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Off the Rails and
Belfast Fashion week

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Sophie Dahl speaks to
Catriona Gray



In the very last issue before Christmas, our Edibles section gets festive with a review of Cornucopia's festive fare, a recipe for mulled wine and the definitive guide to cooking Christmas dinner for the more culinary ambitious. Elsewhere Hugh McCafferty interviews St Vincent, Carolyn Power has a chat with Josh Ritter and I interview Sophie Dahl.

Theatre, meanwhile, has concentrated on the events produced by Trinity's Drama Department, with a review of Brendan Behan's *The Hostage* and an article on *The Debut Festival*, currently running in the Samuel Beckett Theatre.

In Books things get manly, with three reviews of books focusing on all things masculine. *The Metrosexual Guide to Life* was my personal favourite. Reviews of John Banville's crime novels

and Alan Hollinghurst's *The Line of Beauty* also feature. Elsewhere, in Fashion, the two editors review Belfast Fashion Week and Dublin's... equivalent-the debacle that is *Off The Rails Live*.

So, that's it from TN2 this term, see you in January!

Catriona

Notorious

Concerning the so-called rules of how a woman should act. Words: Victoria Notaro

Recently, in Jane Austen class, we were discussing conduct books popular in the 1790s. These volumes told young girls of marriageable age (that's roughly 13 to 27!) in no uncertain terms the dos and don'ts of how to snare a man of wealth and good character. Obviously, one must be a vision of female perfection and not do anything to scare a suitor. One paragraph stated that women should not show their intelligence (if they possessed any), for fear intimidating a potential husband. How we all laughed at this clearly prehistoric culture...until, that is, somebody made a startling comparison between this and a modern, bestselling book you might be familiar with...*The Rules*, by Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider.

One example of a rule is "It's a fantasy relationship unless a man asks you out...you may find yourself wondering if he is interested in you romantically. How can you know for sure? If he's never asked you out, then he's not interested!" Feminism passed this pair by.

Here's the clincher. "Close the deal! Rules women don't wait more than two years!" So if your poor unsuspecting boyfriend hasn't popped the question, you dump him and go right back to hunting, I mean searching for Mr Right.

It's the most sexist thing I've ever read, penned by two scary looking harpies, one of whom is divorced. Women are told they have to behave in certain ways, and men are assumed to be thick enough to fall for it. Its basic message is, if you act like yourself you will die alone. Funnily enough, there's no rules for guys.

Now you might be wondering, what this has to do with students in their early twenties? We may not be searching for a husband at college age in the Noughties but if the media is a reflection of life, we may as well be back in 1792. Take a look in your local Spar, and you'll see "What Men REALLY Think - New Survey!"; "I Got Boobs to Keep My Man" and "What Not to Do on a First Date" screaming from glossy covers. We are being conditioned to trap men with falsehoods from whatever age we're tall enough to reach the newsstand.

“ To downright manipulate somebody into loving you by following rules, and behaving in a completely unnatural way is just inexplicable. ”

It hurts my romantic soul to see that finding love, the unattainable (therefore so attractive) soulmate has become a business preying on fear. One might use dating websites or go speed dating to find somebody who's looking for the same things, you might avoid people who'll mess you around, and that's perfectly understandable.

Not everybody wants to wait around for the universe to decide your fate. But to downright manipulate somebody into loving you by following rules, and behaving in a completely unnatural way is just inexplicable. What about when the first glow of love wears off, and the real you is revealed? What to do faced with the day to day realities of a relationship? Masks of perfection slip, and perfect veneers crack. That's life!

I don't think anybody likes the idea of being alone forever, and I don't believe humans are made that way. We're meant to procreate and it takes two baby! But to get what you want by acting like a programmed fembot would leave a bad taste in your mouth. Isn't it better to have somebody want you for you, warts and all? Nobody is that unwanted, unless you're actually insane. But if Jordan can find a soulmate, I'm thinking anyone can!



Photo: Ian Oliver

For anybody who has an interest in the Trinity Ball Battle of the Bands over the last few years, Maeve Stone will be a familiar face. Front-woman in former four-piece (now three-piece) *At Speed*, her spectacular voice helped the group progress to the competition final in 2006; some feat, considering the band had only been together for four months. "That was such an excellent beginning," she recalls. "We formed around Christmas, entered the competition in March and our second ever gig was the final."

Fast-forwarding a little, Colm (guitar/bass), Ger (drums/bass) and Maeve have had an eventful 2007. Before losing vocalist/guitarist Eman (Maeve's older brother) during the summer, the group recorded a 12-track live CD, which can be downloaded for free at www.atspeedsound.com. "I'm in charge now," Maeve laughs about the amiable departure of her sibling.

Outside of the band, Maeve has been playing solo since her first appearance in Limerick's *High Stool* at the tender age of sixteen. She dismisses some of her early output with a slight shudder as "angsty," but it's clear from early demos that, even then, she had great potential.

"I consider my vocals to be my strong point," she tells me: an understatement, at the very least. Playing on her own, her voice soars above uncomplicated guitar like Janis Joplin minus the Southern Comfort wear and tear. With *At Speed* she enhances the sound of a full band with deft dynamics and more indie-oriented sensibilities.

For now, then, the band will work on new material, but expect to see a rejuvenated group after Christmas, potentially with a new name. "Eight Kinds of Awesome has been popular, but I'm pushing *The Deadlies*," the slightly mental singer discloses. Something to look forward to for the new year then; for the time being, check out choice cuts "Found Out" and "The Good and the Bad" online.

COLLEGE BANDS: At Speed



Photo: Joseph Mangat

From heaven sent

Annie Clark, aka St. Vincent, talks Sufjan Stevens, Arrested Development and bloody keyboards. Words: Hugh McCafferty

Sitting in the corner of a cramped Dublin hotel lounge, a stylishly dressed Annie Clark sips, somewhat incongruously, at a pint of Guinness. Then again, the artist more commonly known as St. Vincent is no typically fey female singer-songwriter. Having cut her teeth on the road backing such acts as Sufjan Stevens and The Polyphonic Spree, Clark proved her worth as an artist in her own right back in July with one of the year's best debuts, *Marry Me*. I begin by asking the amiable multi-instrumentalist about the path her career has taken over the past few years.

"I always intended to go it on my own," she tells me, decidedly. "Backing Sufjan and the Polyphonic Spree kind of just happened, but, as it turned out, it was a really great apprenticeship." Speaking to Clark midway through a recent tour supporting labelmates The National as a solo performer, I wonder whether she prefers playing on her own or with her backing band. "It's a kind of a toss up. With a full band, the arrangements stay pretty true to the album. But solo, it really is like a kind of Cubist, deconstructed version of the songs," she explains, tongue edging, slowly but surely,

towards her cheek.

Indeed Clark is not one to take things too seriously. The apparently sober title of her album is, in part, a reference to the rather excellent, and now lamentably cancelled, American television show *Arrested Development* (the episode where George Michael gets to pretend to marry his cousin Maebly). "I feel like it's a secret handshake to people who are fans, like a mark of solidarity," she smiles. "When I wrote the song 'Marry Me,' I hadn't actually seen *Arrested Development*, but then as the album was being written and progressing, I fell deeply in love with the show and thought it would be a nice tie-in."

