

Belgrade Theatre Coventry and
The Gate Theatre present

POOR

by Katriona O'Sullivan
Adapted by Sonya Kelly

Directed by
Róisín McBrinn



Fri 1 to Sat 9 May 2026
Belgrade Theatre Coventry



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Coventry City Council



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THE
BELGRADE
THEATRE
COVENTRY

Photograph by: Ailbhe O'Donnell
Hollie Lawlor
Aisling O'Mara



Belgrade Theatre Coventry and The Gate Theatre present

POOR

by Katriona O'Sullivan | Adapted by Sonya Kelly

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Cast

Ensemble Sue Collins

Ensemble John Cronin

Tilly Hilda Fay

Ensemble Shauna Harris

Tony Aidan Kelly

Young Katriona Hollie Lawlor

Ensemble Ben Morris

Katriona Aisling O'Mara

Young Katriona Pippa Owens

Special Thanks RTÉ

Alan Tyler (Group Head of Entertainment and Music)

Katherine Drohan (Executive Producer)

Vicky Moran (Senior Lead, Archive User Services)

St Andrews Paris Malahide

Creatives

Author Katriona O'Sullivan

Adapted by Sonya Kelly

Director Róisín McBrinn

Set Designer Aedín Cosgrove

Costume Designer Lara Campbell

Lighting Designer Paul Keogan

Sound Designer and Composition Sinéad Diskin

Musical Director Padraig Dooney

Movement Director Jess Williams

AV Designer and Programmer Michael Dunne

Associate Sound Designer Ultan De Stáinléigh

Associate Movement Director Ghalliah Conroy

Voice Director Cathal Quinn

Resident Assistant Director Emma Finegan

Production

Deputy Stage Manager Mark Jackson

Technical Stage Manager Ben Moore

Assistant Stage Manager Abi McCormick

Stage Management Cover Sara Gannon

Production Manager Jim McConnell

Lighting Operator Adam Warren

Flys Operator Izzie Porter

Sound Operator Katherine Hodgson

Sound #2 and Crew Mike Molloy

Duty Stage Freya Carey - Wood

Fit Up and Get Out Crew

Jason Sylvester
Eddie Reading

Matt Rowley
Chris Jones

Martyn Davies
Luke Parkes

Graham Pardon
Thomas Kavanagh

Costume Dressers Chloe Gentry

Costume Maintenance Naomi Thompson

Wigs, Hair and Makeup Andriea Nelson

Wigs, Hair and Makeup Placement Ariane Sargent

Braid Consultant to Miss Harris Angela Eurba

Images supplied by Steve Humphreys/Mediahuis
Johnny Savage
Kyle Tunney
Keith Arkins
Maeve Hickey/Business Post
The Brendan O'Connor Show
Tony Maxwell

Belgrade Theatre would like to thank Raphael Martin, as well as Poor's original cast from its Dublin premiere in 2025.

Poor 1

THANK YOU

The Gate Theatre would like to acknowledge and thank our donors, Peter Crowley and Neill Hughes, whose support has been instrumental to the development of new work, such as Poor.

Welcome to the Belgrade Theatre!

A warm welcome to the Belgrade Theatre and to our co-production with Gate Theatre Dublin, of *Poor*, by Katriona O'Sullivan.

We're really pleased to be able to bring this play to Coventry, where Katriona was born and where her incredibly powerful and inspiring story began.

Whilst *Poor* was originally produced in Dublin at the Gate Theatre, where it's enjoyed two incredibly successful, critically acclaimed runs, we were really keen to ensure Coventry audiences got a chance to see the show here as well. Our commitment to producing shows that are created with, by and for our local communities, and that support local talent, remains at the heart of the Belgrade's work.

We really hope you enjoy the show and come out feeling inspired by its themes of hope, resilience and community.

Emma Flatley, Interim CEO
Corey Campbell, Artistic Director



Photograph by Dave Worrall

POOR

A Note from the Author

Hi All,

First things first, thank you for coming, for supporting the arts, for taking the time out of your life to come and see a show about my life. Just in case you don't know who I am or what I am about – I am Professor Katriona O'Sullivan (I love being a professor), I am a writer, a reader, a mother, a wife and I am an advocate for equality. *Poor* is my story. It is a story of triumph, it is a story which shows that no matter where you grow up, or how you grow up, it is possible to live an amazing life and to achieve amazing things.

When the Gate Theatre asked to adapt my book for the stage, I was reticent – the idea of this big posh theatre being able to understand poverty and turn it into a show that didn't stereotype or harm my people, seemed impossible. But as we talked, as I met the people who work there, who manage there, who produce there, I knew that my story, that little Katriona, was in safe hands. The decision to allow *Poor* to be adapted by the Gate, the Belgrade, and by Sonya Kelly was easy in the end. The vision, the care, the ethics, the willingness to include me all the way through has made this experience one of the best experiences of my life!

As you sit down to watch, I hope that you can come to it with an open heart and an open mind. You will see and hear things that might hurt you, that might challenge you, but that also might make you feel warm inside. I ask that you stay in the story, that you stay with me. And as you watch I ask you to think about why people like me end up in dark places. Why people like Tilly end up dying young.

