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THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD

John Millington Synge



The Playboy of the Western World

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Including notes by Christopher Collins

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The Playboy of the Western World (2025).

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The Company

Cast, in alphabetical order

Ensemble	Susan Akintomide
Sara Tansey	Marty Breen
Old Mahon	Declan Conlon
Pegeen Mike	Nicola Coughlan
Michael Flaherty	Lorcan Cranitch
Susan Brady	Megan Cusack
Jimmy Farrell	Naoise Dunbar
Philly Cullen	Matthew Forrest
Nelly	Sallay Garnett
Honor Blake	Fionnuala Gygax
Christy Mahon	Éanna Hardwicke
Fiddle / Ensemble	Erin Hennessey
Widow Quin	Siobhán McSweeney
Banjo / Ensemble	Peter Mooney
Ensemble	Donncha O’Dea
Shawn Keogh	Marty Rea

All other roles played by members of the company

Understudies

Sara Tansey/Nelly/Honor Blake	Susan Akintomide
Old Mahon/Michael Flaherty	Donncha O’Dea
Pegeen Mike	Megan Cusack
Susan Brady	Sallay Garnett
Jimmy Farrell/Philly Cullen/ Shawn Keogh	Peter Mooney
Christy Mahon	Naoise Dunbar
Widow Quin	Fionnuala Gygax

Musicians

Ultan O’Brien (Violin/ Viola), **Kevin Murphy** (Cello),
Matthew Jacobson (Drums)

Recorded at **Hellfire Studio, Dublin** and engineered by **Joe McGrath**

Tina Jacobs-Lim (Violin), **Dominique Pecheur** (Cello),
Wayne Urquhart (Cello), **Lully Bathurst** (Bassoon), **Sarah
Manship** (Flute), **Simon Williams** (Flute)

Recorded at the National Theatre and engineered by **Niall
John Acott**

Director	Caitriona McLaughlin
Set and Costume Designer	Katie Davenport
Lighting Designer	James Farncombe
Movement Director	Sue Mythen
Sound Designer	Adrienne Quartly
Composer	Anna Mullarkey
Fight Director	Kev McCurdy
Casting	Alastair Coomer CDG and Naomi Downham
Dialect Coach	Patricia Logue
Voice Coach	Shereen Ibrahim
Staff Director	Neetu Singh
Producer	Debbie Farquhar
Production Manager	Ben Arkell
Company Stage Manager	Ian Farmery
Deputy Stage Manager	Jo Nield
Assistant Stage Managers	Aida Bourdis and Ian Connop
Deputy Stage Manager Cover	Aimee Woods
Assistant Stage Manager Cover	Ophir Westman
Deputy Production Manager	Phil Connolly
Project Draughting	Tom Atkinson and Nathan James
Digital Art	Daniel Radley-Bennett
Costume Supervisor	Natasha Prynne
Assistant Costume Supervisor	Ciara Leneghan White
Wigs, Hair & Make-up Supervisors	Leanne Lashbrook and Daisy Beer
Running Wardrobe Supervisor	Ruth Williams
Props Supervisor	Kirsten Shiell
Props Buyer Matilda	Eldon McCaig

Props Making Coordinator	Lara Scott
Lighting Supervisor	Laura Curd
Lead Lighting Programmer	Reese Graham
Assistant Lighting Programmer	Rachel Finney
Instrument Maker	Reginald White
Production Sound Engineer	Tom Cassidy
Sound Operator	Mike Poon
Radio Mic Supervisor	Laura Gingell
Stage Supervisor	Liam Toughly
Rigging Supervisors	Phil Horsburgh and Mateusz Slonowski
Flying Supervisor	Suresh Chawla
Construction Supervisor	Barrie Nield
Scenic Art Supervisor	Lindsay Tuffnell
Production Photographer	Marc Brenner

Opening

Lyttelton Theatre, 11 December 2025

The Playboy of the Western World

John Millington Synge (1871–1909) is widely regarded as the greatest ever Irish dramatist. The lives of the people of Wicklow, Kerry, Connemara, Mayo and the Aran Islands were brought to life through his six great plays: *In The Shadow of the Glen* (1903), *Riders to the Sea* (1904), *The Well of the Saints* (1905), *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), *The Tinkers' Wedding* (1909), and his unfinished mythological drama *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (performed posthumously in 1910).

Christopher Collins is Head of Drama and Creative Writing at the University of Nottingham, and is an expert on the life and works of J. M. Synge.

Chronology

- 1871** Born Edmund John Millington Synge on 16 April in Rathfarnham, an affluent suburb of Dublin, Ireland.
- 1872** Synge's father dies on 13 April. Family moves to Rathgar, another affluent Dublin suburb.
- c. 1881** Begins to attend school, but attendance is irregular due to poor health.
- 1885** First reads the works of Charles Darwin.
- 1889** Begins studying at Trinity College Dublin. Also begins to study musical theory, violin, and composition at the Royal Academy of Music.
- 1892** Receives a second-class B.A. degree from Trinity College Dublin. Wins prizes for his examinations in Hebrew and Irish.
- 1893** Spends the summer in Oberwerth, Germany.
- 1894** Visits Würzburg, Koblenz and Frankfurt, Germany.
- 1895** Arrives in Paris, France, in January. Enrols in courses in modern French literature, medieval literature at the Sorbonne University.
- 1896** Visits Rome, and Florence, Italy. Visits Paris again in October. Takes a course at the Sorbonne.
- 1897** Visits Paris. Undergoes an operation on swollen glands in Dublin.
- 1898** Visits Paris. Enrols on a course in Irish and Homeric civilization at the Sorbonne. Visits two of three Aran

Islands (Inishmore and Inishmaan) in County Galway for the first time.

- 1899** Visits Brittany, Paris, Inishmaan and Inishmore.
- 1900** Visits Paris. Visits Inishmaan and the one Aran Island that he had not yet visited: Inisheer.
- 1901** Visits Inishmaan and Inisheer. Visits Paris.
- 1902** Visits Paris. Enrols on a course in Old Irish at the Sorbonne. Visits Inisheer.
- 1903** Visits London in January (his previous journeys to London had been quite brief). Leaves for his final visit to Paris in March. Visits County Kerry. His play, *In the Shadow of the Glen*, is performed at Molesworth Hall, Dublin in October. Irish National Theatre Society is formed.
- 1904** His play, *Riders to the Sea*, is performed in February by the Irish National Theatre Society at Molesworth Hall. Tours *In the Shadow of the Glen* and *Riders to the Sea* with the Irish National Theatre Society to London. Visits County Kerry. Visits North County Mayo, the setting for *The Playboy of the Western World*. Abbey Theatre opens.
- 1905** His play, *The Well of the Saints*, opens at the Abbey Theatre. Visits County Kerry, including the Blasket Islands. Tours the 'Congested Districts' in Counties Galway and Mayo with J.B. Yeats. Visits England with the Abbey Theatre on tour.
- 1906** Visits England, Scotland and Wales with the Abbey Theatre on tour. Begins to publicly indicate he is in a relationship with Molly Allgood, an actor in the company. Visits Kerry. Health begins to decline.
- 1907** *The Playboy of the Western World* is produced by the Abbey Theatre in January, and disturbances last for almost the entire week. *The Aran Islands* is published.