Whatever the references, the album is a treat, veering from delightfully orchestrated pop to Kate Bush-style experimentalism via some of the messiest guitar freak-outs you'll see this side of Radiohead. With the exception of contributions from former Spree-members Brian Teasley and Louis Schwadron, along with David Bowie's longtime pianist Mike Garson, Clark played virtually all of the instruments on the record herself (from guitar and piano, to the slightly more obscure dulcimer and clavieta).

Is it easy, then, for her to work cre-

atively with other people when it comes to her own material? "Do I subjugate other people with my sheer will, you mean?" she returns, with an ironic grin, then, more thoughtfully, "Well, to answer your question, yes and no; I think it definitely has to be the right people. Working with Brian on this record was like having a cheerleader or a coach; he was always pushing me and giving me extra challenges. The record was like *my* baby, though," she confirms, then (just to clarify), "except, of course, a baby that took two years in the womb."

Clark's internet blog reveals a number of oddities, not least a picture from her hair modelling days. She recalls this with a hint of embarrassment; modelling was never something in which she had intended to get involved. "I think it's not necessarily a matter of me considering modelling, it's a matter of modelling considering me. I don't think I would do it, though. I mean, I love fashion, I do, but I lie when I say I'm 5'8" on my driver's licence," she laughs. "Music was always what I wanted to do."

Her online postings also include a picture of a bloody keyboard with the caption "if you're not bleeding, you're not playing hard enough. the carnage i left on montreal ivory?" A set-up? "No,

that really actually did happen. It was during that guitar solo in "Now, Now" and I tore open my thumb. It was one of those things where I tore open my thumb one night and I would tear it open the same place every single night.

And so they had this great piano in Montreal; I came out to play it and it was dark, so I didn't even notice it until after the gig." Clearly, then, her live show is something she gives her all to: a heartening thing to hear.

As a former Catholic schoolboy, for whom the words "St. Vincent" call cold showers and itchy school jumpers to mind, I can't help wrapping up with a question Clark has probably heard a million times already: why the saintly moniker?

"Well, I went to a Catholic school too, but that's not actually where the name comes from. I thought that if you give yourself or your project a name, it gives you more creative freedom to just sort of do whatever you want; y'know, include other people or not. I just thought *St. Vincent* was nice," she finishes, with a smile, "I thought it was a pretty name."

Marry Me is out now on Beggars Banquet and well worth your attention.

Once upon a time ...

Sophie Dahl talks about the publication of her first novel, Playing with the Grown-Ups. Words: Catriona Gray

Sophie Dahl is in Ireland promoting her new novel, *Playing With the Grown-Ups*. The 30 year old supermodel, daughter of the actor Julian Holloway and granddaughter of Roald Dahl is in the middle of a gruelling publicity tour. "It's an odd thing with a book, in that you forget that you have to do all of this at the end of it," she says. "I feel slightly divorced from it, because I finished it such a long time ago and suddenly you have to get back into that place again?" The transition from professional model to professional writer is not an easy one, since the two occupations are not normally closely linked. "You're allowed to be an actress as a model, but a writer is a bit of a baffling one," says Dahl. "It's a bit of an anomaly, I suppose, it's a weird one. I was on the telly last night and I had to keep switching hats because it flipped from one thing about the book and then they pulled out an old U2 video that I was in from twelve years ago."

Her celebrity status has had its effect in the way the book has been received- with most of the reviews seeming exceedingly eager to pin it down as a thinly veiled autobiography rather than a first novel. Dahl has certainly received a lot of media attention with the release of this novel, but this is not entirely a positive thing, since the majority of publicity about the book has involved people avidly scanning the books for personal details. "It's been a slight frustration throughout this process," comments Dahl. "Had I wanted to write a memoir, I would have written a memoir. The thing that people seem to miss is that most first-time novels are, without question, drawn from life. It's unfortunate that

because my life is somewhat known about there isn't the same safety net."

Writing a book is easier said than done. The discipline and sheer doggedness required to complete it can often prove terrifying to would-be novelists. "It was difficult, to embark on a proper novel was really daunting and I really struggled in the first couple of months to find a voice. I felt like I was writing for an unseen jury and it really took a bit to get into the frame of it and get into the voice of it. I did, finally, but it did take a while- it took about two years really. The first bit of it was when I got the bones of it down, and then I had to go back and edit and really chop into it. At that stage, I was doing nothing but that, because otherwise, I would have never got it finished. I took eight months off at the end and was just working on the book every day. It would have been too fragmented otherwise."

One would imagine that finding the time to write a novel would be almost impossible for Dahl, who has lived under the glare of the fashion spotlight since being discovered at the age of 18 sitting on the edge of a pavement, by the late Isabella Blow. Dahl agrees: "Getting on and off aeroplanes and going from place to place is just not conducive to the finding the momentum of where you're at when you're writing a novel. I thought it might seem deeply interrupted, because I would get my thread and then lose it slightly." Eventually, finishing the novel took precedence, and Dahl devoted her time purely to prose: "The last eight months were crucial to it. I booked out and said no to every job and just did it. I went up to the country on my own and got my head down."

Writing has always been an area that Dahl has been interested in. "I always wanted to write and I'd done small pieces of journalism. Actually what really helped with the writing of the book was getting a contributing editorship with *Men's Vogue* and I write for them every issue. The discipline of having deadlines- quite short deadlines- and writing pieces with a beginning, middle and end was very helpful to the process of the book because I think it gives you a renewed confidence. It's a bit like learning to drive, you've just got to keep doing it. I think the tendency with writing is that it can be quite difficult if it's not a full-time, full-time job. It's a bit like when actors describe the first day of working on a film set where they think 'Shit, can I really do this?' and I don't think [writing] is that dissimilar. Before you embark on a new project you always get that slight lurching fear of 'oh god, how am I qualified?' so to get a cemented reminder that you are, is quite helpful."

Dahl seems to have taken a very logical approach to writing. She started off writing several short stories and then progressed to a novella, *The Man with the Dancing Eyes*, illustrated by Annie Morris and published in 2003, before starting to work on a full-length novel. "The thing that surprised me about the novella was that it was reviewed as though it were *War and Peace*- not the tone of the reviews, but the length and attention that were dedicated to it. It was just a fun, collaborative project that I did with a girlfriend and it wasn't my goal to write the great American novel..." she trails off. "It was a funny one. In a way it prepared me for this. But I still don't think you're ever totally prepared for

it. It goes out into the world and suddenly you have no control over it and it's not yours anymore."

Dahl seems rather excited about the actual publication of the book. "It's tangible, to now have this object that has been so ethereal; it was in various formats on my laptop and on scrawling printed pages covered in red marks. That first moment of actually getting the book: I was the most excited that I've ever been in my life. There's something so *real* about it. That's what I love about books- they're timekeepers. It's that indelible presence, which is what I love about old bookshops. I love the history of things: I collect first editions, but I don't really care about them being pristine and all of those things that a collector should care about. I want something that's been handled with love."

