

Shining City Welcome/Information Packet

SHOW DATES: October 14-16, 2021

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PLEASE NOTE: According to the official Yale College Public Health policy, you must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to participate in any in-person productions, including this one. There will be no exceptions.

If you have any questions about anything in this packet, please email madison.garfinkle@yale.edu and kara.orourke@yale.edu.

MEET (SOME OF) THE TEAM!

Hello! Thank you for your interest in being a part of *Shining City*. Before we get into the details of everything you need to know about this production and its process, here's a little bit about us, the people you'll be seeing in the audition room:



DIRECTOR: Madison Cole (MC '22.5)

PRONOUNS: any

HOMETOWN: Los Angeles, CA

FAVORITE PLAY: *Our Country's Good*

FAVORITE MUSICAL: *Sweeney Todd*

WHEN NOT IN REHEARSAL: Madi loves to write, play guitar (really badly), and hike, though they hardly ever have time to do the latter. When Madi's not working, you will probably find them at home cooking with their roommate and playing music way too loud (it's a miracle they've never gotten a noise complaint).

EMAIL: madison.garfinkle@yale.edu



PRODUCER: Kara O'Rourke (BR '22+1)

PRONOUNS: she/her

HOMETOWN: Darien, CT

FAVORITE PLAY: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

FAVORITE MUSICAL: *Phantom of the Opera*

WHEN NOT IN REHEARSAL: Kara enjoys tending an ever-growing collection of houseplants, listening to fiction podcasts, knitting, reading, and going for long walks.

EMAIL: kara.orourke@yale.edu



STAGE MANAGER: Eliza MacGilvray (TC '22.5)

PRONOUNS: she/her

HOMETOWN: Columbus, OH

FAVORITE PLAY: *Angels in America*

FAVORITE MUSICAL: *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812*

WHEN NOT IN REHEARSAL: When not in rehearsal, you might find Eliza slowly melting into her living room's beanbag, getting paid to make bad puns about Yale's history, or trying to perfect her pumpkin chocolate chip cookie recipe. She has also spent the last year and a half trying to knit one (1) scarf, which pretty much sums up how her quarantine is going.

EMAIL: eliza.macgilvray@yale.edu



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Marissa Blum (TC '24)

PRONOUNS: she/her

HOMETOWN: Berkeley, CA

FAVORITE PLAY: *Zoot Suit*

FAVORITE MUSICAL: *The Band's Visit*

WHEN NOT IN REHEARSAL: Marissa is an avid fan of food history and iced oat milk lattes. When not in rehearsal, you will most likely find her at Koffee or other shops around New Haven listening to *The Band's Visit* and Miley Cyrus a little too loudly on her airpods.

EMAIL: marissa.blum@yale.edu

About the Show

It has been written that, in *Shining City*, "McPherson implies the Irish obsession with the dead is not just a religious hangover but a consequence of failure to achieve proper contact in life."

Originally produced in 2004 on London's West End, *Shining City* is a ghost story which recounts the visits of John, a widow, to Ian, a therapist, claiming she has seen her dead wife in their house. Ian is a former priest who has just started his therapy practice, and is struggling with his loss of faith. Ian and his girlfriend Neasa have a child, but Ian is considering leaving her as he is struggling to understand his sexuality. The play charts the parallel trajectories of John and Ian in their struggle to understand what's happening.

NOTE: Though John is described as male in the original script, in our version, she will be portrayed as female. This is allowed within the context of the script because John is never directly referred to by any gendered pronouns, only spoken to directly. We have made this choice both to open up the opportunity for casting in this production to more people as well as to emphasize John and Ian as foil characters, with John openly living her truth and then losing it, while Ian is too scared to live his own.

CALLING ANY ASPIRING DESIGNERS!!!

We are still looking to fill a number of roles on this prod team, both in full designer and assistant designer capacities. Due to the relatively minimal design requirements of the show (single location, contemporary setting, etc.) this production is a great opportunity to try out any element of design for the first time, and there is no experience required for any of these positions.

If you're interested in any of the following roles, please email the producer Kara (kara.orourke@yale.edu) and we'll set up a conversation!

Set Designer

Props Designer

Sound Designer

Assistant Producer

Assistant Stage Manager

Assistant Set Designer

Assistant Lighting Designer

Assistant Props Designer

Assistant Costume Designer

Assistant Dramaturg

Hair/Makeup Artist

AUDITION INFORMATION

We will be holding an audition workshop on Monday, September 6, at 12PM in the Crescent Underground Courtyard in Morse. Attendance is not mandatory, but is a way for us to help anyone who is new to the audition process or would like guidance regarding their audition.

Auditions will be held at a location that is TBD. If none of the available time slots work for you, email Eliza (eliza.macgilvray@yale.edu) and we will work with you to set up an additional time or arrange for you to send in an audition video instead.

This show calls for a cast of four actors. Below, you will find a full list of characters. Please take care to read the notes, the character descriptions, and any content warnings associated with a character.