Why people like Tony dominate our prison system. I hope that you know that *Poor* is not just my story, it is the story of millions of people who have been left to rot in poor communities for generation. It is the story of women who have been left to fend for themselves, who have been told over and over again that their failings are because they did not work hard enough.

As you head out of the theatre afterwards, I would ask you to consider this – what will you do with my story now that you have seen it? Will you go home and talk about how great it was (hopefully you will) or will you take the message I am trying to convey and use it to make things fairer for women like me? *Poor* is not just a story; it is a call to action. It is the little girl who I was, looking you directly in the eye saying, “help me!”. It is our job to help each other, and if you are privileged, if you have a job, power, prestige, if you are in a position to help... remember the message of *Poor* is this: excellence is everywhere, opportunity is not. You can offer support, be a steppingstone, challenge inequality.

Before I let you settle into the show, I need to say thank you to the wonderful cast who have become my biggest fan club, and my biggest group of supporters. Thank you for loving Tilly and Tony and Katriona, big and small. For working so hard to bring the light and dark to the stage. Thank you Róisín for the direction, for seeing me and hearing me. To the production and creative teams and everyone for the support and the heart you have

brought to all the decisions – you guys will never know how much you have made me feel safe! Thank you.

Finally, all I ever wanted in my life was to love and be loved, that is all we all want. I am so grateful that Ireland provided me with the people, the policies, and the practices that supported me out of poverty, and into the arms of Dave. His love and my boys are my story, my triumph – I hope you enjoy watching me find them!

Professor Katriona O'Sullivan
Author of *Poor*

POOR

Rehearsals



CLOCKWISE

FROM LEFT

Ghaliah Conroy

Hilda Fay

Katriona O'Sullivan

Aisling O'Mara



Photographs by
Ailbhe O'Donnell

Rehearsals



CLOCKWISE

FROM LEFT

Mark Jackson
Róisín McBrinn

John Cronin

Aidan Kelly

Abi McCormick
Mark Jackson
Ultan De Stáinléigh



*Photographs by
Ailbhe O'Donnell*

POOR

Rehearsals



**CLOCKWISE
FROM LEFT**
Hollie Lawlor
Pippa Owens
Róisín McBrinn

Sue Collins

Ben Morris

Aidan Kelly
Aisling O'Mara



*Photographs by
Ailbhe O'Donnell*

Rehearsals



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

Sonya Kelly
Katriona O'Sullivan
Róisín McBrinn

Shauna Harris
Dervel Mellett

Hilda Fay
Emma Finegan

(L-R)
John Cronin
Ben Morris
Emma Finegan
Shauna Harris
Hilday Fay
Aisling O'Mara
Aidan Kelly

*Photographs by
Ailbhe O'Donnell*



Production Photos



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

Aisling O'Mara

Ben Morris

Aisling O' Mara

John Cronin

Sue Collins

Shauna Harris

Aisling O'Mara

Ben Morris

John Cronin

Sue Collins, Shauna Harris, Aisling O'Mara, Ben Morris,
John Cronin, Hilda Fay, Pippa Owens, Aidan Kelly



Photographs by
Ros Kavanagh

POOR

Production Photos



CLOCKWISE

FROM LEFT

Pippa Owens

Hilda Fay

Pippa Owens

Aisling O'Mara

John Cronin

Sue Collins

John Cronin

Aisling O'Mara



*Photographs by
Ros Kavanagh*

POOR

Katriona O'Sullivan And The Legacy Of Storm Trees

Sometime in early February of 2024, I took a trip up to the Tyrone Guthrie Centre at Annaghmakerrig in County Monaghan – a magnificent and magical artists' retreat set in dense forest next to a lake. My mission: Draft 2 of *Poor*, the stage play, adapted from the bestselling memoir by the unstoppable professor, author and activist Katriona O'Sullivan - No pressure.

There had been a violent and unforgiving wind storm that winter. Power was out. The taxi ride from Monaghan bus station to Annaghmakerrig was littered with fallen trees. We arrived to the house, where I set down my bag and took out my computer to start Draft 2. The first draft was a crude and rough edit – an embarrassment of “key events” and bare bones sketched and crudely strung together. First drafts are like guilty secrets – you bury them as fast as you can and if you are lucky, no one will ever know they exist. This next draft, however, made me sick with nerves. This would be the one that would be sent to Katriona.

When we'd met in October of the previous year in the Gate offices, I made it clear to her straight away: 'If you don't like it, we don't do it. You press stop. You press go. You're in charge of everything. This is your life and your story. Your book means an awful lot to an awful lot of people. I have no desire for you to

see it on the stage and think, *What the fuck is this?*' She must have thought I was mad - a bespeckled playwright in a baseball hat, reassuring her she never has to see the story of her life I had been commissioned to adapt.