It is unsurprising, then, that Dahl's enthusiasm for books stems from an early age. She mentions that "the biggest treat of my childhood was to go to the little local bookshop and be allowed just to sit and read books." She even had a character of a book named after her- her grandfather, Roald Dahl, based the little girl in *The BFG*, Sophie, on her.

A number of writers have been influential on her work, and indeed *Playing with the Grown-Ups* is distinctly reminiscent of Nancy Mitford in tone. Dahl's style has the same light and vibrant quality that Mitford epitomized. When I mention this, Dahl replies "Actually, it's funny because with *Bestpapa*, everyone says that it must be your grandfather, but actually, if anyone, I love Uncle Matthew in *The Pursuit of Love* and I wanted a rather bellowing, beloved patriarch that

“ Getting on and off aeroplanes and going from place to place is just not conducive to the finding the momentum of where you’re at when you’re writing a novel. ”

everyone adores, but is also slightly teased. I love her character portraits. I think Nancy Mitford was dismissed as being quite frothy in her own time, but when you read her books now, you realise they’re very clever satire and what she was doing wasn’t that different to Evelyn Waugh. I love that era. I wish I’d lived in it.”

From Nancy Mitford, Dahl goes on to list an impressive array of contemporary writers whose work she admires, amongst others Alan Hollinghurst’s *The Line of Beauty* (reviewed, incidentally, in the Books section, if you’re interested) and Esther Freud’s novel *Hideous Kinky*, a dark, fragmented novel told from the perspective of the child protagonist. The novel bears some resemblance to *Playing with the Grown-Ups* in that they both deal with the experience of living in a fragmented, dislocated family. Dahl talks about the device of using narrators who are children or adolescents to describe unusual upbringings: “The word dysfunctional seems to have no place since I don’t really know who has that functional family, but if you were to do a poll of nine year olds they would all think that their home is the most normal home in the world because they don’t have anything to compare it to. That’s what’s so nice about children: they’re completely devoid of judgement in a way.”

Dahl is currently working on a second book, this time a non-fiction food book for HarperCollins. She describes it as “almost your grandmother’s guide on how to eat, because I think we’re all so conditioned now to eat in a faddish, slightly difficult way.

If I look back to my grandmothers- I’ve got three grandmothers, one was a step-grandmother- and all of them ate in this very straightforward way. They ate breakfast lunch and supper, nothing in between, and all of them had great figures, well into old age.”

She describes the attitudes that prevail towards eating: “It’s not a science. In the past couple of years, I’ve had a very casual relationship with food, and it’s actually lovely because I eat when I’m hungry, I eat what I want to eat and that’s the end of that. I think the less one thinks about it, the skinnier one tends to be. The more that you obsess about what’s going into your mouth, the more it becomes an endless punishing cycle.

I think there’s a real tragedy in that...when you think of the waste of energy spent in thinking about it. Men have it so easy. They get on with it, don’t think about it. It’s so funny if you watch a man pig out and there’s none of that endless recrimination.”

Cooking is something that Dahl loves and is a topic that particularly interests her. She adores food writing, a genre which is enjoying a particularly high profile at the moment, mainly due to the presence of writers like Nigel Slater and Nigella Lawson.

As well her current project, Dahl is also doing some journalism for the *Saturday Times* and is planning to start writing her second novel at the beginning of next year. It sounds like a lot of work. Dahl looks positively enthusiastic: “Long may it remain. Hopefully I won’t have to do press in fifteen years with them still pulling up an old U2 video!”



Beware the Shrooms

Words: Simone Cameron Coen

Paddy Breathnach has returned to directing; putting the producing hat away, he has teamed up again with writer Pearse Elliot and producer Robert Walpole to create the horror film *Shrooms*. In two of the previous films he directed - *I Went Down* and *Man About Dog* - Breathnach first took the gangster and then the road movie and transplanted them into Ireland. *Shrooms* takes the traditional American teen slasher movie and mixes it with the Asian horror... setting it in a damp forest in rural Ireland.

At the outset the film looks like your run of the mill slasher horror. A group of young Americans travel to Ireland to meet their friend for a "trip of a lifetime". However, they are not just here to sightsee and their friend is no ordinary friend; he is a shroom expert and they are here to have the best shrooms in the world. It is this added aspect of the unknown that sets up the film and creates a different atmosphere to the standard horror of late. Complete with fireside tales of nasty goings on in eerie buildings nearby, rules of what should and shouldn't be taken (please note: not the black tipped deathshroom), relationships start to break down and the film turns a little predictable in that it does, for the most part, follow traditional rules of the horror genre. However, as Breathnach pointed out when I got an opportunity

to interview him and some of his cast: "It's the relationship between the shrooms and uncertainty, the people in this film, the characters who don't know what's happening, whether they can trust their perceptions, which is a really horrific thing." This is the Japanese influence in the film: that of the uncanny, the world that is recognisable and a horror that comes from within, something that a shroom trip evokes quite well; the brakes are taken off as the real and unreal become confused.

But does it work in the surrounds of a boggy forest somewhere in the middle of Ireland? The American and English cast, which included Lindsey Haun and Jack Huston seemed to adapt quite well to the damp conditions of the shoot, as Breathnach continues "It comes with difficulties that were not onerous on me in terms of the cast - they were wet and they were cold. Generally they were brilliant, but it was tough". While there are elements of the slasher film in *Shrooms*, the psychological aspect is more important. According to Breathnach, the fact that the cast did not know one another and, for the most part, had not been to Ireland before added to the uncertainty "It helped maybe a little bit in the film because of the story they came into this place with. They come with a romantic vision of it and suddenly it starts turning into a less romantic, more threatening, terrifying place than they thought?"

