

Once



**THEATER
LATTÉ
DA**

THEATER MUSICALLY

ONCE PLAY GUIDE

**SEP 12 - OCT 27, 2018
RITZ THEATER**



THEATER MUSICALLY

Founded in 1998, Theater Latté Da (TLD) is in its 20th season of presenting original and re-imagined musical theater. Theater Latté Da seeks to create new connections between story, music, artist, and audience by exploring and expanding the art of musical theater. TLD is dedicated to expanding the American Musical Theater with work that speaks to a contemporary audience. Theater Latté Da has fostered innovation and diversity since its conception. We believe in work that is bold and collaborative; we act with integrity and gratitude. These values are integral to the organization's health and drives the discussion at every stage of decision-making. Through productions that transcend the conventional, the organization helps solidify the Twin Cities' reputation as a place where progressive art plays a vital role.

Theater Latté Da is the leading nonprofit professional theater in the Twin Cities that exclusively produces musical theater. Since its inception, TLD has presented 70 Mainstage productions, including ten world premieres, and ten area premieres. Each has garnered critical acclaim and earned its artists and TLD a host of awards, including: seven IVEY Awards for overall excellence, National Endowment for the Arts, the Gabriel Award for Broadcast Excellence, and the American Theater Wing National Theater Company Award. In addition to our Twin Cities presence, TLD's original production *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* celebrated its 11th anniversary with a national tour to 16 cities, ranging from New Jersey to California and Wisconsin to Florida. TLD's provocative staging of *Ragtime* was remounted at the 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle, Washington in October 2017, and will be remounted at Asolo Repertory Theater in Florida in May 2018.

Since 1998, TLD has performed in venues throughout the Twin Cities, ranging from the intimate 120-seat Loring Playhouse to the Pantages Theater in downtown Minneapolis. To deepen our relationship with Twin Cities audiences and to better reach the communities we serve, Latté Da decided to make a permanent home in northeast Minneapolis. In 2016, TLD became the proud owner of the historic Ritz Theater, a 248-seat theater with administrative offices, rehearsal space, dressing rooms, and box office.

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ONCE

Book by Enda Walsh
Music & Lyrics by Glen Hansard & Markéta Irglová
Based on the Motion Picture Written
& Directed by John Carney

Directed by Peter Rothstein
Music Direction by Jason Hansen
Choreography by Kelli Foster Warder

Sep 12 - Oct 27, 2018
Previews on Sep 12, 13, and 14
Opening Night on Sep 15 at 7:30 pm

ENDA WALSH ON ADAPTING *ONCE*

THE PLAYWRIGHT RECALLS HIS JOURNEY FROM CYNIC TO PROUD, EMOTIONAL WRECK



Enda Walsh

“To make the musical work, it would have to wear its heart on its sleeve as openly as the film.”

We don't do musicals in Ireland. Well, not much. We like to keep our actors and our musicians separate at all times. In separate counties, even. There is possibly a musical theatre company hidden on Sherkin Island doing a production of *Wicked* right now, but they haven't been found yet. And when we do find them, it will be a heavy dose of Samuel Beckett for those grinning fools. Why break into song and dance to exorcise your inner emotions when you can talk yourself through it? Over the years, I've added my own fair share of words to Irish theatre. You can't help it as an Irish person. We talk. Singing's for after hours.



Enda Walsh and *Once* (Broadway) director John Tiffany

So, when, in October 2010, I got the call from the (*Once*) producers asking whether I wanted to write a stage musical version of the small, Irish film, *Once*, I was embarrassed. This was the end! I mean, I wrote plays about death, for Christ's sake. A friend of mine was particularly appalled at the idea. When he heard I'd been approached to write *Once* for the stage, he said it was “like someone giving Charles Manson the rights to adapt *It's A Wonderful Life*.”

You see, I loved the movie *Once*. It's pretty much perfect: the story of a love that can never happen between a failing Dublin songwriter and a Czech immigrant, it has a bittersweet ache to it. I'm a practicing misanthrope, but that movie turned me into a bunny rabbit.

To make the musical work, it would have to wear its heart on its sleeve as openly as the film. It needed to find its own simple style, though; it needed to be a little awkward in itself. Simple is easy in film. Onstage, something understated needs muscles if it's going to live in an auditorium of a thousand people and speak to them. The film is effectively a two-hander. We needed more than that, without ripping the heart out of the piece and shouting all over it.

I went home and gave it a go. The cast grew from two to 12; smaller stories spun around the central one; I discovered how to make an ensemble piece of theater where you are watching not just two but 13 people's lives change. They change in small ways, but in the scale of their own lives, they are big. A time-line of five days made the whole thing more delicate and transient; an inarticulate, hesitant language appeared—even some comedy. It seemed to be a story about people finding a voice.