I'd been given the book by Thomas Conway, the New Work Manager at the Gate, a month before, and was struck by its beauty, brilliance and the powerful message it delivered: Trauma is not a choice. Addiction is not a choice. Poverty and abuse are not a choices. Talent is everywhere. Opportunity is not. Everybody matters and as a society, we can do better to hold each other up. The darkness and shadows were real and unsettling, and yet in between the pages, there was light, laughter, love and the absolute craic. I really wanted this job. I really wanted it. To turn my back on an opportunity like *Poor* would be to render myself complicit with the repressive structures responsible for unequal advantage.

Poor, the play charts the promise that Katriona, made to herself on the opening page – *To me, aged seven. I've got you.* To me, the phrase, *I've got you* means, I will never let you down, even when it's hard and I don't know if I can. *I've got you* means I will do what I said I'd do, when I said I'd do it. It is a convent of unconditional constancy. *I've got you* is one of the most powerful single clause sentences written in the English language.

It is clear and elegant, simple yet epic, easy to say - not so easy to carry through, and therein lies the triumph of *Poor*.

While in Annaghmakerrig, I sat down at my desk, opened up my computer to start Draft 2 and my phone rang. It was Thomas Conway from the Gate Theatre. 'Sonya, I know you're up in Monaghan working on the play, but there's something quite urgent I need to tell you.' My heart sank. 'She's changed her mind, hasn't she? That's okay... I did say that was an option... oh god! Please don't tell me you sent her the first draft!' 'No, no, no, it's not that. It's just –' The call was cut off by a knock on my door. And the person on the other side? Katriona. She'd come up to work on the second draft of her second book. We fell about laughing.

I completed my second draft of *Poor* – the draft she would be sent – that week at Annaghmakerrig. I typed like a mad thing, from early morning, and late into the night. I typed like Jessica Fletcher in the opening credits of *Murder, She Wrote* as Katriona, its protagonist, walked the corridors. I typed the fire in Golden Bridge to the sound of her footsteps on the ceiling above. I typed the *Boppy! Boppy! Tea! Tea!* scene to the sound of her laughing on the phone to her husband. I typed to the sound of her blow dryer, as she sang Fleetwood Mac's *Go Your Own Way* at the top of her voice.

POOR



Photo: Ailbhe O'Donnell

I typed her family holiday in Maplethorpe as she walked by my door, chatting her way to the kitchen, 'Oh and Sonya Kelly's in there. She's adapting my book.' In the afternoons I'd take a break and go down to the kitchen where she'd be sitting at the table. 'Hey Sonya. Where are you up to now?' So I'd tell her where I was up to, and she'd tell me all about the Blue Lion Pub or Stoneycroft Tower, or Sandra and Keith, or Mrs Arkinson. Then I'd go back to my room and write it all down.

It was cold that February, but Katriona still got in the lake, and I typed to the sound of her squeals bouncing off the broken forest around us. It has been without exception, the most surreal and privileged thing I have ever experienced: Katriona O'Sullivan, alive in all her present tense in one room, and her past, her memories, all her pain and pockets of sunshine coming out of my hands in another.

One day she came in the back door and into the kitchen from a walk, and showed me a photo she'd taken. 'Two trees fell against each other during the storm. That's just like me and my husband, Dave - a pair of storm trees holding each other up.'

I thought about the image of those storm trees a lot during the rehearsals for *Poor*, while I watched Jess, the choreographer work with the cast to build the skills and trust required to hold up the actors who play Katriona, show after show. Their strength and her trust are all she has between herself and the ground. It is no easy feat, to hold another person up, but what this book has taught me is that nothing is impossible. Just ask those storm trees up in Monaghan.

My heartfelt thanks to Katriona O'Sullivan for allowing me to be part on this extraordinary journey, and to Dave, the storm tree who holds her up. It has been the privilege of my career to deliver this play, and to be part of the legacy of this book that has brought so much to so many people. My deepest appreciation also to Michelle King, Thomas Conway, Róisín McBrinn, Colm O'Callaghan, the Gate staff, the entire cast, creative, stage management and technical teams of *Poor* who worked so tirelessly to bring this magnificent story to their stage. And of course to my own storm tree, my amazing wife Kate Ferris.

And to you, thank you for coming to *Poor*, and for supporting Irish theatre.

Best wishes,
Sonya Kelly

POOR

Writers



KATRIONA O'SULLIVAN

Professor Katriona O'Sullivan is a bestselling author, award-winning academic, and fearless storyteller. Her memoir *Poor* debuted at #1 on the Irish Non-Fiction chart and has been hailed as “essential” and “life-changing,” offering an unflinching portrait of working-class life, resilience, and love. Now adapted for the stage, *Poor* carries her voice from the page to the theatre, amplifying the lived realities of women and families too often unheard.

Katriona's words have travelled far beyond the bookshelf. They've sparked conversations in classrooms, boardrooms, and parliaments, challenging how we think about poverty, class, and opportunity. Her essays and talks—delivered everywhere from the United Nations to Electric Picnic—marry intellect with honesty, proving that storytelling is not just art, but power.