Please *prepare* (memorization not required) a contemporary monologue of no less than 20 lines to read at your audition. In case you do not know any, we have included four potential options later in this packet

Do not worry about attempting an Irish accent in this initial audition. Speak in your normal voice. During the rehearsal process, we will have dialect coaches to assist you in learning and developing the proper accent.

We can't wait to see you at auditions!

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

NOTE: Actors of all genders are encouraged to audition for all roles. Please note, however, that any actor cast will be expected to present in their roles as the gender listed in the character's description.

IAN – (male, any race) A former-priest-turned-therapist, Ian struggles with loss of faith and his own realizations about his sexuality. Over the course of the play, we see him struggle to balance his responsibilities to his girlfriend and newborn daughter, his responsibility to his patients, and his responsibility to himself. Though these fears haunt him in every moment, he maintains the appearance of a precarious and fragile equilibrium on the surface.

JOHN – (female, any race) A widow being actively haunted by the ghost of her recently-deceased wife Mari, John is a woman whose conscience is plagued by worry and regret. She blames herself for her wife's death (for a myriad of complicated reasons) and over the course of the play, we see her transform from a closed-off person living in fear to someone capable of holding her own and moving on.

NEASA* – (female, any race) Ian's girlfriend and a working mother, Neasa is a product of the misogyny that is so historically central to Irish Catholicism. We meet her after Ian has abandoned her with their infant daughter for almost a week, and "Like most Irish women, [Neasa] throws herself under the bus and blames herself" for her boyfriend's misgivings, "an all too real and all too tragic circumstance," said Lisa Kwan, who played Neasa in the 2016 Irish Repertory production.

LAURENCE – (male, any race) A male prostitute hired by Ian, Laurence is the only character in the play who appears to be truly free. Seemingly unhindered by societal expectations, he accepts things for what they are, including himself.

* = to be doubled with Mari's ghost

MONOLOGUE 1 - From Conor McPherson's *The Weir*

JACK

But she was a grand, you know, spritely kind of a woman 'til the end. And had all her ... She was on the ball, like, you know? And she swore that this happened. When she was only a girl. She lived in that house all her life. And she had older brothers and sisters. She was the youngest. And her mother, eh ... Bridie. She was a well-known woman in the area. A widow woman. She was a bit of a character. Bit of a practical joker and that, you know? And Maura would say that when she was young, she was, Bridie was, always doing things on the older kids, hiding their ... clothes and all this, you know? And she'd tell them old fibs about what a certain, prospective boyfriend or girlfriend had said about them out on the road and this about coming courting or that. And she was always shouting from upstairs or this 'There's someone at the door.' She was always saying there's someone at the back door or there's someone coming up the path. You know. This. And there'd never be anyone there. And people got used to her. That she liked her joke. And Maura used to say that one Saturday evening back in about 1910 or 1911, the older ones were getting ready to go out for a dance or whatever was happening. And the mother, Bridie, came down the stairs and said, 'Did no one get the door?' And they were all, 'Oh here we go,' you know? But – Bridie came down and *opened* the door, and there was nobody there. And she didn't say anything, And she wasn't making a big thing out of it, you know? And Maura said, she was only young, but she knew there was something wrong. She wasn't cracking the jokes. And later on, when the others were all out, it was just her and her mother sitting at the fire. And her mother was very quiet. Normally she'd send Maura up to bed, early enough, like. But Maura said she remembered this night because Bridie didn't send her up. She wanted someone with her, you see. And in those days, Valerie, as you know, there was no electricity out here. And there's no dark like a winter night in the country. And there was a wind like this one tonight, howling and whistling in off the sea. You hear it under the door and it's like someone singing. Singing in under the door at you. It was this type of night now. Am I setting the scene for you?

MONOLOGUE 2 - From Conor McPherson's *Come On Over*

MATTHEW

There were tomato plants spiralling up these sticks there in the window ledge.

The sunlight was coming in through all the leaves.

Me and Margaret were looking at them and counting the tomatoes.

I was shocked at how she'd aged.

We'd hardly said a thing since I came in. In off the main street and into her narrow hallway and up the stairs into the spare room.

Her daughter had planted these tomatoes before she'd left to go on her travels.

Margaret watered them and I put my suitcase down and sat on the bed.

Outside, the little town was dead.

So many shopfronts boarded up.

The silence was overwhelming.

The house where I grew up was gone.

I'd stepped off the bus into my past.

Into the shocking reality of myself and everything I'd been through.

Margaret turned away from the plants towards me and took my hand for a moment before she left and I heard her go downstairs.

I'd spent the last two months recovering from an experience I'd had in Africa.

I'd slept and dreamed and prayed in a seminary in Belgium until Father Sebarus came to see me.

He was as sympathetic as always but also businesslike because he was my boss.

He held an A4 envelope on his lap while he sat there gravely talking to me.

I didn't feel any terror any more but even though I was medicated I sensed that the envelope would change me even further than I'd already gone.

Maybe even back to what I had been.

MONOLOGUE 3 - From Conor McPherson's *This Lime Tree Bower*

JOE

Damien came to our school halfway through the term.