Anything I have ever written, dark or light, has been about characters finding a voice, or finding clarity in their lives. It's a very tiny, delicate thing but it can become a powerful theme in the theater—it speaks loudly in those places.

Excerpted from an interview with The Guardian; 2013

MUSIC, LOVE, AND FATALISM: HOW IRISH

The idea of reviving the oft-maligned genre of the rock musical is one of several twists in the saga of *Once*. It is based on the Irish-born writer and director of the film John Carney's own experiences when he was living in Dublin and temporarily separated from his girlfriend, who was pursuing an acting career in England.

"I kept thinking, 'How do you make a modern musical?'" Mr. Carney said. "Then it became clear that I could do it just like a small indie art-house movie, very naturalistically. I could create a world where it was O.K. to break into song, without an orchestra coming up out of nowhere."

The film was completed in 17 days for \$150,000, most of which was paid for by the Irish Film Board. The title originally referred to a planned scene in which the two characters made love, but just once. After the actors objected to Mr. Carney's idea ("So predictable," Ms. Irglová, who plays Girl, said), the scene wasn't filmed. Now the title, Mr. Carney says, refers to fellow Irishmen and women he would encounter in bars: "They say, 'Once I do this, then it'll be great.' But they never do it. It's a great Irish tradition of vacillating."

In keeping with another Irish tradition—fatalism—initial expectations for *Once* were low, especially after the film festivals in Toronto and elsewhere rejected it. But in another unexpected turn, a scout for the Sundance Film Festival



John Carney

saw *Once* at the annual movie festival in Galway. *Once* was included in the 2007 Sundance Film Festival, where it was awarded the Audience Award. Mr. Carney and (lead actor) Glen Hansard were so convinced that it didn't stand a chance of winning any awards that they had to change their return plane reservations at the last minute (and at substantial cost) so they could attend the closing ceremony.

Mr. Carney hopes that one of the film's subjects—the way inexpressive people can connect and communicate through music—will resonate beyond Ireland, as well as the timeliness of the film's themes of immigration and cross-cultural migration. As for the ambiguous relationship at the core of the film, Carney says, "It's the ones who are gone who haunt you for the rest of your life."

By David Browne
May 13, 2007

Excerpted from a *New York Times* interview with John Carney, director of the 2007 film, *Once*, 3 days before it was released in the U.S.



John Carney with Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová on the set of *Once*.

COMINGS AND GOINGS: IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION IN IRELAND



The Czech Inn in Dublin

Once not only captures its characters on the brink of transition, but the country of Ireland itself.

For most of its existence, the Irish Republic has been a relatively poor, under-modernized nation. One of the most important stories in Irish history is not only about the country itself, but about the people who left. The very idea of being away from home became a part of the Irish psyche. In the 1700 and 1800s, famine drove many out of Ireland. In the 20th century, economic downturns in the 1920s, 1950s, and 1980s convinced generations of Irish to try their luck elsewhere. The fighting in Northern Ireland from the 1960s also persuaded many people that their future lay outside of Ireland. In 1980, the Irish unemployment rate was 18%, but all of that changed rapidly in the 1990s when the Irish Republic underwent a staggering period of economic growth and became one of the fastest growing economies in Europe.

From being the poor man of Europe in the 1980s, Ireland became the rich man. Between 1991 and 2003 the country's economy grew by an amazing 6.8 percent per year, and Irish living standards became among the highest in Europe.

In 1994, economist and broadcaster David McWilliams drew analogies between the situation in Ireland and what had happened in countries like Hong Kong and South Korea a decade earlier and coined the phrase "The Celtic Tiger." This shorthand way of describing the boom in Ireland became a popular term to sum-up what was happening in the country.

With the advent of "The Celtic Tiger," outward emigration largely stopped and, for the first time ever, large numbers

of immigrants began arriving in Ireland. Immigrants from African and Eastern European nations traveled seeking to benefit from the wealth of the country. In 2002, as a member of the European Union, the Republic of Ireland (which includes Dublin), adopted the euro currency. In 2004, Ireland became one of just 3 countries to open its border to migrant workers from the European Union's 10 newest member states, including the Czech Republic. By 2007, a year after *Once* was filmed, 10% of Dublin's residents were foreign born.

In 2008, a journalist from *Radio Prague* paid a visit to the Czech Inn in Dublin, a gathering place for Czech and Slovak immigrants. Describing the role the Inn plays in the community, one of the patrons said, "In particular [Czech] people come in here to make new friends, which is normal of course. They come here if they are looking for a job or accommodations. At the same time, they can drink and talk their own language and listen to music from home as well. The Czech Inn actually plays the same role as Irish bars all over the world." Proof that, whether people are coming or going, music, drink, and the company of others provide momentary safe harbors in a transient world.