As Professor of Psychology at Maynooth University, she also leads the groundbreaking STEM Passport for Inclusion, opening doors to education for thousands of young people from under-served communities. Whether in her research, her writing, or now the theatre, Katriona's work insists on possibility: that brilliance can emerge from the most unlikely places, and that no story—however marginalised—should remain in the shadows.



SONYA KELLY

The stage adaptation for *Poor* is Sonya's first commission for the Gate Theatre.

Her previous plays include *The Wheelchair on My Face* (Fishamble); *How To Keep An Alien* (Rough Magic); *Furniture, Once Upon A Bridge*, and *The Last Return* (Druid Theatre Company). Her work has been programmed at Dublin Fringe, Galway International Arts Festival, Dublin Theatre Festival, Edinburgh Fringe, The Soho Theatre in London and have toured to the US, Australia and New Zealand. She is the recipient of the Stewart Parker Award, the Phelim Donlon Award, a ZEBBIE Award, two Scotsman Fringe First Awards and the Windham Campbell Prize For Drama.

Her TV work includes, *Smother* and *Blackshore* for BBC/RTE, and *Breeders* for Sky and FX.

As an actor, Sonya was a series regular in RTE's *The Savage Eye*. She made her stage debut at the Gate Theatre in 1997 as Maria, the maid in *The Heiress*. Subsequent productions include, *A Christmas Carol*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *As You Like It*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *Private Lives*. She is delighted to be back.

Cast



SUE COLLINS

ENSEMBLE

Sue Collins is an actress, comedienne and writer. She trained at The Dublin School of Acting and She has worked extensively in theatre. She started her comedy career when she co-founded The Nualas all-female musical comedy trio in 1995.

Poor is Sue's Gate Theatre and Belgrade Theatre debut.

They became a huge success performing all over the world, most notably The Irish Arts Centre New York, The Melbourne, Adelaide and Singapore comedy festivals, The Edinburgh festival, The Lyric Hammersmith and the Royal Albert Hall.

Film, TV and radio credits include *The Ned Sherrin Show; Edinburgh Nights; The Stand-up Show; The Arts Show; The Late Late Show; Soupy Norman; The Center; Vexed; Badly Drawn Boy* and *Fair City*.



JOHN CRONIN

ENSEMBLE

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *A View From The Bridge, My Cousin Rachel,* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

John's other theatre credits include *The Dead* (ANU/Landmark Productions); *Robin and Dawn, No Romance* (Bewley's Cafe Theatre); *Konstantin* (After the Seagull) (Project Arts Centre/Dublin Theatre Festival); *Amelia* (Project Arts Centre / Dublin Theatre Festival); *Children of the Sun* (Rough Magic / Abbey Theatre); *Country Music* (Glass Mask Theatre); *The Tempest, Glue* (Rough Magic); *Staging the Treaty* (ANU); *The Treaty* (Fishamble); *Restorations* (Project Arts Centre); and *It was Easy* (In the End) (Abbey Theatre).

John's Film & TV credits include *Blue Moon; Harry Wild; This Town; The Doll Factory; The Tourist; Fair City Slice The Thief; Rebellion, Resistance; Black 47;* and *The Foreigner*.



HILDA FAY

TILLY

Hilda Fay is an IFTA-nominated actress.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Poor, The Snapper* and *Threepenny Opera*.

Other theatre credits include *The Plough and the Stars* (Abbey Theatre/ Lyric Hammersmith); *Druid O'Casey: Seán O'Casey's Dublin Trilogy, Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars* (Druid Theatre Company).

Film and TV credits include *The House of Guinness; Trespasses; The Woman in the Wall; Northern Lights; Shantaram; Float like a Butterfly; The Cured;* and *Let the Wrong One In*.

Cast



SHAUNA HARRIS

ENSEMBLE

Shauna Harris is an actor, writer and creative facilitator from Dublin who attended Visions Drama School. Shauna is a current recipient of an Artist in the Community Mentoring Award (Create, The National Development Agency for Collaborative Arts, Dublin) and part of an inaugural screenwriters' group (Pirate Productions, Glasgow, Scotland).

Poor is Shauna's Gate Theatre and Belgrade Theatre Debut.

Other Credits include *The Leap* (Fishamble / Draíocht Theatre, Dublin); 24 Hour Plays: *What do you do Yourself* (Abbey Theatre); and *The Giggler Treatment* (The Ark, Dublin).

Film and TV Credits include *Trasna na Líne*; *Breeders*; and *I Will Appear in The Middle of Your Dream*.
Voiceover credits include *Antigone* (Newstalk).



AIDAN KELLY

TONY

Aidan Kelly's Gate Theatre credits include *Poor*, and *A View From the Bridge*.