He was different from everybody else there.

Even his uniform made him look good.

He had a long fringe, bleached, and he had a tan.

He always smoked and he never went home at lunchtime. I found out that he didn't live too far away, and he probably had the coolest bike in the whole school, but at lunchtime, he hung around.

I started smoking too, so I could talk to him at little break behind the religion room. It was completely fucking disgusting.

You were supposed to be dying for a pull and about nine blokes would be sharing a cigarette. By the time it came around to you it was just a soaking-wet filter.

And you had to drag on it like you'd die without it.

But I got to talk to Damien.

I pretended my bike was broken and I brought sandwiches in so I could hang around at big break.

Damien was only in three of my classes, and one of them was civics, which we only had once a week, but I could never wait for him to come in.

He was never on time and in the mornings if I was in a room where I could see the driveway, I'd watch for him.

I never once saw him arrive but he'd always be there.

That's the way it is when you like someone – you can never see them.

I tried to tell Frank, my brother, about Damien, but he called me a poofter and told me to go asleep.

MONOLOGUE 4 - From Conor McPherson's *St. Nicholas*

KENNETH

When we'd stop at the lights and this, I'd be giving her friendly ... you know? Smiling at her. Chaucer and Milton were in the back of the car. Having a great fucking time.

But this was just a lift home.

Let's not get excited.

Dropped her off in Pembroke Park.

She kissed me on the cheek before she got out. And I was the lowest thing.

'Good luck tomorrow night,' I said.

And she told me to sleep well.

I couldn't sleep.

I sat in my study with the windows open. That summer breeze.

And I thought about killing myself. I could imagine the cast reading the review I'd actually given them, talking about what a complete cunt I was. And then they'd find out I was dead and they'd feel rotten. That they hadn't taken into account the integrity you know? The mystery that I was. But I was too chicken for that. Instead I lay on the sofa and things crawled all over me till it got bright.

Well. I wasn't the same after that.

The summer, all our prospects, that bright youthful ...

I was hacking away, reviewing books. On the radio, what have you.

And I couldn't stop thinking about her. I'd be working and suddenly I'd remember her and be all ... fucking hell.

Happy. But that tinge as well.

Wasn't a sexual thing.

I don't think I even wanted that.

I knew that when we were married, I'd be happy enough just to sit and watch her tend our beautiful children. Yeah.

I went back to the Abbey the night her show closed.

Broke my fucking heart to watch her. And I'll tell you, because it was in her arms.

Because you could see her arms working. The weight changing there.

With you and me, it's all this: We get older, we try to hide the excess. We compensate for our appearance with our 'sense of humour' or our taste, or our ... mind.

But what if you woke up in the morning and you were the physical specimen you always wanted to be. Wouldn't that make you happy? Of course it would.

Go a long way in any case.

Because now your smile would beam confidence. Your stride would never need to conceal the way you were built. And we could all concentrate on just being nice to each other.

Helen had that.

TIMELINE

Transparency is extremely important to this team, so we want to be upfront about just what the timeline/time commitment for this show is going to look like. We'd also like it to be known that what you see below is a fairly standard time commitment for a small-cast Yale show.

Please note that the max. hours approximate the time commitment of the actor playing Ian, and the min. hours approximate the time commitment of the actor playing Laurence. The actors playing John and Neasa should expect a commitment somewhere in between these two estimates, with John on the higher end and Neasa on the lower end. In addition to what you see below, know that each actor will have at least one day off per week (if not more).

None of these numbers are set in stone, of course, as people's schedules fluctuate, but here's a pretty comprehensive idea of what you'll be looking at.

PHASE 1: ON THE PAGE

SEPTEMBER 12: Casting Cycle

SEPTEMBER 13: First Readthrough

Approx. 1.5 hours

SEPTEMBER 14-18: Tablework, Character Work, Cast/Prod Bonding

TIME CALLED: 3-6 hours/actor

PHASE 2: ON YOUR FEET

SEPTEMBER 19-25: Initial Blocking

TIME CALLED: 1-8 hours/actor

SEPTEMBER 26-OCTOBER 2: Blocking Review + Cleaning

TIME CALLED: 2-10 hours/actor

OCTOBER 3-9: Cleaning, Reblocking, Fixes

TIME CALLED: 2-10 hours/actor

PHASE 3: IN THE SPACE (Tech)

Please note that while the amount of time called for this period will significantly increase, the majority of your time (especially during Q2Q) will be spent sitting off to the side, doing your

own thing, unless actively in a scene that is being worked on. Any conflicts during this period must be reported to the director, producer, and stage manager at least three weeks ahead of time.

OCTOBER 10-11: Load-In, Q2Q, Focus

TIME CALLED: 5-7 hours/day

OCTOBER 12-13: Tech + Dress Runs, Final Fixes

TIME CALLED: 5 hours/day

OCTOBER 14-16: PERFORMANCES

TIME CALLED: Approx. 3 hours/show (1.5 hour runtime w/ intermission, 1.5 hour set-up)