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COMHLACHT CHALAFORT ÁTHA CLIATH
DUBLIN PORT COMPANY

Bitter Like A Lemon and the Abbey Theatre
in association with Dublin Port Company present

IN OUR VEINS

by Lee Coffey

SAMUEL FRENCH

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United Kingdom and World
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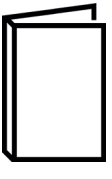
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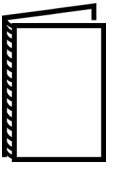
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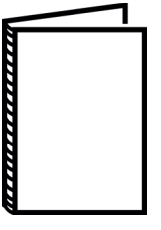
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ABBEY THEATRE
AMHARCLANN NA MAINISTREACH

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The Abbey Theatre is Ireland's National Theatre. It was founded by W.B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory. Since it first opened its doors in 1904 the theatre has played a vital and often controversial role in the artistic, social and cultural life of Ireland.

Inspired by the revolutionary ideals of its founders and its rich canon of Irish dramatic writing, the Abbey Theatre's mission is to imaginatively engage with all of Irish society through the production of ambitious, courageous and new theatre in all its forms. The Abbey Theatre commits to lead in the telling of the whole Irish story, in English and in Irish, and affirms that it is a theatre for the entire island of Ireland and for all its people. In every endeavour, the Abbey Theatre promotes inclusiveness, diversity and equality.

Over the years, the Abbey Theatre has premiered the work of major Irish playwrights such as J.M. Synge, Sean O'Casey and Teresa Deevy, as well as contemporary classics from Sebastian Barry, Dermot Bolger, Marina Carr, Shaun Dunne, Brian Friel, Thomas Kilroy, Frank McGuinness, Tom Murphy and Mark O'Rowe. In recent years, Irish and international audiences have enjoyed the plays of a new generation of playwrights, including Stacey Gregg, Nancy Harris, David Ireland, Deirdre Kinahan, Jimmy McAleavey, Owen McCafferty, Phillip McMahon, Elaine Murphy, Margaret Perry, Michael West and Carmel Winters.

In 1905 the Abbey Theatre first toured internationally and continues to be an ambassador for Irish arts and culture worldwide.

The Abbey Theatre gratefully acknowledges the support of the Arts Council.





Port Perspectives is Dublin Port Company's series of commissioned original artworks, installations and creative performances aimed at strengthening the bond between Dublin Port and the City.

Port Perspectives began with an open call to visual artists which resulted in three project commissions for a series of site-specific public artworks. Each of these commissions responded specifically to the built environment, local areas, history and context of Dublin Port. New works unveiled in 2017 included Sheelagh Broderick's *Port Walks*, Silvia Loeffler's *Transit Gateway*, and AEMI & Cliona Harmey's *port | river | city*.

These commissions were part of a larger programme of activity throughout 2017 which included Eugeen Van Mieghem: Port Life, a new exhibition sponsored by Dublin Port Company, which showed at Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane. The exhibition was supported by a programme of seminars and educational and outreach initiatives. Port Perspectives also included an arts engagement programme curated by Declan McGonagle and featured the sponsorship of Jesse Jones' Tremble Tremble, which represented Ireland at the 57th International Venice Biennale.

In 2019, Port Perspectives will involve a year of new Irish theatre commissions, featuring *In Our Veins* by Lee Coffey, a co-production between Bitter Like A Lemon and the Abbey Theatre, *What Lies Beneath – Port Stories* by The Lir Academy and Ringsend College, and an Abbey production, *Last Orders at the Dockside* by Dermot Bolger.

Port Perspectives builds on previous arts commissions by Dublin Port Company, including *Starboard Home* with the National Concert Hall – a new song cycle of Irish music and spoken word inspired by Dublin Port, Dublin City and the River Liffey; Cliona Harmey's Dublin Ships installation on the Scherzer Bridges in conjunction with Dublin City Council and the re-imagining of The Diving Bell on Sir John Rogerson's Quay.



LIFFEY WATER RUNS IN HIS VEINS

In Our Veins is the title of a new play from Bitter Like A Lemon Theatre Company, commissioned by Dublin Port Company as part of its Year of Theatre. Bitter Like A Lemon are a relatively new theatre company, having staged their first production in 2014, but Dublin Port Company CEO, Eamonn O'Reilly was suitably impressed by some of their previous productions to green-light *In Our Veins* in January 2018, when playwright Lee Coffey "went into full-on research mode".

