

Cricklewood Community Play Association

Bulletin No. 3 February -March 1993 Tel: 081 450 8764



ARTS FILE

An Irish community play to be staged in Cricklewood this coming December is likely to be the biggest Irish event of its kind ever to be staged in this country or, for that matter, in Ireland.

For it is planned that the play, a dramatisation of John B. Keane's novel *The Bodhrán Maker*, will have a cast of up to 100 actors and an orchestra of some 50 musicians. In order to achieve the highest possible level of community participation, workshops in drama, music theatre writing and design will begin in March, so that even those with no previous experience will have the chance to take part in the play, rehearsals for which will begin in September.

Set in the 1950s and told through the eyes of Irish people settling in Cricklewood at that time. *The Bodhrán Maker* explores the delights of rural Ireland but also its tensions, as the anarchic revelry of the St. Stephen's Day Wren Ball collides with 'the Church.

The play is to be directed by Robert Rae, a resident of Cricklewood, whose credits include community plays such as *Go See Fanny Deakin* as well as *Ma Hat*, *Ma Coat* and *the Gandhi Girls*, a production by the Falls Road-based *Marillac Theatre Company* which travelled to London's National Theatre and was the subject of a BBC TV documentary, *Daughters Of The Falls*.

Rod McVey will be the composer and musical director. A native of Belfast, he worked with Rae on the above mentioned productions, and has also collaborated with such leading performers as Van Morrison, Andy White, Maura O'Connell and Dolores Keane.

The Cricklewood Community Play Association has already attracted a total of £7,000 in grants from Brent and Barnet councils and help in kind from Camden council, as well as raising over £2,000 so far themselves through fund-raising events.

HELLO

Welcome to our third bulletin. Listed below are details of how the project is progressing.

We had a very enjoyable and successful Christmas Ceili at the Cricklewood Trades Hall which as well as raising money generated wide interest and enthusiasm for the project.

Thank-you to all those who supported the evening especially the musicians who entertained us so well. Liz Duggan, Bernie Hourigan, Bernard Gorman, Chris Sadler, Vince Edgerley, Malcolm Bray, Paddy Newman, Nick Ruane, Paddy Gallagher and Frank Fox, everyone said how good they were. We did

our best to keep everybody happy with a good mix of Ceili and sets.....so watch out for April 1st, Ceili.....word on the dance floor is that it's the hottest Ceili in town! Thanks also to the dancers and Frank Fox for the dazzling display, Patsy Hurley and the Committee Members.

FORTH COMING EVENTS

RACE NIGHT

TUESDAY 23 February
Cricklewood Trades Hall Cricklewood Lane, 8pm till late.
Tickets available on the door or ring this number 081-450-8764

25 CARD DRIVE

THURSDAY 11 March
St. Agnes Youth and Community Centre at 7.30 p.m.
Ashford Rd. Cricklewood
Tickets available on the door or ring this number 081-450-8764

CEILI

THURSDAY April 1st
Cricklewood Trades Hall at 8.30 p.m.
Tickets available on the door or ring this number 081-450-8764

J.B. KEANE

Robert Rae, Bernie Hourigan and Jim Hourigan went to Birmingham to meet J.B. Keane and his wife Mary Keane, who were over from Kerry for the opening of his play *Big Maggie* at the Birmingham Repertory. We spent a fascinating couple of hours with them. John is delighted that the *Bodhran Makers* is to be staged in Cricklewood and by the community. He spoke at length about many important details of the book portraying its many subtleties and revealing his reverence of the people of Dirrabeg. He had endless suggestions of suitable poems verses lyrics and songs, he danced a few steps, sang and recited poems for us as we gaily munched our way through tea and sandwiches.

At the end he expressed his confidence in Robert and the artistic team - with a reminder that the characters in the book, all of which he knew, will be watching the proceedings closely "from the other side"

PLAY COORDINATOR

Our Play Co-ordinator Bernadette is now in post and will help to mastermind the whole project. Bernadette, a health visitor is on leave of absence from Haringey Health Authority, they recognised it as a highly commendable project. Bernadette will be setting up the office very soon (see below) and will be welcoming volunteers who can help in all sorts of areas. Bernie's job is to get and keep the community involved in the project. So good luck to her and as anyone who knows her will tell you we've got the best person for the job.

JOURNALIST

As you can see from the article in the Irish Post we're getting the support of a first class journalist Martin Doyle, Robert Rae, our director, did a long slot on GLR's Irish programme. Both have promised extensive coverage of the project.

PATRON

Big thanks to Fr. Haines at St. Agnes's who has agreed to be a patron along with Ken Livingstone, John Marshall, Brendan Mulkere and internationally acclaimed playwright Mustapha Matura. Fr. Haines support has been strong and invaluable.

OFFICE AND REHEARSAL SPACE

Looks like Childs Hill School Dersingham Rd NW2 under the enthusiastic support of the new Head Milena Renshaw will be hiring us an office and rehearsal space.... those of you who went to St. Agnes's will remember the huts....we expect them to be our new base. Mrs Renshaw is keen to develop Childs Hill as a community resource, her enlightened views make it a wonderful base for us. Big thanks to Mrs Kelly, Ian McDonald and all the other school governors for their support and encouragement. Hands needed on deck to get the huts comfortable and fully operational. *All donations of paint, office furniture and furnishings, curtains, stationery etc. urgently needed.*

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee are keeping their heads down working very hard liaising and writing to funders. Work now commences on attracting business sponsors. We have prepared a business proposal and list of benefits. We need the Irish Business to support the project. Any money given will be matched by the government £1 for £1. So if for example Mc Hourigan Builders gave us £1000, the government will double the money. So please if you know anybody who wants their business attached to the largest Irish project "so far staged" then persuade them to support us. The Irish are renowned for their generosity so please support the project.