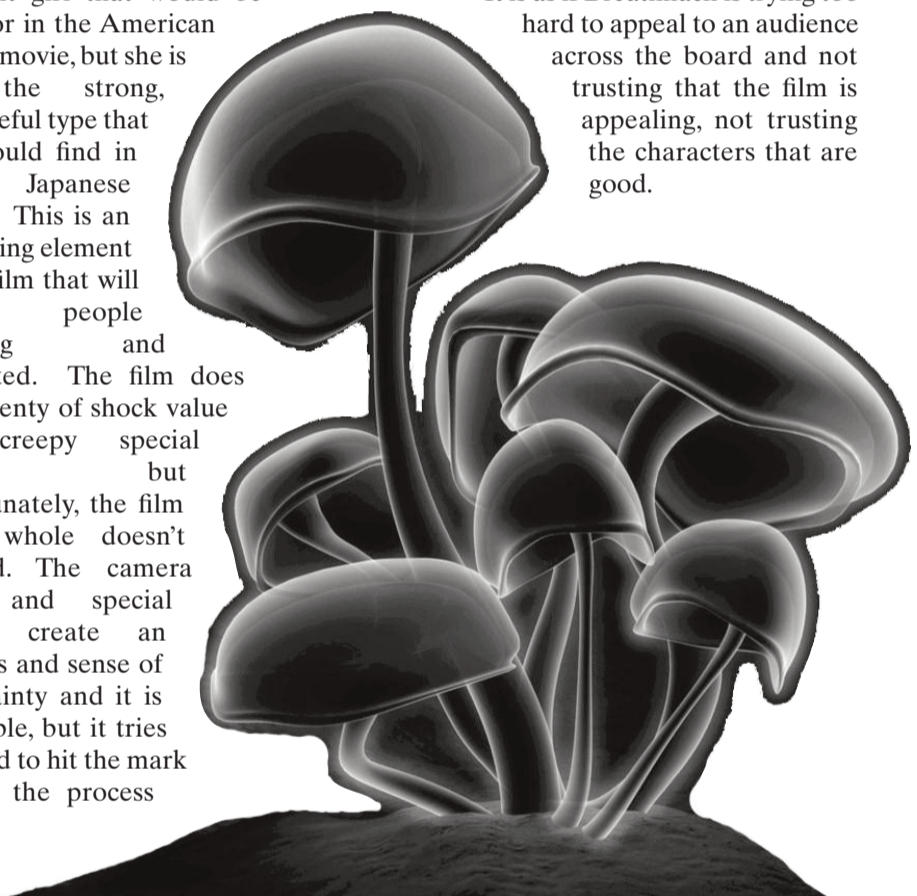
Despite the less than ideal shooting

conditions, the cast seemed to adjust quite well as Lindsey Haun described her time to me, "I had such a great time on the set, I miss shooting here. It was tight quarters for two months, but still, we got along so well". Haun's character, Tara, is the central character of the film. Her character embodies elements of both American and Asian horror genres in that she is a blonde, blue-eyed, innocent girl that would be done for in the American slasher movie, but she is also the strong, resourceful type that you would find in the Japanese horror. This is an interesting element in the film that will keep people guessing and interested. The film does have plenty of shock value and creepy special effects, but unfortunately, the film as a whole doesn't succeed. The camera work and special effects create an eeriness and sense of uncertainty and it is enjoyable, but it tries too hard to hit the mark and in the process misses.

Which is a pity, because some elements of the film work extremely well. Taking their roles seriously and really getting into the spirit of things, Seán McGinley and Don Wycherly are fantastic as the drooling, inbred, woodsmen characters of "Ernie and Bernie" as Paddy Breathnach describes them.

Unfortunately this film is not the great innovative movie that it could be.

It is as if Breathnach is trying too hard to appeal to an audience across the board and not trusting that the film is appealing, not trusting the characters that are good.



Beowulf: the future has three dimensions



Director: Robert Zemeckis
Cert: 12A
Running Time: 115 mins
Words: Conor O'Kelly

I have seen the future and its 3D. Specifically it's *Beowulf*, a big budget Hollywood adaptation of the ancient Norse tale so beloved of Trinity's single honours English students. *Beowulf's* tale centres on a warrior king whose desire and pride snare him in a pact with a she-devil. For a promise of eternal fame as the greatest king to have ever lived, he fathers a demon child. Big mistake: it's a decision that will come back to bite him, literally. It is a rollicking good story and well told by director Robert Zemeckis and undoubtedly hugely aided by

screenwriter Neil Gaiman, a superstar of graphic novels.

Like all great Hollywood treatments, there are barely any literary pretensions in this film, rather, it is an all-out CGI battle fest, tossing ruminations of power and destiny aside in favour of drinking songs and dragon-slaying. As an added bonus, I managed to catch one of a few showings that are in 3D - funny spectacles and all - which I found added immensely to my enjoyment while also distracting somewhat from the narrative.

There is an all-star digitally enhanced cast including Anthony Hopkins, Angelina Jolie, Ray Winstone and our own Brendan Gleeson, who all provide adequate voiceovers to match their digital antics. Jolie's voice is

particularly spectacular when her digital self rises naked and glistening from some water. Enough said. In parts *Beowulf* has been directed with the 3D format foremost in the director's mind, with a few too many objects hurtling directly at the screen. No less distracting was some inconsistencies with the animated characters: some seemed almost flesh and blood, while others looked straight out of *Shrek*.

Despite this, the level of immersion achieved was beyond anything I've ever experienced in the cinema before. The promotion of 3D as a mainstream format is going to be hugely aided by this film. Not the greatest film ever made then, but good and it will be remembered as a major technical milestone.

Right Moves

Photo: Jeope Wolfe



*Josh Ritter talks about his *Historical Conquests* and music gunslinger style*

Words: Carolyn Power

Picture the scene, if you will. You're an acclaimed and popular singer-songwriter with two albums under your belt, the second of which is garnering you massive kudos. You and your band have also got the chance to perform on a high-profile Letterman slot. And then the same night, your record label goes under, cutting you rather entirely loose.

I think it's fair to say that for plenty of people, this would be something of a catastrophic event. At his point you have two choices: pack it in or soldier on. Luckily for us, Josh Ritter chose the latter option, and *The Historical Conquests* of Josh Ritter is the result.

To longtime fans, and to the man himself, this album represents a new shift in direction in terms of the recording and the delivery of songs. Where *The Animal Years* was a more introspectively crafted, politically ambiguous and guitar-based offering, this record represents Ritter's wish for a different, more direct and fun-loving approach. And even the madcap title reflects this; as he says himself, 'the last record was so serious; I wanted this record to have more of a sense of humour to it. I was just enjoying writing stuff that I thought was kind of funny, you know, like falling in love in a missile silo or random other things.'

Some of his influences for this may not be the ones that would instantly spring to mind when you look at Ritter's back catalogue; and perhaps it is this range of musical resources that makes this album so fresh. Although a self-confessed non-badass, rap was first on

the menu: 'I was listening to a lot of rap while I was writing, and I love how with some of those songs, those guys just say some of the most impossibly humongous badass things, and you can tell that they're not really serious but I like that. And I woke up one morning with that [album] title in my head, just like the biggest, most hilarious, absurd title that I could come up with, you know? And then I was just hoping that people would get it, and get the humour of it!'

Apart from the sense of humour and the candidly direct lyrics, the other main element to watch on *The Historical Conquests*...is the introduction of Ritter's piano-based writing. The piano that he learned on and wrote with was given to him by some family friends, and this idea of using instruments with a history calls to mind Neil Young's preference for second-hand guitars, as he believes that their history gives them something of an inspirational voice in their own right. Does Ritter share any of this view?

'Yeah, it's true, different guitars for me as well will have a different sound that will give me a different idea for a song, sometimes – for me, it was something about having the piano – I've never really had one in my home, so I sat it down and I had it there all the time. And I really can't play it, you know, but you just put your fingers down and there are notes that come out that you would just never be able to find on a guitar in the same way. The chords can be more complex, and the rhythm is different because you don't have the strumming, so suddenly having that ability to play with a different kind of metre and

melody really changed everything. So I thought, well, why don't I try writing a song on the piano? And it was really fun. But I wasn't so much releasing spirits from the piano or anything like that in a sort of Neil Young way!'

Of course, once you get into the swing of experimenting with instruments that were previously alien to you, there is always the option of going down the Tom Wits route and creating totally new instruments of your own invention. 'You know, I think there are so many instruments out there...I love the idea of making new ones, like with Tom Waits, and The Plastic Ono Band, and Captain Beefheart, it's a really cool idea – but just, you know, for me, I have enough trouble learning the ones that already exist...!'