Other theatre includes *Fear of 13* (Donmar Warehouse); *Salome*, *Treasure Island*, *The Silver Tassie* (National Theatre, London); *Macbeth*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Merchant of Venice* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Once* (Phoenix Theatre, West End); *Last Orders at the Dockside*, *The Country Girls*, *Macbeth*, *True West*, *Howie the Rookie*, *Doubt*, *The Plough and the Stars*, *Juno and the Paycock*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *The Barbaric Comedies*, *The Burial at Thebes* and *Sucking Dublin* (Abbey Theatre); *The Misfits* (Corn Exchange); *Inside The GPO* and *The Pride of Parnell Street* (Fishamble); *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *The Playboy of The Western World*, *The Good Father*, *Philadelphia* and *Here I Come!* (Druid Theatre Company). Film and TV credits include *Say Nothing*; *Stay Close*; *Killing Eve*; *Warrior*; *Call the Midwife*; and *Fair City*.



HOLLIE LAWLOR

YOUNG KATRIONA

Hollie Lawlor is 10 years old. She's been attending classes with Mary Murray at Visions Drama School for the past eight months. She's a student of Sean Gilligan's Performing Arts School since age 4, also training in lyrical and tap dancing. Hollie has been attending private singing lessons with Showstoppers Stage School for the past 3 months. Hollie has been performing at The Big Busk with Focus Ireland every year it began from the age of 6. She has also part of the Ensemble for Santa's arrival in Blanchardstown Shopping Centre for the past 2 years.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Poor*.

Other theatre credits include *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (National Concert Hall); *Matilda*, *Shrek the Musical*, *Annie: The Musical*, and *Rapunzel* (Helix Theatre); *Frozen*, *Aladdin* (Dublin Panto); *Frozen* (Ratoath Musical Society).

TV and Film credits include *The Late Late Toy Show*.

Cast



BEN MORRIS
EMSEMBLE

Ben Morris is from Tallaght and trained at the Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, London.

Gate Theatre credits include *The Borrowers*.

Other theatre credits include *Next To Normal* (Donmar Warehouse, West End); *Wáitzaíl Abhaile* (An Taibhdhearc, Galway); *Waitress* (Adelphi Theatre, West End); *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (UK tour); *The Phantom of the Opera* (Her Majesty's Theatre, West End); *Fiddler On The Roof* (Savoy Theatre, West End); *The Commitments* (UK tour); *Oh! What a Lovely War* (Bruiser Theatre Company, Belfast); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (RTE Concert Orchestra); *I Do, I Do!* (Upstairs at the Gatehouse, London); *Beauty & The Beast* (Gaiety Theatre); *Fame* (Irish tour); *Hair* (European tour); *Here We Are Now*, and *Listen to my Heart* (Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin); and *In the Shadow of the Glen* (Union Theatre, London).

Television credits include *The Tudors*; *Delphine*; *Detained*; *Dancing with the Stars*; *The Voice of Ireland*; and *Fame: The Musical*.



AISLING O'MARA
KATRIONA

Aisling O'Mara is a Dublin-based actor and a graduate of The Lir Academy's Bachelor in Acting programme. She was nominated for an Irish Times Theatre Award for *Next Please*.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Poor*.

Other theatre credits include *Baby* (Dublin Fringe Festival); *Somewhere Out There You* and *The Quare Fellow* (Abbey Theatre); *Next Please*, and *Nothing But A Toerag* (Bewley's Cafe Theatre); *SHIT* (Thisispopbaby); *Tarry Flynn* (Livin' Dred); *In Our Veins* (Bitter Like A Lemon/Abbey Theatre); *We Can't Have Any More Monkeys in the House* (The New Theatre/Abbey Theatre); *Sunder, Rebel Rebel* and *Jack Duggan's War* (ANÚ Productions); *Fierce Notions* (Ill-Advised Theatre Company), and *Murder of Crows* (Bitter Like A Lemon).

Film and TV credits include *Blue Moon*; *Haunted Harmony Mysteries*; *Redemption of a Rogue*; *The Vanishing Triangle*; *Redemption*; *Cold Courage*; *Taken Down*; *Rosie*; and *The Colour Between, The Dry*.

Writing credits include *Next Please* (Irish Times Theatre Award nomination); *15 Minutes*; *Nothing But A Toerag*; *Rebel Rebel* (co-written with Louise Lowe and Robbie O'Connor).



PIPPA OWENS
YOUNG KATRIONA

Pippa is a 10-year-old performer who has trained with the Billie Barry Stage School since the age of seven and currently attends Visions Drama School, where she continues to develop her love for acting.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Poor*.

Other theatre credits include *A Christmas Festival* (National Concert Hall); *Higher Ground Musicala* (Helix Theatre); and *Diamonds are Forever* (Gaiety Theatre).

Wraparound Programme

Alongside our production of *Poor*, the Belgrade Theatre is proud to host a series of wraparound events and support opportunities that explore the themes of the production and create spaces for connection, conversation and practical support. These events bring together local organisations and communities in meaningful ways.