WORKSHOPS

In preparation for Cricklewood Community Play Association's large scale production of John B Keane's **THE BODHRÁN MAKERS** in December 1993, we are offering a series of workshops aimed at anybody who thinks they may like to be involved and/or wants to find out more. While the focus of the project is Irish our only requirement is interest in and sympathy with that culture.

IRISH MUSIC WORKSHOPS

The aim of the workshop is to assemble an orchestra for **THE BODHRÁN MAKER**. Workshops will be led by Bernard Gorman, Chris Sadler and Paddy Gallagher, all respected musicians on the traditional scene.

Traditional Music is played on a variety of instruments. Some familiar (fiddle, flute and guitar) and some not so familiar (bagpipe, button accordion and harp) and of course the bodhan (Irish drum). We are anxious to extend the range of instruments to include for example Cello, Viola, Brass and Percussion.

The workshops will be participatory, offering an opportunity for people to gain an understanding of the nature and structure of Irish Music and to explore the possibilities such an orchestra offers.

The workshop will be open to people of differing ability and backgrounds. Previous experience of playing Irish music is not essential. However, knowledge of a musical instrument is required.

VENUE: St Agnes' Youth & Community Centre,
60 Ashford Road, NW2
DATES: Sundays, 21st and 28th March,
4th and 18th April
TIME: 5.00 - 7.00 pm

IRISH SET DANCE WORKSHOPS

Irish Set Dancing is a group activity which is enjoyed by people of all ages. These workshops will be led by Kevin MacMahon who has been running the highly popular classes at Aras Ná nGael for the last three and a half years.

The workshops will provide an introduction to set dancing and will be suitable for those with little or no prior dance experience. Participants need not come with a partner.

VENUE: St Agnes' Youth & Community Centre,
60 Ashford Road, NW2
DATES: Sundays, 21st and 28th March,
4th and 18th April
TIME: 7.00 - 9.00 pm

DRAMA WORKSHOPS

These workshops will act as an introduction to drama and performance and will take into account that people coming along may have no previous experience. They will be led by Robert Rae, a professional director and a qualified teacher who uses games and improvisation (playing) as the basis of his work with both community and professional performers.

The workshops are designed to allow people to overcome their inhibitions in a supportive atmosphere. These workshops are devised so that they can be enjoyed by people with a wide range of confidence and experience.

VENUE: Baldwin Room, Tricycle Theatre,
Kilburn High Road, NW6
DATES: Mondays, 22nd and 29th March,
19th and 26th April
TIME: 7.30 - 9.30 pm

WRITING WORKSHOPS

THE BODHRÁN MAKER is a novel that is so to be adapted for the stage by a professional playwright, who will also lead the workshops. The writer will work on the adaptation with a writing group, to which these workshops will be an introduction, and out of which the nucleus of a group may emerge.

By participating in the process, working closely with the writer in research, sharing for example decisions about character and structure, the participants will have a unique opportunity to develop their own understanding and skills and gain unique insight into the process of writing for the theatre.

Open to all with an interest in writing for the theatre and in Irish culture.

VENUE: Cricklewood Library, Olive Road, NW2
DATES: Tuesdays 23rd and 30th March,
20th and 27th April
TIME: 7.00 - 9.00pm

DESIGN FOR THE THEATRE

Led by 'award-winning' designer James Helps, and assisted by Anita Coleman, a local artist, there will be a design led discussion and practical investigation of the process of creating a Community Play.

Enthusiasm for the project is more important than fine art skills, which are not a pre-requisite for attendance; however support and guidance will be offered to people of all levels of experience and skill.

The workshops will offer an opportunity to create a stage design. It is hoped that some of those involved will go on to be actively involved in the design process for **THE BODHRÁN MAKER**.

VENUE: Cricklewood Library, Olive Road, NW2

DATES: Thursdays, 25th March, 1, 15 22nd April

TIME: 7.00 -9.00 pm

Workshop places are limited by the capacity of the venue and the nature of the workshop, so it is advisable to book in advance. However, some places may be available on the night. We are encouraging people to attend all four workshops in a chosen area so that work can be developed.

To book a place on a workshop or for more information about the **Cricklewood Community Play Association** please ring Bernadette (Play Co-Ordinator) on (081) 450 8764.

MESSAGE FROM ROBERT

The workshops are likely to be busy so don't delay in booking a place through Bernie. For the drama, design, writing and dance only interest is required.....don't worry if you've never done it before—there'll be loads who haven't. Come and have a go, no pressure and lots of fun.

For the music we are looking to put together an orchestra, so if you've got any training classical or Irish however basic come along. Bring your instrument and be part of the most exciting orchestra to hit the street of Cricklewood since... well since forever.

Funding from Brent, Barnet, the Milly Apthorp and the Paul Hamlyn Trust has allowed me to put a couple of full time weeks in and for Bernie to work full-time on the project from now on which has given the project a real boost. We must keep our fingers crossed that the major funders turn their enthusiasm for the project into real grants. As the project gathers pace the work load gets greater and greater. Last week was a typical week. I attended four evening meetings and must commend the

committee members who like myself have full day and evening schedules, plus hours and hours of typing photocopying etc etc. Their efforts are quite extraordinary. We all work hard have lots of fun and are secure in the knowledge that your involvement and pride in the project will make it all worthwhile.

For more details continue to phone this number until further notice: 081-450-8764

For correspondence: 21 Oak Grove, Cricklewood, London NW2 3LS.

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O'Connell, M Ryan

Patrons: K Livingstone MP, J Marshall MP,
M Matura, B Mulkere, F H Haines