Well in fairness to him, it must be said that you don't hear any of this difficulty on the album: just a fresh sense of excitement and the discovery of a new mode of expression.

Another aspect of his expression that has been duly noted by music critics is his penchant for political observations, and while this is not so deliberate in the latest album, it is nonetheless there, in a form that Ritter has likened to 'gunslingers'. What's with this reference?

'Well, even though I was trying to stay away from politics there was still a lot of America coming through on the record, you know. The gunslinger thing is something that I think can be taken so many different ways, but I was always thinking of this sort of 50s-style gunslinger movies, where the movies are very cut and dry.

There's the good guy and the bad guy, you know, and they fight and the good guy wins. And I like that, you know. And especially today, with America being such a gun culture, our president being a cowboy, you know – from Texas supposedly, but he went to

one of the richest schools in the country, and his family's got that Connecticut connection – and one of the things that I wanted from these songs was, with all the moral ambiguity of the last record, to have something that was just so cut and dry, where the motifs and symbols are just so easy to understand. So that's is easy to sing them, and kind of with a wink and a nod. I don't feel like any of the songs are supposed to be nostalgic for a time that couldn't exist where there's the good guy and the bad guy, but I wanted to be...more of a cartoon almost, you know what I mean? Plus, you know, I'm not a badass! And it'd be easier to sing this kind of thing in a funny way than actually trying to take it seriously.'

So, from where he stands now, how did the collapse of the label really affect him?

'Finding your drive is hard sometimes, especially when you start to get a little bit of the taste of success, and you start to think, Well now I can start to relax a little bit. And then when something like that happens, you realize, Okay, now it really is me – and it was me all along. And that's important to know, because it's easy to forget that. So what was good about that was that it got me off to a good start, like, it got me thinking, Okay, why am I doing this, and what do I want – do I want to go out and make a new record, and kick ass, or do I want to wait for something new to happen? It just made me really want to go for it, and not wait around for anybody to tell me to go forward with it. And that's obviously the way it should be, and you forget that sometimes.'

Well if that's the case, he's clearly remembered it for this album. Josh Ritter is coming to the Olympia in Dublin, December 6th, and seeing as how he says himself that 'a really great gig anywhere in the world feels like a gig in Ireland', it's one not to be missed!

Off the Rails Live Fashion Show

Words: *Ciaran Durkin*

The only thing in this country that comes close to being a fashion week took place on 16, 17 and 18 November in the RDS.

With over 150 exhibitors in the "Boutique Boulevard", the Simmons Court pavilion looked a far cry from the bleak bunker filled with a labyrinth of desks which many students will remember from exam time, it was positively brimming with enthralled shoppers and packed with stores from all over the country. If you were looking for big names, think again, this was an exhibition of the best of the high street and some of the more select boutiques.

As I perused around, I overheard on more than one occasion from innocent bystanders, unaware of my eavesdropping, that this year's event was not nearly as good as in previous years. Personally I found the vast array of cheap jewellery, the hideous display of all kinds of fake ugg boots and the woeful sale of discontinued cosmetics (which even the most beat down transvestite would not admire) to be more than disappointing. There was, however, much to keep the ladies occupied. Makeovers for €10 and special "show" discounts on nearly everything. Sadly, and I think more than a little upsetting, there was not one stall in the whole place that catered to menswear, men's grooming, or men's

anything....correction, there was one, with a new range of mens fake tan, which, after seeing the after shots on display, made it clear that if it was going to a job interview to work in a chocolate factory you were after, this was the product for you.

The show itself was extremely well-produced, and it is no mean feat to put on an hour long fashion show, what with the models, makeup, hair, wardrobe changes and the rest. Pamela Flood and Caroline Morahan floated onto the catwalk (Caroline nearly fell off the runway on the way out due to the large amount of dry ice which one can only assume was supposed to be dramatic) and introduced the show.

Placed on everyone's seats was a look-list so it was easy to follow what was gliding down the catwalk, and easy to source should you like enough to purchase. The seats were terrible, cramped and unsteady, and practically impossible for the anyone of the larger dress size to manouver into gracefully.

Stylist Catherine Condell had all the bases covered and did a great job creating looks from each of the hottest trends this season. Divided into 13 themes, with a strong emphasis on the Iconic Silver Screen era and 1940's glamour including;

Wartime – A mixture of military chic and WWII-inspired outfits which gives a softer more seductive edge to

military functionality. Screen Sirens - with a number of Hollywood glitz inspired dresses, hairstyles and sequins galore.

Land Girls – a rather strange mixture of wellington boots, house and home style attire and far too many floral prints in base tones of beige, grey, brown, and faded primaries.

Of course Knitwear had a section of its own, Knit one Purl one, which showcased the best in Knitwear in greys, winter white, and black. Although it should be noted that one of the male models appeared to be wearing a straight jacket the way his over-sized scarf had been draped around his neck.

Urban Warrior and Campus Cool would perhaps be the most attractive sections to the student reader, as a number of these outfits would not look at all out of place on a frozen girl hobbling over the cobbles towards the Arts Building.

The end of the show featured a stunning array of LBDs and other outfits with black and dark greys as the primary focus. Featured fabrics, again right on trend, were lace, wool, satin and chiffon. And there was no fear of the magpies not being mesmerized as there was shimmering sequins galore.

Menswear was horrendous. The male models were not, as Caroline and Pamela promised us in their introduction, hot. The outfits they wore

looked like they were from thrown together at the last minute. A shame, really, as some of the themes could have produced some great outfits for men. The trousers for the casual looks were absolutely hideous, mostly beige and khaki and I noticed that more than one of them had the ¾ length zip-off option which is never a good look, no, not even on holidays! And in the 9-5 section they had all four of them dressed to look like "Henry" from Ugly Betty, including bow-tie.

Just like at Belfast Fashion Week, here there were some plus sized models. A busty blonde with a sassy catwalk attitude looked great in almost everything, and the famous Irish model Corina Grant, who is noted as being a size 12, looked as stunning as always.

As this is the only fashion event of note that takes place here in Ireland, it is worth a look and the show itself was a huge success.

Pamela and Caroline of Off the Rails fame looked stunning in their Karen Millen dresses and even mingled and shopped with the crowd after the event, although much harassed by eager passersby who wished for a photograph of the pretty girls off the telly.

I did overhear Caroline say she was dying for a coffee at one stage, so perhaps the pain of constantly smiling was getting to her. Sadly, Caroline, that's the price of being fashionable in Ireland!

tn2
says
YES

Words:
Patrice Murphy

All in white or all in black: I don't know where people are getting this idea, but it seems to be a general consensus and it's definitely working.

Normal-sized models: One size twelve/fourteen model in Belfast Fashion Week and Off the Rails Live. And they didn't make a big deal about it – it was a big deal.

The High Street: Oasis, Replay, River Island, Urban Outfitters and Topshop. These guys are so underappreciated, especially in a Penney's-obsessed society. Go check them out.