At selected performances, **Coventry Haven** and **Kairos** will be available with support stalls before and after the show, offering information, advice and a welcoming space for audiences who may wish to talk or seek guidance. On days where in-person support is not available, an information stand will remain in place with resources and signposting.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Coventry Haven

Coventry Haven provides specialist support to women and children affected by domestic abuse. Their services include refuge accommodation, advocacy, community support and recovery programmes, helping survivors rebuild their lives safely and with dignity.

www.coventryhaven.co.uk

Kairos

Kairos supports women in Coventry who are experiencing multiple disadvantages, including homelessness, trauma, addiction, sexual exploitation and poverty. Through practical help, advocacy and long-term support, Kairos empowers women to create safer and more stable futures.

www.kairoswwt.org.uk

WRAPAROUND ACTIVITY

Wed 6 May: Relational Social Work Podcast – Live

11.30am–12.30pm | B1

How do our views on poverty shape the way people think and act? And what can individuals do within systems of power that often feel beyond our control?

This live recording of the Relational Social Work Podcast brings together lived experience and professional perspectives to explore how individuals can make a difference, whatever role they are in, and even within challenging systems.

Featuring Katriona O’Sullivan, Coventry-born bestselling author of *Poor*, currently playing at the Belgrade Theatre. Hosted by Hannah Bedford and Matt Clayton from Coventry City Council Children and Education Service.

At its heart, this conversation asks: what helps someone truly see a child, understand their story, and respond in a way that creates positive change?

Wed 6 May: Belgrade Book Club: *Poor*

6.00pm | No.71

Join the bookworms of Coventry and beyond for a special Belgrade Book Club exploring *Poor* ahead of its vivid, brave and unflinching stage adaptation.

Gather with fellow readers to discuss Katriona O’Sullivan’s memoir, share reflections, and meet like-minded literature lovers. Through stories connected to our theatre programme, Book Club offers the chance to discover characters, journeys and ideas before seeing them brought to life on stage.

Wraparound Programme

Fri 8 May: Coventry Women's Partnership Drop-In

10.30am–12.30pm

Join us for an open, welcoming advice drop-in event inspired by the themes of *Poor*.

This is a space to reflect, create, and connect. Partners from Coventry Women's partnership will be on hand to give support and advice on a range of things covered in the play. This include advice around benefits, care, housing and employment. There will also be creative activity to explore your own experiences in a relaxed, supportive environment.

Drop in anytime, stay as long as you like, and be part of a conversations about what it means to live, struggle, and hope in a world where so many are labelled "poor".

Staff from *Central England Law Centre*, *Kairos*, *Foleshill Women's Training* and *Haven* will be in attendance.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY ANY OF THE THEMES OR ISSUES RAISED IN THIS PRODUCTION, PLEASE KNOW THAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE.

[FOLLOW THIS LINK FOR FURTHER SUPPORT RESOURCES.](#)



Aidan Kelly, Aisling O'Mara, Hilda Fay
Photography by Ros Kavanagh

POOR

Creatives

RÓISÍN MCBRINN

DIRECTOR

Róisín McBrinn is Artistic Director and co-CEO of the Gate Theatre. She was previously Joint Artistic Director and CEO of Clean Break Theatre Company in London where she also held the role of Head of Artistic Programme.

Clean Break is a company dedicated to transforming the lives of women who have been to prison or who are at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system. She trained under Michael Grandage at the Donmar Warehouse and frequently assisted Kathy Burke.

She has been nominated for an Irish Times Theatre Award and UK Theatre Award for Best Director and is the recipient of The Young Vic Jerwood Director's Award and the National Theatre's Quercus Award.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *The Borrowers*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Fun Home* and *The Snapper*.

Other directing credits include *Dixon and Daughters* (National Theatre); *Afterplay* and *Typical Girls* (Sheffield Crucible); and *Before It Rains* and *A Family Affair* (Sherman Theatre).

AEDÍN COSGROVE

SET DESIGNER

Aedín Cosgrove is a scenographer who has worked extensively in Ireland and internationally.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Medea* and *Our New Girl*.

Other theatre credits include *Good Sex* (Dead Centre); *To the Lighthouse* (Everyman Theatre); *Drainage Scheme*, *Saló* (Peacock Theatre); *The Temple* (Melbourne Malthouse Theatre); *All that Fall* and *Playing the Dane* (Pan Pan Theatre); *Guests of the Nation*, *Sacrifice at Easter*, and *Faraway* (Corcadorca); *Der Sturm*, *Schone Neue Welt* and *NONONO* (Theatre Bonn); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Abbey Theatre); and *The Seagull* and *Other Birds* (Chengdu Theatre, China).

Aedín won an Irish Times Theatre Award for Best Set for *Good Sex* (2022) and *Rehearsal*, *Playing the Dane* (2010), Best Lighting for her work on *All That Fall* and *Man of Valour* (2011) and with Paul Keogan for *Faraway* (2017).

Recent opera work includes *Guilio Cesare* (Blackwater Valley Opera Festival 2023) and *Mars* by Jennifer Walshe for Irish National Opera July 2025.

LARA CAMPBELL

COSTUME DESIGNER

Lara Campbell is the IFTA 2024 award winning costume designer.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Fun Home*. She has been nominated for an Irish Times Theatre Award and UK Theatre Award for Best Director and is the recipient of The Young Vic Jerwood Director's Award and the National Theatre's Quercus Award.

