



## PRESS RELEASE

# The Wrens

by Dan Colley

with Osaro Azams, Ventia Bowe, Karen McCartney and Maeve Stone

**World Premiere of 'The Wrens'** co-commissioned by Draíocht Blanchardstown and co-produced by Riverbank Arts Centre.

**Riverbank Arts Centre / 22nd April 2023**

**Draíocht Blanchardstown / 5th and 6th May 2023**

An odd collection of tricksters lives in the gorse bushes at the edge of the town.

They're best left alone, the townsfolk say.

We've nothing to do with them.

What they don't say is; except the odd healing spell, love cure, hair-cut, or to burn them out of their nests once a year...

Following the critical and audience response to *Lost Lear* (nominated for Best New Play; Best Supporting Actor and Best AV Design at the Irish Times Theatre Awards 2023), Dan Colley is now making work inspired by his research from his residency at Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge. *The Wrens* is a dark, yet vibrant fable loosely based on the Curragh Wrens.

This magic-realist piece for audiences aged 8+ is a poignant, funny, and wildly speculative interpretation of history and myths. A new piece from Dan Colley (*A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*, *Lost Lear*) is bound to captivate and inspire.

Co-commissioned by Draíocht Blanchardstown and co-produced by Riverbank Arts Centre.

Supported by The Ark and Fishamble's New Play Clinic.

Funded by the Arts Council of Ireland.

*"Draíocht is delighted to co commission this new piece of work for children. We have been a longtime supporter of Dan Colley's work. His commitment to creating exciting and innovative work for young audiences chimes with our commitment to both these audiences and the artists who create same."*

- Emer McGowan, Director, Draíocht Blanchardstown

## #THEWRENS

Developed as part of Theatre Artist in Residency at Riverbank Arts Centre, Kildare.

**Draíocht Listings Details:**

Draíocht Blanchardstown, Studio Theatre

Fri 5th May 2023 10.15am and 12.15pm and Sat 6th May 2023 2pm and 4pm

Tickets: €7 adults / €5 children / 2 teachers free per class booking

Booking: 01-885 2622 / [www.draiocht.ie](http://www.draiocht.ie)

Age: 8+

Dur: 60 mins

**Cast and Crew:**

Written by Dan Colley,

with Osaro Azama, Venetia Bowe, Karen McCartney & Maeve Stone

Music by Maeve Stone

Directed by Dan Colley

Produced by Matthew Smyth

Performed by Osaro Azams, Venetia Bowe, Karen McCartney

Set and Costume Design Molly O'Cathain

Sound Design Alma Kelliher

Lighting Design Suzie Cummins

Dramaturg Amanda Piesse

Costume Supervisor/ Assistant Costume Designer: Saoirse O'Shea

Hair and Makeup Design: Michelle Ruane

Stage Manager Evie McGuinness

Assistant Stage Manager Sarah Purcell

Chief LX Adrian Moylan

Production Manager Eoin Kilkenny

Graphic Design Sarah Moloney

**Notes for the editor:****DAN COLLEY:**

Dan Colley is a theatre maker with a particular focus on devised ensemble work, theatre-for-young-audiences and large-scale spectacle. As Artistic Director of Collapsing Horse (2013-19) he directed nine original productions, a series of ten radio plays, an exhibition in the National Museum, and toured to New York, London, Edinburgh, Bergen, Moscow, and 15 Irish venues. He was also Co-Artistic Director of the Kilkenny Cat Laughs comedy festival from 2017-19. Collapsing Horse's final production, *A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings* was nominated for two Irish Times Theatre Awards and four Dublin Fringe Awards, including 'Best Production'. Dan wrote and directed *Lost Lear* for which he was nominated for Best New Play in the Irish Times Theatre Awards. Other directing credits include, *Me Michael* by Tara McEvitt, and a short as part of *Fourteen Voices From the Bloodied Field* for the Abbey Theatre and *Danse Macabre*, a large-scale processional street theatre piece for Macnas.

In 2015, Dan was the Creative Producer of TWENTY FIRST the Dublin Fringe's 21st birthday project. Dramaturgy credits include WillFredd, Sugarglass, Louise White and Macnas.

Dan trained as a youth theatre facilitator with Youth Theatre Ireland and has run workshops and classes in the Lir, Trinity College Dublin, LA LGBT Center's Homeless Youth Services, and in schools, Youth Theatres and with communities Nationally.