Shoots: The not quite a shoe, not quite a boot that shows off the ankle- really hot right now.

tn2
says
NO

Words:
Ciaran Durkin

All shades of coral: It just looks like your mum's lipstick has been washed with your white skirt.

Christmas jumpers/scarves/earrings: Decorations are for house and tree only.

Hippy "style"; and its floaty trousers, flowery tops, crocheted fabrics and sandals, has breathed its last. Smother it with cashmere sweaters, faux-fur shrugs and stamp on it in jeweled stilettos.

Wedges: I don't care that they were all over the catwalks this season, or the fact that they are more comfortable on the cobbles. Fact is that ladies are not supposed to trudge along like extinct dinosaurs, if the alternative is skulling yourself, so be it!

Belfast Fashion Week

Words:
Patrice Marian Murphy

OK, so it was my first (hopefully my first!) fashion show. But it was unlike anything I've ever read, heard or seen of the shows of

Paris, Milan, New York or anywhere else. For one thing, I got my ticket with little stress and just £8 per show from the ticket office of Belfast's Grand Opera House – no pristine white envelopes, embossed or otherwise; no frosty editors flinging second row cast-offs across a table; no begging burly security guards for just a peek...

In fact, the man in navy uniform (how on-trend...and yet it was polyester!) told me that he who gets there earliest gets first row... How democratic, how fair; how unfashionable? But I got there and I got third row (rows one and two were reserved with black and white patterned cushions) at the end of the catwalk.

The Baby Grand looked well; black curtains from which the models would emerge, black and white decorative panels on the wall, white almost paper-chain chandeliers and blue lighting everywhere but the catwalk.

The shows in Belfast, at least this year, were not about showing off new designers, but new fashion in Belfast, in the form of eagerly awaited retail outlet Victoria Square. The development will open on 6 March 2008 and will hold names such as Topshop, Clockwork Orange, French Connection, Urban Outfitters and the big pulling power, House of Fraser.

Belfast Fashion Week was allowed a sneak preview of some of House of Fraser's biggest collection's spring/summer lines in their Saturday, while the other stores showed on Friday 2 November.

The set-up was thus: the models walked the catwalk, and behind them on a screen a video of the action pointed out where each look was from – and every single thing that I loved was from Clockwork Orange.

I know that this sounds bad in writing – It's difficult to explain and harder to understand why I loved a tracksuit; an ankle-length tracksuit nonetheless, in

white of all colours (still, it could have been pink) and paired with heels. But I did. It looked good. Oh, go check out the pics yourself.

A loose black silky all-in-one of boob tube and ankle trousers paired again with heels and a gold supersize clutch was another look which, I know, sounds tacky, but looked good on the model. Really.

Hang on, let me find something that everyone would love – ah; the ageless mac left open, but still belted – it will look good on anyone, with anything; even the flowy skirt and t-shirt which is so not my taste.

The very high-waisted jeans paired with a replay t-shirt was so low casual, easy, classic and yet so now. I loved it so much, I may even try it.

A forties-style gold dress with ties at both the shoulder and elbow looked fit for one of those dressy dos at Trinity, as did a LBD – flowy, silky, shiny, with a cinched waist and unusual straps; shown with a red belt, and red open-toed fishnets and a red bag.

It was obvious from the show that all the high-end of the high-street stores were heavily influenced by designers and featured coloured tights galore (pink, purple and blue seemed to be favourites, as well as the immortal black), peep-toe shoes (hello 40s-style), high, high, high-waisted jeans – and if they only went to ankle-length, all the better.

Seriously, ankles are going to be huge very very soon. I know you don't believe me, but you will see.

Other trends to watch out for – and these are even more important than the ones you see on the catwalks and in vogue – since these are the ones the



high-street are covering, and therefore, the ones we'll all be wearing.

Cinched waists, we already covered a few issues ago, and the proof was on that BFW catwalk. From a few seasons ago, animal print is just not going away, but the look is getting harder and harder to pull off whilst looking effortless – but no one said fashion was easy. Known as the easiest high shoes to walk in, wedge heels may be controversial within the fashion world and yet everyone is sending out their models in them.

Appropriately enough for TN2's last issue before Christmas, the sequins and glitter comes out – is there any point trying to tell you to be careful; I know some of you will get carried away. Do go a bit overboard on bright colours; they're still here, (despite so many magazines promising me head-to-toe black) and they are surprisingly do-able; the high street favoured hot pink, deep purples, scarlet and bright blue (if this is you, get Penney's coats and wear constantly).

That old student staple, jeans, were generally tight and high-waisted, but thankfully for those of us who overindulge all year round, loose and high-waisted also worked surprisingly well. The former, however, were unbelievably gorgeous when worn tucked into knee-high, stacked-heel brown boots.

Shift dresses also made an appearance at BFW, and I know some of you Holly Golightlys on the cobbles will be dizzy with excitement. For those who prefer a skirt, my favourite, the pencil, together with the also wearable A-line, were the only thing to wear on the catwalk. The only thing I beg of you is please don't wear those patterned, coloured, flowery floaty wallpaper-inspired dresses, as so many Trainers do - you'll only blend into the background in a ridiculously stand-out way...

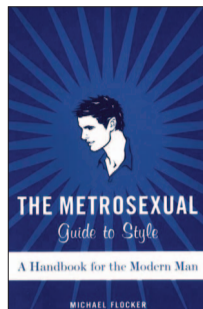
The Man's Book



Author: Thomas Fink
Price: €15.20 192pp.
Publisher: Orion Books

Describing itself as the “definitive new handbook of men’s customs, habits and pursuits”, The Man’s Book quite rightly aspires to a sort of encyclopaedic omniscience concerning everything it means to be a 21st-century male. Mr Fink has thoughtfully compiled (among other things) a list of the 85 ways to tie a tie and a catalogue description of each of the 120 types of single malt whiskies. Had it been published a century ago, The Man’s Book would surely have taken the publishing world by storm. Alas, however, the archetypal “gentleman” towards whom this book seems geared has long since given up the ghost.

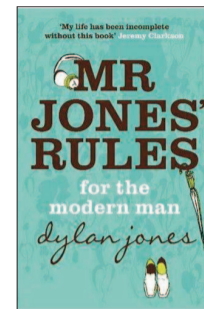
The Metrosexual Guide to Style



Author: Michael Flocker
Price: €12.15 208pp.
Publisher: Da Capo Press

Are you a single young man with a high(ly) disposable income? Do you live within reasonable distance of a bustling metropolis? Are you struggling to come to terms with your own burgeoning metrosexuality? Michael Flocker is here to lend a manicured and thoroughly well-moisturized hand. Taking the tentative reader through his first baby steps into the hitherto unknown realms of social niceties, home décor and cultural taste, Flocker’s metrosexual not only looks the part, he speaks and acts the part as well. Terse and to the point, The Metrosexual Guide gives you the tools you need to take your post-college place in the world.

