

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE INIS NUA THEATRE CO

INIS NUA THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES 2018-2019 SEASON

Inis Nua Theatre Company is proud to celebrate its fifteenth anniversary with its 2018-2019 season. Inis Nua Theatre Company has become a distinct voice and a firmly established company in the great Philadelphia theatre community. The best part of this story has been seeing the growth of our audience, cheering, supporting, and confirming our mission to explore the exciting plays of contemporary Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. We strive to be a unique facet of the city's cultural life, bringing Philadelphia provocative, shocking and jubilant work by some of the best playwrights we know.

Through the years, Inis Nua's aesthetic has included plays that are many times monologues or direct address or storytelling. "While we also mount large dramas, these unique, theatrical genres make for an intimate experience", says Artistic Director Tom Reing. Seeing *Dublin by Lamplight* in Ireland in 2004 inspired Reing to found Inis Nua Theatre Company and, not only did Inis Nua introduce the play to Philadelphia, the company also took that acclaimed production to New York's First Irish Festival in 2011 and won the Award for Best Ensemble. Inis Nua revisited *Dublin by Lamplight* again in 2017—in a co-production with Drexel University, we taught a new generation of artists this unique storytelling style. Philadelphia audiences loved *Trad* when it was showcased by the 2007 Philadelphia Live Arts Festival (now Fringe Arts). That encouraged Inis Nua to present *Skin Deep* the next year and take the leap into multiple-play seasons. This journey has earned the company Barrymore nominations for *Dublin by Lamplight*, *Spine* and *Radiant Vermin*. We have won Barrymore Awards for *Midsummer [a play with songs]* and *The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning*, as well as the June and Steve Wolfson Award for an Evolving Theatre Company. We are especially honored to be listed in *Timeout's* "Your Guide to the Top Theater Companies in Philadelphia": David Fox wrote, "Many works here originate in European Fringe festivals, where the style is punchy and often deliberately shocking. At the same time, founder and artistic director Tom Reing is one of Philly's most thoughtful and nuanced directors. It's a great combination that has positioned Inis Nua as one of the Philadelphia theater companies to watch, especially for those whose taste runs on the edgy side."

This season's three mainstage productions are *The Monster in the Hall* by David Greig, a funny musical romp through the decidedly complicated life of a very unusual teenage girl; *Box Clever* by Monsay Whitney, a powerful tale of one young mom's struggle to get ahead and leave her mistakes behind; and *untitled* by Inua Ellams, a modern myth of twins separated at birth set in both Nigeria and England and suffused with the magical spirits of nature. We also offer *Reading Series: Medicine in Modern Life* and the popular Pop-Up Play in a Pub. Here's more on each of this new season's productions:

From Scotland, *The Monster in the Hall* kicks off our season with songs in the spirit of Inis Nua's Barrymore Award-winning *Midsummer [a play with songs]*, also written by David Greig. Duck Macatarsney is a teenage girl from the little Scottish town of Kirkcaldy. Duck and her father are doing great. At least that's what they'd like the social worker that's visiting today to believe—she doesn't need to know that Duck's father just woke up blind, or who that random Norwegian woman in the closet is. With the help of her own backup band, The Marvellous Duckettes, Duck is sure to persuade anyone and everyone that she and her dad are absolutely, positively, certifiably *fine*. *The Glasgow Theatre Blog* said of *The Monster in the Hall*, "The story is infused with such infectious

charm and wit that I defy anyone not to be completely engaged by its joy and exuberance". Full of teen spirit and teenage kicks, this play with songs is directed by Claire Moyer with music by Nigel Dunn & Stephen Wright. Running October 3-21 at The Louis Bluver Theatre at The Drake.

Much like 2016's *Spine, Box Clever* by Monsay Whitney tells the story of one woman against the world. "Whitney's text is infused with anger, vulnerability, comedy and overwhelming honesty" says *Broadway Baby*. In a women's shelter in London, Marnie is doing her best to care for her four-year-old daughter. But it would be a lot easier if she had the support of her case workers, or could finally ditch the three useless ex-boyfriends that keep hanging around her. Mouthy, headstrong and maybe just a tad crazy, Marnie is going to prove to everyone that she's a competent mother. Because she is...isn't she? If you liked *Spine*, you'll love *Box Clever*. This American Premiere from England is directed by Tom Reing and runs February 6-24 at The Louis Bluver Theatre at The Drake.