Lee reached out to the Dublin Dockworkers Preservation Society, and pays huge tribute to the man who runs it, Declan Byrne, for putting him in touch with a host of retired dock workers.

"They had a lot of info about the area around the Monto, the North Inner City and what it was like at the time these men lived there, because obviously it's now completely different. A lot of things have been knocked down and the docks have totally changed."

Lee also took some inspiration from Dublin Port Company's Starboard Home project, where a host of Irish musicians penned songs based around the theme of the port, river and docklands. He spoke to some of the musicians involved about what influenced them in the creation of their music: "Lisa O'Neill actually released a brilliant video for her song, 'Rock The Machine', where she filmed a lot of the men I spoke to from the Dublin Dockworkers Preservation Society."

The support of businesses like Dublin Port Company is hugely welcomed by all arts groups and theatre companies, but particularly for smaller entities like Bitter Like A Lemon, for whom it was their first time being commissioned to produce a play.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lee Coffey is a writer from Dublin.

His shows include: *Leper + Chip* in Theatre Upstairs, Project Arts Centre, The Edinburgh Fringe Festival (Nominated for the Broadway Baby 5 Star Award and the National Student Drama Award for best play); *Electric Picnic* at The Lyric Belfast, The Axis, Cork and a production by Inis Nua in Philadelphia, USA; *Peruvian Voodoo* in Theatre Upstairs, 24 Hour Plays in the Abbey Theatre; *Slice, the Thief* in Smock Alley and The Axis; *Murder of Crows* in Theatre Upstairs, Project Arts Centre, Garter Lane and the Lyric Belfast; *From All Sides* in The Dublin Fringe Festival and a radio play, *The Matron for Dead Air* in the Bram Stoker Festival.

Lee was a participant in Rough Magic Theatre Company's SEEDS programme 2016/2017, Irish Theatre Institute's Six in The Attic Programme 2018/2019 and The New Playwrights' Programme in The Lyric, Belfast 2018.

He is a founding member of Bitter Like A Lemon Theatre Company.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In Our Veins was a commission from Dublin Port Company as a part of their Port Perspectives Initiative. They approached myself, Amilia Stewart and our company Bitter Like A Lemon to make a show for their year of theatre. It is a love letter to Dublin, in every sense. Putting a lens up to a world that no longer exists and that will never exist again. With the help of The Dublin Dockworkers Preservation Society and The North Inner City Folklore Project's publications of Dublin's social history, I hoped to put a mirror up to now by taking you back to a forgotten world. A world of tough choices, hardship and survival where human kindness knew no bounds, as the dark and unforgiving world took everything. It's a piece close to my heart and something I have been very proud to be a part of and I hope I've done it justice. It's a funny, dark and poignant look at where Dublin came from. Out of the shit and into the world.

Lee Coffey, April 2019

In Our Veins was first performed at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin on 10 April 2019 with the following cast and creatives:

Ian Lloyd Anderson	Will, Michael, Paul, Patrick (1955) Whacker, Voice of Bloody (1970)
Jack Mullarkey	Stephen, Patrick (1938), Man, Bill
Aisling O'Mara	Sharon, Mary (1922 + 1938) Lily, Esther (1955)
Amilia Stewart	Kim, Anne, Woman, Margo
Catherine Byrne	Esther (2019) May, Mary (1955)
Gerard Byrne	Francis, Lynch, Doctor, Pawn, Bloody, Patrick (1970)

Writer	Lee Coffey
Director	Maisie Lee
Movement Director	Paula O'Reilly
Set and Costume Design	Lisa Krugel
Set and Costume Assistant	Jack Rogers
Lighting Design	Eoin Byrne
Composer and Sound Design	Denis Clohessy
Stage Manager	Evie McGuinness
Production Manager	Conor Mullan
Producer	Bitter Like A Lemon
Photography	Ste Murray

CHARACTERS

WILL, MICHAEL, PAUL, PATRICK (1955), WHACKER, VOICE OF BLOODY (1970)	Actor One
STEPHEN, PATRICK (1938), MAN, BILL	Actor Two
SHARON, MARY (1922 + 1938), LILY, ESTHER (1955)	Actor Three
KIM, ANNE, WOMAN, MARGO	Actor Four
ESTHER (2019), MAY, MARY (1955)	Actor Five
FRANCIS, LYNCH, DOCTOR, PAWN, BLOODY, PATRICK (1970)	Actor Six

VOICE*: Is designated by the director and actor is assigned to each line as seen fit*

There are no directions or definitive items needed for the performance. It should be at the director and designer's discretion as to how much or how little is used.