Mr Jones’ Rules for the Modern Man



Author: Dylan Jones
Price: €11.90 448pp.
Publisher: Hodder and Stoughton

Mr Jones’ modern man doesn’t go in for metrosexuality; he’s about quiet strength and chivalric courtesy, all those rugged characteristics with which the Nineties seemed to have played havoc. Across 450 pages of good old-fashioned, mano-a-mano common sense, Jones has provided answers to all those minor uncertainties which plague the modern male: how do I go about asking for a raise? Where exactly is the fabled G-Spot? While reading Mr Jones’s Rules may at times feel like having an intimate conversation with your father, it does so without any of the embarrassing revelations.

Death in Dublin

Kevin Breathnach *investigates John Banville’s crime-writing alter ego, Benjamin Black.*

John Banville is the greatest living novelist. But his books sell few, even here in his native Dublin. He is our national treasure; yet he remains buried to most. That he writes under a pseudonym is no literary scoop: his pseudonymous crime novels each boast a great big black sticker with his name on it. Published just over a month ago, *The Silver Swan* follows Black’s popularly and critically acclaimed debut, *Christine Falls*.

Both efforts star the same cantankerous protagonist: the enormous, mononymous Quirke. Because it’s crime fiction, Quirke naturally isn’t a detective by profession and because behind Black sits Banville, Quirke’s actual profession is yet closer to death: he’s a pathologist; what else? “I suppose,” ventures his colleague Sinclair, “I must have preferred the dead over the living. ‘No trouble there’, as someone once said to me.”

No trouble at all, normally.

Quirke is introduced to the reading world walking in to his mortuary and in on his brother-in-law and colleague Mal Griffin, who is relieved to notice

Quirke’s inebriation, for he is not supposed to be there. He is editing *Christine Falls’* death certificate. Though witnessed through the opacity of intoxication and remembered through the haze of a gin hangover, an incurably curious Quirke returns to the incident in the months that follow. *Christine Falls* died with child, but child did not die with *Christine Falls*. Mal’s pen puts a living child into the official world of dead. But why?

There is a distinction to be made between John Banville, the artist, and Benjamin Black, the craftsman, but before going down that tempting pathway, it’s important to underline just how much fun Banville is having as he plays with this new structure, this new style and these new characters. He embraces the far-fetched with some gusto.

In *The Silver Swan*, for instance, Quirke and his daughter unknowingly engage in sexual relationships with either end of a recently divorced couple. Though an existentialism seeps from these pages, these novels are not serious. No matter Benjamin Black’s popular success, no John Banville novel will ever

be allowed to bear a sticker with Black’s name on it, no matter its size or colour.

Two years on comes *The Silver Swan*, and though he has tried sobriety, Quirke is still a great drinker and Black still a great writer. His protagonist has gone about the business of pathology without investigatory excursion since his incriminating revelations from the *Falls* case about the pillars of Irish society fell on deaf ears.

But an old acquaintance calls him up out-of-the-blue and asks him not to perform a post-mortem on his wife who, found sprawled naked on the Sandycove shore, has recently put herself into-the-blue, as it were. Quirke takes a quick look at the body, in any case, only to discover that, oh dear, there’s an injection puncture on her arm and, oh my, no sign of drowning. Whoop!, whoop!; and so turn to the next page, one and all.

I’m reluctant to move further into either of the plots of these two books. To navigate Black’s plots from point to point in this humble, hidden space would require a great deal more economy than I am capable of. For someone whose novels are notoriously,

insistently starved of narrative, this Black of his can spin a prodigiously tangled, glistening web. And yet, Black persistently betrays the linguistic restraint of Banville, a restraint of almost 40-years learning. Not only has this author to one name the best novels I’ve ever read, to another name he has the best sex, too: “‘Oh’, she cried, and rolled her head on the pillow to one side and then to the other, biting her nether lip. Quirke loomed above her in starlight, hugely moving. ‘Oh, God.’”

Though Benjamin Black is evidently a writer with more popular appeal than John Banville, his prose is by no means vulgar. He picks up the subtleties of the quotidian - with which we identify but which we rarely, if ever, consider - with the retained, adept writer’s eye of his master: “they climbed the narrow, winding stair to the upper deck, Kate going first and Quirke the gentleman trying not to look at her behind.”

Yes, two years on, Quirke remains a great drinker and Black a great writer, too. But two years on, Quirke is a shrewder detective and Black, by far a more astute composer. “Oh God.”



A scene from the 2006 television adaptation of *The Line of Beauty*. Photo courtesy of BBC.

Beauty and the Beast

*Alan Hollinghurst wrote three novels before winning the Booker Prize for 2004's **The Line of Beauty**. Paul Earlie traces the evolution of one of Britain's most promising novelists.*

The only interesting thing about Alan Hollinghurst is that he is not straight. Or at least, that's the only interesting thing about the author of *The Swimming-Pool Library*, *The Folding Star* and *The Spell*, Hollinghurst's first three (largely unsuccessful) novels. Each of these books strikes the hindsighted reader as an impoverished cousin to 2004's *The Line of Beauty*, a novel of rare subtlety and depth which justly garnered Hollinghurst not only the Booker, but also a rather stylish BBC television adaptation.

One can forgive an author his first novel. Every Woolf, after all, has her stormy *Voyage Out*. *The Swimming-Pool Library*, ostensibly a traditional English "class" novel, is something of a slave to sex, STIs, and other naughty words beginning with "S". Refreshingly racy at the outset, even the most excitable of readers will inevitably find himself cold to the carwash of sex and alcohol into which the novel quickly descends. As for what is conventionally called "style"; it is conspicuous mostly by its absence. Within the first few pages, we are greeted with such minimalist marvels as "I came home on the first train" and "He was watching television when I came in"; leaden sentences remarkable only for their expositional value.

The Folding Star, Hollinghurst's second swing at literary stardom, manages a little more engagement between the narrator and the reader, but sacrifices a lot more in order to achieve this. Taking up as a teacher of English, our thirty-three year old protagonist, Edward Manners, soon falls in love with a sixteen-year old student named Luc (a palindrome for "Cul"; our pervy narrator gleefully notes) and the reader becomes aware that what is at play here is all too familiar. *The Folding Star* reads like a gay *Lolita*, with Mr Manners a poor match for the beguiling literati Humbert Humbert.

In his early fiction, Hollinghurst is straining to present his subterranean world of crusty gay bars and early morning rendezvous in a style worthy of the tag "literature". He scores some success with his next novel *The Spell*, published four years after *The Folding Star*, mostly because the novel abandons all pretensions to higher art, delighting instead in a narrative tapestry of romantic entanglements. *The Spell*, ostensibly a novel of "sexual manners", centers around the interlocking love lives of four gay men: two young, two very much older. The novel succeeds because its goal is relatively humble. Things never elevate beyond the level of soap opera (albeit soap opera of the highest rank).