Dan was awarded the Arts Council's Next Generation Bursary Award in 2016. He is Theatre Artist in Residence in the Riverbank Arts Centre, a member of the Project Arts Centre, and on the board of the Dublin Fringe Festival.

## **RIVERBANK ARTS CENTRE**

Riverbank Arts Centre aims to enrich the imagination and creativity of our audience by working in partnership with international, national and local artists to deliver an accessible and consistently high quality arts programme in an intimate environment. We provide a multi-disciplinary programme which includes theatre, cinema, comedy, music, dance, workshops and visual arts. With an extensive outreach and schools' programme, and programming of high quality theatre and workshops for younger audiences, Riverbank is also committed to promoting early engagement with and access to the arts.

[www.riverbank.ie](http://www.riverbank.ie)

## **DRAÍOCHT ARTS CENTRE**

Opened in 2001 and located in the heart of Dublin 15, Draíocht is an arts centre steadfastly committed to serving its local community. At Draíocht, our work goes far beyond our programme of events. Throughout the year, we help people of all ages to make space for the arts in their lives. Working collaboratively with artists of all disciplines, we journey with thousands of people to enhance their lives through arts events, projects and initiatives. We bring the public and artists together and in that space, magic happens.

[Http://www.draiocht.ie](http://www.draiocht.ie)

**Reviews for Dan's most recent work:**

### **For Lost Lear (Dublin Theatre Festival 2023):**

#### **REVIEWS**

##### **★★★★★ The Stage**

"Devastating stuff, deftly done...Colley is a theatre maker of remarkable imagination and insight"

##### **★★★★★ The Examiner**

"Brilliantly conceived and executed... a remarkable achievement"

##### **★★★★★ The Arts Review**

"Bravely visits painful places to tenderly illuminate them"

##### **★★★★★ Irish Mail on Sunday**

"In a role demanding a wide physical and emotional range...Bowe is remarkable"

#### **AWARDS**

Nominated at the Irish Times Theatre

Awards 2023 for:

- Best New Play
- Best Production – Audience Choice Award
- Best Supporting Actor
- Best AV Design

### **For: A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings (Riverbank; Dublin Fringe; The Abbey and Irish National Tour):**

#### **★★★★★**

'There's a touch of Monty Python's Life of Brian about it all ... an absolute delight' Irish Mail on Sunday

#### **★★★★★**

'fifty minutes of near theatrical perfection' The Arts Review

#### **★★★★**

'a model of ingenuity' The Irish Times

## Awards

WINNER	- Best Design at Dublin Fringe Festival 2019
NOMINEE	- Best Set at Irish Times Irish Theatre Awards 2020
	- Best Lighting at Irish Times Irish Theatre Awards 2020
	- Best Production at Dublin Fringe Festival 2019
	- Little Gem Award at Dublin Fringe Festival 2019
	- Best Performer at Dublin Fringe Festival 2019

For: *Bears in Space* (Underbelly; Soho Theatre and 59E59 New York):

– *Reviews + Awards*

**Winner of 'Best Playwright,' 'Best Design', and 'Special Jury Award for Ensemble Performance'**

Origin's 1st Irish Festival, NYC

**'Goofiness is next to godliness....blissful'**

– *New York Times* ★★★★(Critic's Pick)

**'These Irishmen and their bears have mastered the strange alchemy of transforming misshapen jokes and awkward repartee into contagious hilarity, and underneath their endless sarcasm they are really very sweet.'**

– *The New Yorker*

**'A batshit-crazy comedy puppet show about a couple of bears in space...a riotous, hilarious, trippy journey to infinity and beyond'**

– *TIME OUT London* ★★★★

## 2018

**"A gloriously surreal comedy that confirms the status of Collapsing Horse as Ireland's most inventive theatre company... [a] dazzling concoction of wordplay, pastiche, slapstick, lo-fi puppetry and commedia dell'arte. [...] technical excellence, terrific performances, and multi-layered, intertextual references... a show not to be missed."**

– *Sunday Business Post*

**"An Epic Theatrical Blockbuster Comedy... a hilarious, intertextual, comedy cocktail suffused with almost every flavour imaginable. Referencing King Lear, Chekhov, and Agatha Christie, to name but a few, along with seventy shades of whatever you're having yourself, this metaphysical psychodrama, full of madness, mystery, and mayhem, overflows with wild, whimsical wonder. it's a show not to be missed"**

– *The Arts Review*

## HIGH RES IMAGES AVAILABLE BY REQUEST

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