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CONCORD
THEATRICALS

MUSTARD

by Eva O'Connor

SAMUEL FRENCH

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ISBN 978-0-573-13221-6

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FIRST PERFORMANCE

MUSTARD premiered at Bruford, Summerhall at the Edinburgh Fringe in August 2019. The play is produced by Fishamble: The New Play Company, in association with Sunday's Child.

WINNER OF A SCOTSMAN FRINGE FIRST AWARD 2019
WINNER OF THE SUMMERHALL LUSTRUM AWARD 2019.
NOMINATED FOR SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH AWARD 2019.

Written and performed by	**Eva O'Connor**
Directed by	**Hildegard Ryan**
Set and costume design by	**Hildegard Ryan**
Lighting design by	**Marianne Nightingale**
Cover photo by	**Hildegard Ryan**

Fishamble Team

Artistic Director	**Jim Culleton**
Dramaturg	**Gavin Kostick**
Production Coordinator	**Ronan Carey**
Marketing	**Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan**
PR	**O'Doherty Communications**
Producer	**Eva Scanlan**

The production runs for approximately 60 minutes, with no interval.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I'm fascinated by heartbreak. It's terrifying to fall so fully in love with someone that you feel you would die without them. The thought of losing them makes your knees buckle. You bargain with god – take my right arm, but don't take that person. That's how E feels about the cyclist. I wanted to capture the self sacrificing, undignified depths you sink to in the name of "love".

I recovered from an eating disorder. It defined a good decade of my life. As a result I am intrigued by people's coping mechanisms, the shame attached to them, and the lengths we go to to hide them from others. I wanted to explore self harm and addiction, but with an abstract spin on things. Hence the mustard.

When I was sick I put mustard on everything – toast, broccoli, eggs. It's low in calories, and I'd have spoons of it with every meal. Even now I'm still a bit obsessed with it. I suppose I called the main character E, because she is a strange other-worldly version of me.

When we first performed the show we used a mix of cheap hair conditioner and turmeric for the mustard. My skin was yellow for days. I looked genuinely ill. Later my stage manager came up with a more sophisticated concoction.

I wrote and rehearsed this tiny passion project in my house in London. Hildegard (my work wife) script edited, directed and designed the set and costumes. She had such a clear and striking vision for the piece. Winning a Fringe First at Edinburgh was a huge career highlight. I had no idea how it would be received but it turns out this play is small but mighty. Like a tiny jar of Colman's.

Eva O'Connor, June 2020

CREATIVE BIOS

EVA O'CONNOR is a writer and performer from Ogonnelloe Co. Clare. She trained at Rose Bruford drama school, and runs Sunday's Child theatre company with Hildegard Ryan. Her work has been produced in Ireland, the UK, France, Belgium, Australia, and the US. She has won multiple awards for her work, including a Scotsman Fringe First for *MUSTARD*, at the Edinburgh Fringe 2019.

HILDEGARD RYAN is a director in theatre and TV, hailing from Skerries co. Dublin. Hildegard studied English and History in Trinity College Dublin, and Film Production at CFS London. Her graduation short film was selected for the Cannes Film Festival short film corner in 2014.

Hildegard has collaborated with Eva O'Connor since 2013. She directed *My Name is Saoirse* (winner of First Fortnight Award at the Dublin Fringe 2014, the Argus Angel at the Brighton Fringe 2015, and the Best Theatre Award at the Adelaide Fringe 2017). She directed *Overshadowed* for the stage, and for its BBC Three screen adaptation. *Overshadowed* was nominated for a 2018 Rose d'Or Award and won the Mind Media Award for Best Drama in 2019.

With O'Connor, Hildegard has co-written and directed *The Friday Night Effect*, which debuted at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2017. She also directed O'Connor's *MUSTARD* which won a Fringe First and the Summerhall Lustrum award at the Edinburgh Fringe 2019.

Having directed a standalone episode for series 7, Hildegard has just wrapped on directing four episodes of *The Dumping Ground* series 8 for CBBC.

MARIANNE NIGHTINGALE is a lighting technician and designer from South East England. She studied Technical Theatre as part of an apprenticeship at Richmond Theatre, London.

Throughout her profession she has worked as part of the lighting department in multiple producing theatres on many successful productions: *The Inheritance*, *Ivan and the Dogs* (Young Vic Theatre); *My Name is Lucy Barton*, *A German Life* (The Bridge Theatre), Royal Court Theatre and The National Theatre.

Maz has been involved with Fishamble since 2018 and has been working with O'Connor & Ryan for more than 5 years on productions including: *My Name is Saoirse* (Best Theatre Award at the Adelaide Fringe 2017), *The Friday Night Effect*, *Maz and Bricks* and in 2019 was the lighting designer for O'Connor's *MUSTARD*.