Inua Ellams' *untitled* was a hit when it premiered in London in 2010, and Inis Nua is very excited to bring it to Philadelphia audiences. Also, like *Spine, untitled* was first presented as part of our Reading Series, and there was no doubt then that Artistic Director Tom Reing wanted a full production to follow. Two brothers are born on Nigerian Independence Day. But on the night of their naming, one brother cries out and refuses to be named—that act set an unalterable course for his life. *untitled* is his story and the story of his twin brother who has a life and a marketing career in London where he names products. Myth intertwines with reality as the brothers are drawn together. As *The Guardian* said, "A piece that feels both modern and ancient, touched by the otherworldly yet grounded in reality". *untitled* creates a world where the past catches up to us and where a name spells destiny. This production is directed by Jerrell L. Henderson. Running April 24-May 12 at The Louis Bluver Theatre at The Drake.

This year's *Reading Series: Medicine in Modern Life* takes a look at how medical and scientific advances have shaped our lives. Exploring how we are affected by the treatment we receive, the illnesses we suffer, and the motivations of those who treat us—three very different stories show the problems created by the solutions in science and medicine. In *The Effect* by Lucy Prebble, Connie and Tristan meet on a paid overnight drug trial, but the chemistry isn't immediate. When a romance starts to develop under these strange conditions, it's hard to tell what is a genuine emotion and what is just a side effect. *Fibres* by Frances Poet looks at how one man's exposure to asbestos as a shipbuilder in 1970s Glasgow has shaped his family's life for decades. Now his wife and daughter must each make their own peace with the consequences. *Tomcat* envisions a world where enforced pre-natal screenings have eliminated most medical conditions. In this play by James Rushbrooke, a twelve-year-old orphan under observation as an unscreened "rare specimen" offers her health care workers a chance to reclaim another kind of humanity. All readings are Monday nights at 7:00 pm at the Theatres at The Drake. *The Effect* begins the series on November 12, with *Fibres* on January 14 and *Tomcat* on June 10. *Reading Series: Medicine in Modern Life* is made possible, in part, by Thomas Jefferson University.

Inis Nua's Pop-Up Play in a Pub brings you a short play and a terrific early night out, complete with beverage and Stargazy meat or veggie pie. This season's offering is *Fishskin Trousers* by Elizabeth Kutu. From England, *Fishskin Trousers* is a magical and haunting tale set by the sea in East Anglia. Linear time is reshaped as three people from three different eras become entwined with a mysterious presence in the sea. Fable or fate? It becomes hard to untangle as the loss each of them carries becomes a part of the sea's deep, unknowable story. Directed by Claire Moyer. This year the Pop-Up Play in a Pub

has a two-week run...six performances! It all pops up at Fergie's Pub (1214 Sansom Street) at 6pm on March 19-21 and 26-28.

Tell the Story. That's our slogan and we have been doing just that for fifteen years! Our mission is to bring you contemporary plays from Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales and to show you that the iconic storytelling tradition of this part of the world is as vibrant as ever.

ABOUT INIS NUA THEATRE COMPANY

Inis Nua's mission is to produce contemporary, provocative plays from Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales which reflect those cultures' new identities in today's world. Inis Nua also seeks to cultivate and produce contemporary, provocative work from American playwrights who deal with the Irish-American, Welsh-American, Scottish-American and Anglo-American experiences.

To date, Inis Nua has produced one world premiere, seventeen American premieres and thirteen Philadelphia premieres. Inis Nua Theatre Company has been the recipient of grants from the William Penn Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation, the Independence Foundation, the Samuel S Fels Fund, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, the Charlotte Cushman Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the Virginia Brown Martin Fund of The Philadelphia Foundation. Inis Nua Theatre has also had eight playwrights visit during production of their shows.

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