This script went to press during rehearsals and may differ from the text in performance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Amilia Stewart, Ger McNaughton, TileStyle, Business To Arts, Dance Ireland, the Abbey Theatre, Irish Theatre Institute, Karl Shiels, Laura Honan, Jimmy Fay, Annie Ryan, Lynne Parker, The North Inner City Folklore Project, The Dublin Dockworkers Preservations Society, Aaron Monaghan, Theatre Upstairs, Dublin Port Company, Paul Stewart, APT Workplace Pensions and the staff of Lanigans Pub.

For my mother and father, Catherine and Denis.

The stage is empty. We hear the wind blowing and music playing. It continues through the overlapping dialogue. This can be repeated, depending on the director's preference.

VOICE Down the docks.

VOICE Up the Monto.

VOICE In the Tenements.

VOICE The rot of Dublin.

VOICE Rats in your bed.

VOICE Flies in the walls.

VOICE The unfortunate girls.

VOICE The unfortunate boys.

VOICE The unfortunate families.

VOICE No work today.

VOICE No food today.

VOICE No hope today.

VOICE The worst slums in Europe.

VOICE Collapsing on us.

VOICE Killing us.

VOICE That's where Dublin came from.

VOICES Out of the shit.

VOICES And into the world.

The lights flash and the outline of a coffin appears on the ground.

KIM Heya, Granda.

SHARON You don't say, "Heya..." to your dead Granda.

KIM What do you say then?

SHARON I don't know.

Pause.

Alright, Granda.

Pause.

KIM Is he supposed to look like that?

SHARON Show some respect.

KIM How do you know I didn't mean that in a positive way?

SHARON Well, did you?

KIM No, he looks awful.

SHARON He's dead.

KIM Thought they put make-up and that on him.

SHARON They did.

KIM Doesn't look it.

SHARON We all don't have as much time as you.

KIM Fuck off.

SHARON Language.

Pause.

Caking yourself with it.

KIM We fucking get it.

Lights change. They both bless themselves.

ESTHER Now we'll say a little prayer. You start one there, Stephen.

Pause.

STEPHEN I don't know any, Nan.

ESTHER Some bleedin' Catholic you are. God forgive me for cursin'.

STEPHEN Sorry, Nan.

ESTHER It's okay, chicken. I'll teach you a few.

ESTHER *blesses herself and mouths a prayer to herself. She finishes it with, "Amen."*

Amen.

STEPHEN Amen.

Pause.

ESTHER He looks lovely, doesn't he?

STEPHEN Eh, he does, Nan.

ESTHER He always looked well.

STEPHEN He did.

ESTHER Even in death.

STEPHEN Eh, yeah.

ESTHER The bastard.

STEPHEN Nan.

ESTHER God forgive me for cursin'. It's a compliment, son. You'll have to glue me together when I'm dead.

STEPHEN Jaysus.

ESTHER I'll be fallin' off the bone an' that.

STEPHEN You'll look beautiful when you're dead, Nan.

ESTHER Thanks, darling. You're so sweet.

Lights change. **FRANCIS** *stands in silence for a moment.*

FRANCIS I'm going to miss you, Dad.

WILL I'm sorry, Mr Doyle.

FRANCIS Will?

WILL Yeah.

FRANCIS How did you end up in here with me?

WILL Walked into the wrong room.

FRANCIS Okay.

WILL Was looking for the jacks.

FRANCIS That's fine, son.

WILL I'm dying for a sh/

FRANCIS Don't finish that sentence.

WILL Sorry.

FRANCIS Where's me daughter?

WILL She's outside with the rest of them.

FRANCIS Alright.

Silence.

WILL Never know what to say in situations like this.

FRANCIS Silence is good, William.

Lights change. Everyone is now at the coffin together.

SHARON Why are you in here?

WILL Looking for the jacks.

STEPHEN Thought it smelled a little funky.

FRANCIS Shut up, you lot.

ESTHER It was a lovely turnout, son.

KIM Busiest wake I've ever seen.