JIM CULLETON is the artistic director of Fishamble: The New Play Company. He has directed many productions in Ireland and internationally, winning awards including an Olivier Award in 2016 for *Silent* by Pat Kinevane and the Irish Times Best Director Award in 2020 for *The Alternative* by Michael Patrick and Oisín Kearney. He has also directed for companies including the Abbey, Gaiety, RTÉ, as well as on Broadway and the West End.

GAVIN KOSTICK, as literary manager at Fishamble, works with new writers for theatre through script development, readings and a variety of mentorship programmes. For Fishamble Gavin is particularly proud of his work on *Show in a Bag*, *The New Play Clinic*, *Tiny Plays for Ireland* and *A Play for Ireland*. Gavin is also an award-winning playwright. He has written over twenty plays that have been produced nationally and internationally. Favourite works include: *Invitation to a Journey* and *The End of the Road* (Fishamble); *This is What we Sang for Kabosh*, *Fight Night*, *The Games People Play* and *At the Ford (RISE)* and the Libretto for *The Alma Fetish* (Raymond Deane and Wide Open Opera). As a performer he performed Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness: Complete*, a six hour show for Absolut Fringe, Dublin Theatre Festival and The London Festival of Literature at the Southbank. His work in all areas has received many national and international awards.

EVA SCANLAN is the general manager and producer of Fishamble. Producing work includes: *On Blueberry Hill* by Sebastian Barry; *The Alternative* by Michael Patrick & Oisín Kearney; *Before* by Pat Kinevane; *Rathmines Road* by Deirdre Kinahan; *Haughey|Gregory* by Colin Murphy; Fishamble's award-winning Pat Kinevane Trilogy on tour in Ireland and internationally; *The Humours of Bandon* by Margaret McAuliffe; *Maz and Bricks* by Eva O'Connor; *Inside the GPO* by Colin Murphy; *Tiny Plays for Ireland* and *America and Swing* on tour in Ireland, the UK, and Australia. Eva produces *The 24 Hour Plays: Dublin* at the Abbey Theatre in Ireland

(2012-present), in association with the 24 Hour Play Company, New York, and has worked on *The 24 Hour Plays* on Broadway and *The 24 Hour Musicals* at the Gramercy Theatre. Previously, she was Producer of terraNOVA Collective in New York (2012-2015).

ABOUT SUNDAY'S CHILD

Sunday's Child is an award winning Irish theatre company run by Eva O'Connor and Hildegard Ryan. Their plays include: *My Name is Saoirse* (Winner of First Fortnight Award Dublin Fringe 2014, Argus Angel Award Brighton Fringe 2015, Best Theatre Award Adelaide Fringe 2017); *Overshadowed* (Winner of Fishamble Award for Best New Writing 2015 and now a series on BBC Three), *The Friday Night Effect*, and *MUSTARD*. Eva and Hildegard collaborate on work for stage, screen and radio.

Eva and Hildegard are delighted to be working with Fishamble on *MUSTARD*. Eva's play *Maz and Bricks* was directed by Olivier award-winning Jim Culleton, and produced by Fishamble, and she is thrilled to be collaborating with them again.

Eva would like to thank Jim Culleton, Eva Scanlan, Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan and Gavin Kostick for their unwavering support in developing and producing work. They are true champions of the arts.

Eva would also like to thank her literary agent Frances Arnold, from Rochelle Stevens & Co. for her brilliant work ethic and words of wisdom.

ABOUT FISHAMBLE

"Ireland's leading new writing company"
THE STAGE
Fishamble is passionate about discovering, developing and producing new plays. It is named after the Playhouse on Dublin's Fishamble Street which, in the 1780s, became the first theatre to commission and produce plays by Irish writers.

"Fishamble puts electricity in the National grid of dreams"
SEBASTIAN BARRY
Fishamble believes that vibrant theatre stands at the centre of a vibrant civic society. It harnesses the imaginative power of theatre to provide audiences with a diverse range of contemporary, compelling and heartfelt dramatic works.

"a global brand with international theatrical presence"
THE IRISH TIMES
Fishamble thinks nationally and reaches globally. It works collaboratively with networks of artists, communities, and organisations, to achieve the maximum possible life for its plays. For instance, over 30 Fishamble playscripts have been published.

Fishamble has toured its productions to audiences throughout Ireland, and to 19 other countries. It typically produces over 200 performances annually, from the Aran Islands to Auckland, Ballymun to Brisbane, Clonmel to Cleveland.