Other credits include designing and directing *Selva* (Bru Theatre); *Gol* (Bru Theatre/Joyces Women); *Film Supervisor* (Abbey Theatre); and *The Seagull* (Moscow Arts Theatre, Galway International Arts Festival).

Film and TV credits include *LOLA*, *Hokum*, *Saipan* and *SisterS* (RTE); *The Young Offenders*; *An Crisis*; *Aifric*; *Grace Harte*; *Fir Bolg*; *God's Creatures*; *Terminator – Dark Fate*; *My Brothers*; *Dracula Untold*; *Stay*; *Darktouch*; *The Hallow*; *End of Sentence*; and *Dollhouse*.

For An Taibhdhearc the Irish language theatre Lara acted, directed, taught and produced work. She directed *Hen Night Epiphany* and *Kings of the Kilburn High Road* by Jimmy Murphy which was staged in the Druid Theatre Company venue. *Idir Da Shuil* by Aoidh Uí Domhnaill a piece also directed and devised in workshop by Lara and the team of actors went on to win the Stewart Parker award.

PAUL KEOGAN

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gate Theatre credits include *King Lear*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Hamlet*, *The Snapper*, and *Molly Sweeney*.

Other theatre credits include *Ainadamar* (Metropolitan Opera, New York); *King Lear* (Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company, West End London and The Shed, New York); *Shirley Valentine*, *Sadie* and *Double Cross* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast); *Na Peirsigh* (Peacock Theatre); *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Happy Days* (Landmark Productions); *The Sugar Wife* and *Tales from the Holywell* (Abbey Theatre); *Masterclass* (Smock Alley, Dublin); *Jilly Morgan's Birthday Party* (Belltable, Limerick); *Translations* (Abbey Theatre/Lyric Theatre); *La Traviata* (Irish National Opera); *The Gondoliers/Utopia Ltd* (Scottish Opera); *Our Country's Good* and *Faith Healer* (Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith); *I Think We Are Alone* (Frantic Assembly); *The Gaul* and *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* (Hull Truck, UK); *Doubt: A Parable* (Chichester Festival Theatre) *Cristina, regina di Svezia* (Wexford Festival Opera); *The Treaty* (Fishamble); *Semele* and *The Return of Ulysses* (Opera Collective, Ireland); *Cassandra*, *Hansel and Gretel* (Royal Ballet, UK); and *No Man's Land* (English National Ballet, Queensland Ballet).

Creatives

SINÉAD DISKIN

SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER

Sinéad Diskin is a Dublin based sound designer and composer from Mayo. She studied music in Trinity College Dublin and is a graduate of the *SEEDS* program with Rough Magic.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Piaf*, *Pale Sister*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *The Snapper*.

Other Theatre Credits include *The Cave*, *Audrey or Sorrow*, *Somewhere Out There You and Tales from the Holywell* (Abbey Theatre); *Cold War* (Almeida Theatre, London); *Bedbound* (Galway Arts Festival and Landmark Productions); *Dixon and Daughters* (National Theatre, London); *Walking With Ghosts*, *Blood in the Dirt* and *Happy Days* (Landmark Productions); *The Taxidermist's Daughter* (Chichester); *Boland: Journey of a Poet* (Druid Theatre Company); *The Wakefires*, *Faultline* and *Torch* (ANÚ Productions); *The Anvil* (Manchester International Festival/ANÚ Productions); *Incantata* (Galway International Arts Festival); and *The Phlebotomist* (Hampstead Theatre, London).

Film Credits include *Suited*; *Constance*; *Canaries*, *Torch*, and *Hecatomb*.

PADRAIG DOONEY

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Padraig Dooney is a Dublin based musician, composer and actor. He is a co-founder of the theatre company Teatro Nua, with whom he develops and stages theatre pieces infused with original electronic music.

Poor is Padraig's Gate Theatre and Belgrade Theatre debut.

Other theatre credits include *The Musicians of Bremen LIVE!* (Cahoots NI + Segerstrom Centre for the Arts, California); *Please Hold* (Teatro Nua); *Sketcharella* (Dublin Fringe Festival); *You: The Improvised Musical* (Dublin Fringe Festival); *Shelf* (Teatro Nua); *No Citation* (Teatro Nua); *The Commitments West End and UK Tour* (Phil McIntyre Productions); and *A Dickensian Christmas* (Ha-Hum-Ah Theatre).

JESS WILLIAMS

MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

Jess Williams trained at the London Contemporary Dance School and the Laban Centre.

Other theatre credits include As Movement Director: *Nye* (National Theatre, London); *Hamlet Hail to the Thief* (RSC, Factory International); *Richard III* (The Globe); *Lost and Found* (Factory International, Aviva Studios); *The Boy with Two Hearts* (The Wales Millennium Centre/National Theatre); *Snake in the Grass*, *Rope*, *Mother Goose* and *Celebrated Virgins* (Theatr Clwyd); *Byth Bythoedd Amen* and *Merched Caerdydd* (Theatr Cymru); *A Little Piece of You* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane); *Around the World in 80 Days* (Theatre by the Lake); *Blood Harmony*, and *Petrichor* (ThickSkin); *A Walk is Not Just a Walk* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast); *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (English Theatre Frankfurt); *Constellations* (National Centre for Performing Arts, Mumbai). As Associate Director or Associate Movement Director: *I Think We Are Alone*, *The Unreturning* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Frantic Assembly); *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* and *Beginning* (National Theatre, London); *Dracula: Mina's Reckoning* (National Theatre of Scotland).