ESTHER Noticed a load of people missin' too/

FRANCIS Ma/

ESTHER Those feckers are off my Christmas card list. God forgive me for cursin'.

FRANCIS Ma, let's just enjoy this time with Da.

ESTHER Sorry, son.

Pause.

He looks so lovely. My Patrick.

FRANCIS He does.

ESTHER What's that on him?

WILL Looks like lipstick.

SHARON Kim!

KIM Sorry, Nan. I just added a little colour to him.

STEPHEN Jesus Christ.

ESTHER Language, you. You little Protestant.

STEPHEN Nan.

ESTHER Don't Nan me, you. You didn't even know a prayer. Francis, do you know that?

FRANCIS What, Ma?

ESTHER This little Brit didn't know a single prayer to say to his poor Granda, God rest his soul.

SHARON Disgraceful.

KIM Yeah.

STEPHEN You two don't have a clue either.

KIM We do.

SHARON Yeah.

WILL I know a few.

ESTHER Son, be quiet. You're a little blow-in.

SHARON Nan/

ESTHER A prayer, girls. For your Granda, Patrick.

STEPHEN Come on, girls.

ESTHER Off you go.

SHARON Go on, Kim.

They all drop their heads in respect. Pause.

KIM Em... *(speaks the first 3 lines of Dionne Warwick's* ***"I SAY A LITTLE PRAYER"****)**

STEPHEN Jaysus.

ESTHER Have some respect, you!

STEPHEN But Nan.

ESTHER Shut your hole. Makin' me curse in front of me poor dead husband. Continue, dear.

Pause.

KIM I run for the bus, dear.

While riding/

ESTHER Riding?

KIM Yeah.

ESTHER You dirty little/

FRANCIS Ma, it's not their fault.

ESTHER Little heathens you've raised.

SHARON Nan, nobody goes to mass anymore.

WILL It's true, Mrs Doyle.

STEPHEN Yeah, It's fucking/

FRANCIS If you swear in this room again, I swear to God.

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* A licence to produce IN OUR VEINS does not include a performance licence for "I SAY A LITTLE PRAYER". For further information, please see Music Use Note on page v.

ESTHER Francis. I'll handle this. Stephen, I'll put you on your arse if you swear in front of your grandfather again. Now, apologise.

STEPHEN Sorry, Granda.

FRANCIS A lot of people don't go to mass anymore. It's a different world, Ma.

ESTHER Who are you telling? No respect.

KIM It's our choice, Nan.

ESTHER Choice, you kids today know nothing of choice.

SHARON What are you on about?

ESTHER Not going to mass. That's a choice? You have no idea what it's like to be faced with an actual choice. One that would shape the generations to follow.

STEPHEN We just don't like mass, Nan.

ESTHER I'm not talking about mass!

FRANCIS It's okay, Ma. We're all just a little worked up.

ESTHER I'm not worked up. You children have no idea how easy you have it.

FRANCIS Times change, it's not how it was when you were younger.

ESTHER Who're you telling? The tough choices that have shaped our family, defined our family, they're lost on the youth of today.

KIM You losing it, Nan?

WILL Bit harsh.

STEPHEN No, I think she might be.

ESTHER Your poor great-grandmother.

SHARON Yep, she's lost it.

ESTHER Lost it, you watch yourself. Looking at me like I've ten heads. Have you not told them, Francis?

SHARON Told us what?

Pause.

FRANCIS No, I haven't, Ma.

ESTHER Your grandfather there was given up! His poor mother, a lady of the Monto. Now there's a choice! Something you lot know nothing about.

STEPHEN A prostitute?

WILL Nice.

ESTHER Although they were never called that in the day. Unfortunate girls is what they were called. Your Granda Patrick there was a Monto baby.

STEPHEN What?

FRANCIS He was born to one of the girls of the Monto.

SHARON The Monto Monto.

STEPHEN Like, "Take her up to Monto, Monto, Monto."

KIM That Monto?

WILL Great tune, that.

FRANCIS Yes, that Monto.

ESTHER Poor little Monto babies.

KIM Jaysus.

ESTHER Imagine that, giving up your child.

SHARON I wouldn't wish that on anyone.

ESTHER Your grandfather, born in a house on…Railway Street… in…nineteen twenty…two. I think. Wasn't it, Francis?

FRANCIS Yeah, Ma.

ESTHER Given up and raised by Paul and Mary Doyle.

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