre Lab has helped to develop my sense of drama and what will and won’t work on stage.”

Hilary McCollum, writer.



Thanks so much for the opportunity to take part in the Royal Court Theatre Lab, It was beautifully and gently facilitated by Louise. I learned a lot, hearing my work played by professional actors brought it to life!”

Jim Simpson, writer.



“As Director of the Outburst Queer Arts Festival, I know that spaces like Sole Purpose Theatre Labs are essential in developing confident new voices in local LGBT storytelling”

Ruth McCarthy, Outburst Festival Director



Work April 2013 - March 2014

April 2013

Theatre Lab, facilitated by Patricia Byrne and Shauna Kelpie

June 2013

LGBT Theatre Lab Taster Session facilitated by Patricia Byrne

July 2013

LGBT Theatre Lab, facilitated by Patricia Byrne and Bronagh Diamond

August 2013

Rehearsed Readings of LGBT Plays in Development

The Derry Playhouse

October 2013

Pits and Perverts by Micheál Kerrigan

The Derry Playhouse

An Grianan Theatre, Letterkenny

The Lyric Naughton Studio, Belfast

The Alley Theatre, Strabane

November 2013

Theatre Lab with Louise Stephens Alexander from The Royal Court, London

November/December 2013

Don't Say A Word by Patricia Byrne

The Ardhoven Theatre, Enniskillen

Northside Community Centre, Sligo

Loughan House Prison, Cavan

February 2014

LGBT Theatre Lab, facilitated by Patricia Byrne and Lisa Fitzpatrick

March 2014

The House by Edie Shillue

The Derry Playhouse

The Maidens' City: A Herstory of the Walled City by Anne Crilly

Past Productions

Every Move You Make by Patricia Byrne

A play on young people and abusive relationships

A Wee Taste by Patricia Byrne

A portrayal of underage drinking

Don't Say A Word by Patricia Byrne

A play on domestic violence

See No Evil by Patricia Byrne

A portrayal of elder abuse

For details of past productions by Patricia Byrne, Dave Duggan and other writers, plus full details of current repertoire, please refer to our website www.solepurpose.org

Thank you to the following organisations for their support throughout the year

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Gilly Campbell, Lizzie Devlin, Anne Shipton, Damian Smyth

Derry City Council

Brendan McMenamin

The City of Culture Company

Marty Melarkey, Chris McDonagh and Shauna McNeilly

The Playhouse

Pauline Ross, Niall McCaughan, Edel Harrigan,
Áine McCarron, Breige Keenan, Gregory Peck,
Keith Gallagher, Jessica Caldwell, Paul McLaughlin

Our Funders:

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Derry City Council,
The City of Culture Company,
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland,
The Big Lottery Fund for NI Culture For All,
Derry Trades Union Council,
Fermanagh Community Safety Partnership,
Sligo Traveller Support Group

As a non-profit organisation and charity, Sole Purpose Productions depends on grants, sponsorship and donations to make our work possible. If you would like to support us in any way, we would be delighted to have a chat about it!

Call us on 028 7127 9918 or
email solepurpose@mac.com

Photography by

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Alexia Henderson,
Rory McSwiggan, Nicola Schnurr



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LOTTERY FUNDED