"forward-thinking Fishamble"
THE NEW YORK TIMES
Fishamble champions the role of the playwright, through its productions, and wide range of artist supports and development initiatives. It works with over 50% of the writers of all new plays produced on the island of Ireland each year.

"*excellent Fishamble…Ireland's terrific Fishamble*"
THE GUARDIAN
Fishamble has received many awards in Ireland and internationally, including an Olivier Award, won jointly with Pat Kinevane. Its living archive is at the National Library of Ireland.

"when Fishamble is [in New York], you've got to go"
TIME OUT NEW YORK

STAFF

Jim Culleton (Artistic Director)
Eva Scanlan (General Manager & Producer)
Gavin Kostick (Literary Manager)
Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan (Marketing & Development Manager)
Ronan Carey (Office & Production Coordinator)

BOARD

Padraig Burns, Peter Finnegan, Louise Molloy, Doireann Ní Bhriain (Chair), Vincent O'Doherty, John O'Donnell, Siobhan O'Leary (Vice Chair), Andrew Parkes, Colleen Savage

FISHAMBLE'S RECENT AND CURRENT PRODUCTIONS

- *The Alternative* by Michael Patrick & Oisín Kearney (2019), the chosen play from Fishamble's A PLAY FOR IRELAND programme, touring in Ireland
- *On Blueberry Hill* by Sebastian Barry (2017–20) touring in Ireland, Europe, Off-Broadway, Trafalgar Entertainment/West End
- *Before* by Pat Kinevane (2018–20) touring in association with the Strollers Network, and internationally
- *Haughey|Gregory* by Colin Murphy (2018–19) in the Abbey Theatre, Mountjoy Prison, Dáil Éireann, Croke Park, and Larkin Community College, as well as on national tour with the Nasc Network
- *The Humours of Bandon* by Margaret McAuliffe (2017–20) touring in Ireland, UK, US, and Australia
- *Rathmines Road* by Deirdre Kinahan (2018) in coproduction with the Abbey Theatre
- *Drip Feed* by Karen Cogan (2018) in coproduction with Soho Theatre, touring in Ireland and UK
- *GPO 1818* by Colin Murphy (2018) to mark the bicentenary of the GPO
- *Maz & Bricks* by Eva O'Connor (2017–20) touring in Ireland, UK, and Off-Broadway
- *Forgotten, Silent and Underneath* by Pat Kinevane (since 2007, 2011 and 2014, respectively –2020) touring in Ireland, UK, Europe, US, Australia and New Zealand

• *Charolais* by Noni Stapleton (2017) in New York
• *Inside the GPO* by Colin Murphy (2016) performed in the GPO during Easter
• *Tiny Plays for Ireland and America* by 26 writers (2016) at the Kennedy Center, Washington DC, and Irish Arts Center, New York, as part of Ireland 100
• *Mainstream* by Rosaleen McDonagh (2016) in coproduction with Project Arts Centre
• *Invitation to a Journey* by David Bolger, Deirdre Gribbin and Gavin Kostick (2016) in coproduction with CoisCéim, Crash Ensemble, and Galway International Arts Festival
• *Little Thing, Big Thing* by Donal O'Kelly (2014–16) touring in Ireland, UK, Europe, US and Australia
• *Swing* by Steve Blount, Peter Daly, Gavin Kostick and Janet Moran (2014–16) touring in Ireland, UK, Europe, US, Australia and New Zealand
• *Spinning* by Deirdre Kinahan (2014) at Dublin Theatre Festival
• *The Wheelchair on My Face* by Sonya Kelly (2013–14) touring in Ireland, UK, Europe and US.

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We wish to thank the following Friends for their invaluable support:
Alan & Rosemary Ashe, ATM Accounting Services, Mary Banotti, Tania Banotti, Doireann Ní Bhriain, Conor Braiden, Colette and Barry Breen, Business to Arts, Claudia Carroll, Sandra Carroll, Breda Cashe, Maura Connolly, John & Yvonne Healy, Gillie Hinds, Robert Gilligan, Jane Majeski, Monica McInerney, Stuart Mclaughlin, Ger McNaughton, Sinead Moriarty, Pat Moylan, Dympna Murray, Liz Nugent, Lisney, Tom O'Connor, Vincent O'Doherty, Siobhan O'Leary, Nora Owen, Andy Pollak, David & Veronica Rowe, Jennifer Russell, Colleen Savage, Mary Stephenson, Patrick Sutton, and Tesco Finest. We thank all those who contributed generously and wish to remain anonymous.

Fishamble is a registered charity no. CHY 20103958.
Fishamble is funded by the Arts Council, Dublin City Council, and Culture Ireland.