As a teacher Jess has led workshops and masterclasses all over the world in devising and physicality.

MICHAEL DUNNE

AV DESIGNER & PROGRAMMER

Michael Dunne is an audio visual designer from Dublin who studied sound engineering in Windmill Lane college.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Eureka Day*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Poor*.

Other theatre credits include *Deaf Republic* (Dead Centre, Royal Court); *Dublin Gothic*, *The Cave*, *Safe House*, *The Sugar Wife*, *Na Peirsigh* (Abbey Theatre); *3Olympia Patomime* (Spot-light Productions, Pat Egan); *The Jesus Trilogy* (Project Arts).

ULTAN DE STÁINLÉIGH

ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER

Ultan de Stáinleigh is a Dublin based Sound Designer, Technician and Theatremaker. Ultan was the Deputy Technical Manager of the Gate Theatre from Sept 2024 to Sept 2025, and oversaw and facilitated technical requirements for 6 different Gate Theatre Productions.

Gate Theatre credits include *The Pillowman*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

Other theatre credits include *Under-covers*, *The Dollrums* (Jaxbanded Theatre); *Walden* (The Lir Academy); *Shredder* (Dublin Fringe Festival/ Project Arts Centre); and *The Boy*, *The God and his Daughter* (Abbey Theatre); *Bodycount* (Hidden & Forbidden Theatre); and *Dogwhistle* (TeoChroí Productions).

Ultan is the resident Sound Designer and Technical Manager for Jaxbanded Theatre.

GHALIAH CONROY

ASSOCIATE MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

Ghaliah Conroy is a recent graduate from Fontys Performing Arts School in The Netherlands with a degree in Dance and Choreography.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Poor*, *The Pull of the Stars*. Other theatre credits include by *HOTHOUSE* (Malaprop Theatre); *Richard III* (The Lyric Theatre, Belfast); and *HAMMAM* (ANU Productions/Abbey Theatre). Film and TV credits include *TWIG*.

POOR

Creatives

CATHAL QUINN

VOICE DIRECTOR

Cathal Quinn is co-founder and Artistic Director of Mouth on Fire which has staged Shakespeare, Wilde, Yeats and over twenty works by Samuel Beckett.

Cathal is Head of Voice at the The Lir, TCD, and also a Chief Facilitator of The Lir at Work, The Lir's corporate training subsidiary.

Previous Gate Theatre credits include *King Lear*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *My Cousin Rachel*, *The Home Place*, *The Weir*, *The Real Thing*, *Many Happy Returns*, *Poor Beast in the Rain*, *A View from the Bridge*, *Anna Karenina*, *American Buffalo*, *All My Sons*, *Little Women*, *Great Expectations*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and *The Pull of the Stars*.

Other theatre credits include voice work with ANÚ Productions, Lyric Theatre Belfast, The Gaiety Theatre, Brokentalkers and The Ark.

Film and TV credits include *Miss Scarlet and the Duke*, *The Hardacres* and *Cocaine Bear*.

Cathal trained as an actor many moons ago, seven years later as a voice coach, as well as a writer of plays and adaptations of Wilde, Yeats and Keats.

EMMA FINEGAN

RESIDENT ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Emma Finegan is a director from Kildare who studied BA French and Drama Studies at Trinity College Dublin and Clown at École Philippe Gaulier.

Emma is the Resident Assistant Director at the Gate Theatre. Previous Gate Theatre credits include *Lovesong*, *Poor*, *The Pillowman*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Eureka Day*.

Other theatre credits include *The Holding Bones* (Civic Theatre, Mermaid Arts Centre, Riverbank Arts Centre); *SLIME!* (Lime Tree Theatre); *Just A Minute* (Dublin Fringe Festival, Galway Theatre Festival, 96 Festival); and *Pig Brain* and *Who Robbed Annie Queeries* (Dublin Fringe Festival).



Hollie Lawlor, Aisling O'Mara
2025 Production Photo
Photography by Ste Murray

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Blindspot Theatre
Dauntless Evolution
That's A Rap

The Belgrade Springboard Initiative is a Belgrade scheme to support emerging artists through providing training opportunities, organisational development and assistance in developing productions for the stage. We place a particular emphasis on supporting artists and companies from backgrounds that are under-represented in the industry.

Belgrade Theatre Enterprises Ltd

Derek Barnes
Laura Elliot
Charnjit Saranna
Julie White



Ramps on the Moon

The Belgrade is currently working with Ramps on the Moon to embed anti-ableism into our programme, enriching the stories we tell and the way we tell them. With their support, we are striving to normalise the presence of Deaf and Disabled people in theatre, both on and off stage.



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Photograph by: Ros Kavanagh
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