ONCE SCENIC DESIGN BY MICHAEL HOOVER

"We set our production in something reminiscent of a train station, which is a likely home for street musicians to congregate, but it is also a place of comings and goings more than a destination in and of itself."

- Peter Rothstein, Director

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS: BUSKERS IN DUBLIN

The city of Dublin is known for its “buskers”—street musicians and performers who gather wherever people do, hoping to exchange their music for a passerby’s spare change.

Some of Ireland’s best-known musicians have cut their teeth performing on the streets of Dublin including U2’s Bono, Glen Hansard, and Damien Rice. Hansard, who left school at an early age, has said, “Five years busking on Grafton Street was the only education I ever needed.”

A good busker “can hold an audience and make them forget where they are, even if it’s only for five minutes,” says Dublin-

based music producer, Roger Quail. A bad busker? “While I’d never dismiss someone for having the nerve to actually get out and play uninvited in public, I think the bad ones are self-deluded and suffer from the misguided idea that banging away on an out-of-tune acoustic guitar will somehow transform them into a young Bob Dylan. And they always play way too loudly.”

After spending a summer chronicling the lives of buskers on Dublin’s famed Grafton Street, *Irish Times* journalist Una Mullally assembled the following list:

BUSKER DO’S AND DON’TS:

Do your thing: Don’t copy other acts. Don’t feel as though you have to belt out something everyone knows.

If you can’t be original, be good: Tight musicianship and liveliness are musts.

Be funny: The street is a stage. A crowd will gather for witty banter.

Don’t beg: If you’re good, the money will come to you.

No wind instruments: Nothing sours a summer day like a barely-tuned bagpipe or trumpet.

Hone your set: Have a couple of hours of music ready and then go out there and storm through it.

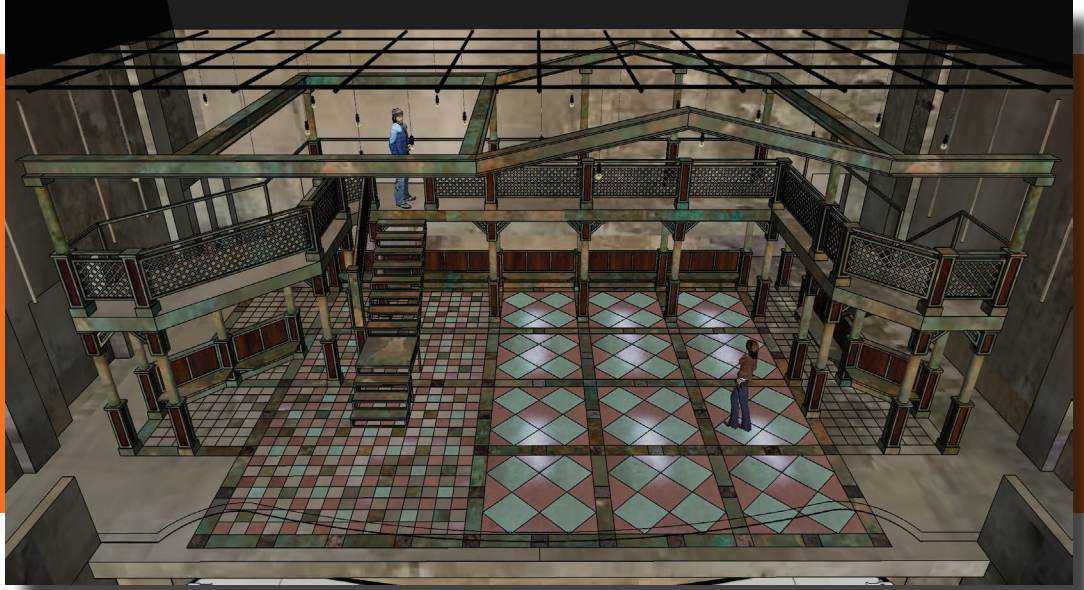
Don’t ask your friends to help: They will just stand there awkwardly, detract from your set, and disappear with your first 2 euros to buy themselves a coffee.



COSTUME DESIGN *by Mathew LeFebvre*



SET DESIGN *by Michael Hoover*



“We set our production in something reminiscent of a train station, which is a likely home for street musicians to congregate, but it is also a place of comings and goings more than a destination in and of itself. When we meet the Girl she has come from the Czech Republic to build a new life in Dublin. When we meet the Guy he is giving up on his music and contemplating a move to America. They are coming and going but they happen to be standing in the same place at the same time. “It was my destiny to meet you today,” the Girl says.”

- Peter Rothstein, Director