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Acknowledgements
Thanks to the following for their help with this production: Rachel West and all at the Arts Council; Ray Yeates and all at Dublin City Council Arts Office; Christine Sisk, Ciaran Walsh, Valerie Behan and all at Culture Ireland; Laura MacNaughton, Aoife McCollum and all at the O'Reilly Theatre; all at 3 Great Denmark Street; Frances Arnold; all those who have helped since this publication went to print.

To my mum, the most creative woman I know.
I love you Ange. X

CHARACTERS

E

Mustard:
A thing of yellow.
Pasty.
Strong, by name and nature.
The only British import in our home.
With sausages, bread, broccoli even.
Taytos dipped in.
Mum's crisps and Colman's sandwiches
on a Friday night in.
I well remember
the first smear on skin.
The pure pain of it.
The glass jar used sparingly shame of it.
Scars screaming.
Wounds alight.
So wrong,
yet so yellowy right.

We have sex.
Good hard satisfying sex.
Solid sex.
Sex that hurts in all the right places.
Sex at angles that feel
slightly dangerous
for my internal organs.
Sex that makes me teeter
on the borders of pain.
Rough sex,
I suppose you could call it.

Sex that makes me bleed.
Sex that makes sense.
Sex that doesn't require an instruction manual.
Sex that makes me cry.
Sex that is over quite fast.
Sex that doesn't make me come.
Which is fine.
It's possibly even a good thing
because realistically
I don't think that kind of intensity
would be good for either of us.
At this time.

And besides, tonight isn't about pleasure
or being taken to higher places,
or feeling safe,
or being valued.
It's about getting fucked.
And I've ticked that box.
And it's about getting back together.
And I'm gonna tick that box very hard,
very soon.
I can feel it in the walls of my tired vagina.

It's a year on.
A collection of months,
stacked like volumes of encyclopedias,
propping each other up,

gathering dust
but otherwise,
redundant.
A year of pain
in the crevices of my elbows,
at the backs of my knees,
behind my eyes,
in corners of me I didn't know existed.
A year of struggle
and screech.
Of nails yanked out of finger beds.
Of grieving.
Worse than a bereavement
I read somewhere once.
At least in death
there is a grave
to piss and spit and cry on.
A year of mustard.
Hot, sharp, yellow, pasty, shameful.

A year seemed like a decent,
if arbitrary length of time
to get my shit together.
On the anniversary
The Blessed Virgin Mary would appear to me
and wipe my mind and muscle memory.
Delete the contents of me.
I'd be like an old computer
getting rebooted to fuck

by Jesus's merciful ma.

On the anniversary
I'd wake up,
wounds healed.
All traces of him –
the taste of the inside of his mouth,
the sound of him on steps,
his concentration face,
the smell of him sleeping –
would be just like that
puff of smoke
gonezo.

On the anniversary
My mind would not go to mustard.

Eleven months three weeks and one day on.
It's the dead of night.
I'm couch slouching.
Thinking about sex.
Lack thereof.

Vagina closed for business.
Even a bean flick feels like
a betrayal.

When he calls me.
The letters, numbers that make him up
flash on my phone screen.
They trigger something
in my head.
A high.

Like a hefty key of coke
up my nose.
I fumble and panic answer.
I'm afraid to blink or breathe.
His voice is like warm water.
Like everything good coming back to me.
Eleven months three weeks and one day
since we spoke.
"Hey. It would be good to see you."
Just like that he summons me.
Back into his life.
Back into his bed.
From the depths of rural Ireland
I buy a Ryanair flight.
Click click click.
The internet is tutting me.
Thirty nine ninety nine one way.
Bus bus train plane bus schlep.
Cross counties.
Cross countries.
I think I might wet myself
with the ecstasy of another chance.
My mind goes to mustard.

Less than twenty four hours since the summons
I am doorstepping him.
The Crouch End Castle looms above.
And then him.
The shape of him.

A stranger now, and yet relentlessly familiar.

My home.

“Come in and up,” he says.

A year since I last graced his bed.

His memory foam mattress has forgotten me.

I am a foreign object.

I press my shoulder blades,

my ankle bones,

the round of my ass

into the soft of it.

The mattress yields to me.

Him less so.

Tonight he will pop the question.

He will sit bolt upright

against his non-existent headboard,

lean his naked sinewy back

against the yellow wallpaper,

he will hold my face in his hands,

like it’s made of precious stone,

and say something along the lines of:

“E Remember those flesh coloured granny pants you left on my banisters the night you walked out. The night I forced you to walk out? I have washed, dried, ironed and folded them and they are in my top drawer. *Our* top drawer. Will you move back in with me?”

Except he is slow with the question.

For now there is only silence.

And the silence is the weight of concrete.

We lie beside each other like formal old people,

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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