With his fourth, and most recent, endeavour, 2004's *The Line of Beauty*, Hollinghurst, at last, managed to outgrow the penchant for an almost

pornographic sexual realism which seems to be a considerable stumbling block for the modern gay novelist. *The Line of Beauty* is a novel about many things: history, class, money. The plot is conventionally British, in many respects working like an updated *Brideshead Revisited* in which Wavian undertones and underthemes are transformed into near-deafening overtures. Our young protagonist Nick Guest comes to stay at the Notting Hill home of the Fedden family, with whom he promptly becomes infatuated. The Feddens rival Waugh's beguiling *Marchmains* in their sheer dysfunctionality: George Fedden, conservative MP and patriarch extraordinaire; Toby Fedden, his handsome son whom Nick falls for at Oxford and who now, post-graduation, finds himself afloat in a sea of mediocrity; Catherine Fedden, Toby's disturbed sister, provides the novel with a social conscience, pecking away at the unjust social order which is the simultaneous cause and putative cure for her mental illness. It is, however, Nick's story, his journey from the innocence of 1983 to the experience of 1987, a journey through the avaricious and dispassionate Thatcher years, which provides the novel with its forward motion and thematic fodder.

The evolution of Hollinghurst's style from *The Swimming-Pool Library* to *The Line of Beauty* couldn't be more palpable: it is breezy and never laboured – not a single bad sentence occurs across the book's 500-odd pages. At points, Hollinghurst's prose reaches heights of poetry strangely deficient in modern fiction. Here is Catherine describing the deepest lows of her depressive spells: "It's the whole world exactly as it is [...] everything exactly the same. And it's totally negative. You can't survive it. It's like being on Mars or something." Nick's observations are precise and always yield more than is apparent at surface-level: "Gerald didn't look quite serious with a fruit-choked tumbler in his fist." Even the seemingly unglamorous world of hardcore pornography is poeticized: "Turned down low, the actors grunted their binary code – yeah... oh yeah, oh yeah... yeah... oh... yeah, yeah."

Towards the novel's close, Catherine remarks that "the 80's are going on forever". Though Hollinghurst insists time and again that he does not, as an author, make moral judgements of any sort, *The Line of Beauty* is indisputably a condemnation of this ruthlessly covetous era in British politics. Explaining Henry James' forgotten novel *The Spoils of Pontyon* to one of the Fedden's diffident philistine dinner guests, Nick remarks: "It's about someone who loves things more than people. And who ends up with nothing, of course." In these two short sentences – in all their postmodern banality – lies the truth of a novel and of a decade.

INREVIEW

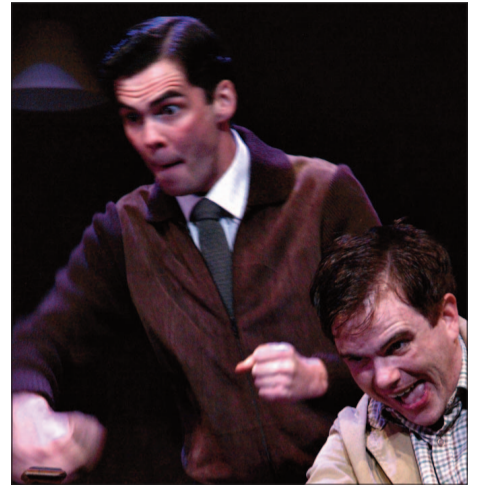


Philadelphia here I come

Words: Polly Graham

A young man's final night in Ireland before emigration to a new life in America; packing his bags, bidding farewell to his childhood friends, collecting his final pay check from his dad. On the surface *Philadelphia Here I Come* is a mildly tragic tale of cutting yourself free and starting afresh away from small town snobberies and family oppression. But there is so much more to it than that. It is the very idea of the surface, the difference between what you say and what you're actually thinking which is at the heart of Friel's play.

Through the two characters of Gar Public and Gar Private (the main character's outward facing persona and his interiorised consciousness) Friel explores the tragedy of a young man's stilted, suffocated relationship with his father painful in its repressed inexpressiveness. The duality of the central character affords some great comic moments as Gar Private predicts his father's daily pat phrases at the dinner table seconds before they are addressed to Gar Public or offers a running commentary on what actually happened as the pair listen to Gar's friends reliving their adolescent adventures. However, it is at heart a tragic device underlining masculine isolation which resonates powerfully through the play and the audience in a way that Gar's emigration cannot in this twenty first century of J1 visas and



Celtic Tiger financed long-haul holidays.

This touring production is snappy and effective, emphasising the comic elements of the play yet at the same time powerfully evoking the audience's sympathies. It is worth pointing out that the play is on this year's Leaving Cert and this is reflected both by the surprising number of matinee performances and the average age of the audience.

However, with a strong cast, driven along fantastically by the two Gars (Sean Stewart and Marty Rea), sensible staging and a great script it is well worth the trek out to the Helix or Dun Laoghaire. See www.secondage.com for more information.

Written by Brian Friel. Playing at The Helix, DCU. On tour, coming to Dun Laoghaire 29th, 30th Nov. 1st Dec.

Taken Hostage

Adam Hall reviews Brendan Behan's play The Hostage.

Brendan Behan's play *The Hostage* is a difficult play to perform as actors must have the ability to shift from comic song and dance to tragic gravity in an instant. The world of *The Hostage* is a surreal world where Irish nationalists have attended all of the finest colleges in England and speak with Eton accents. It is a world where IRA collaborators sing in praise of the King, and dance and cavort with British soldiers. Although it is not a world which we are supposed to fully believe in, it requires a cast who can convince us not only to laugh at them, but to sympathise with them as well. The Department of Drama pulled off this tricky feat admirably.

The play's action is set in a Dublin

brothel, which doubles as an IRA safe house due to the Republican sympathies of the owner Pat who, as he never fails to remind us, fought against the British in Easter 1916. The set design suggested this incongruity. It included a bed and a central staircase leading to the brothel's bedrooms, both serving as a constant reminder of the main use of the setting, even when issues of national importance are at stake.

The make-up and costumes also contributed to the constant undermining of seriousness that characterises the play. The brothel's 'workers' seemed to have had their make-up applied by an over-enthusiastic 5 year old and some wore dressing gowns, contrasting neatly with the austere military uniforms of the two humourless IRA officers.

Gerard Kelly's performance as Pat was for me the best performance of the night. Playing an old man with a limp whilst maintaining a strong Dublin accent may seem a lot for any actor to remember, but he also managed to show both the absurdity and the frailty of Pat, provoking both pity and laughter at different times. His solo song was the most emotive moment of the play and showcased the strongest singing voice of any of the company.

Other performances of note included Brian Bennett's portrayal of the British army hostage Leslie Williams. Although I could not quite 'Adam&Eve' his clichéd cockney accent, he convincingly played the soldier as a lovable 'cheeky chappie' caught up in events of which he knows little, and cares even

less. Mairead Cumiskey played a touching Teresa, likewise caught up in events outside her experience. Conor Madden and Tanya Wilson, playing Monsewer and Miss Gilchrist respectively, proved worthy ringleaders for the farcical scenes which frequently intersperse the thinly plotted play.

At times, there was too much going on onstage, too much effort to create a sense of energy and movement, which was distracting and perhaps did not aid the singing performance of the weaker singing voices. Indeed this is the only production I have ever seen to include a 'movement consultant' in the programme, and he was too liberally employed. Overall though, this was a very enjoyable production from a talented cast and crew.

Striped Pyjamas

John Boyne, author of the critically acclaimed The Boy in the striped pyjamas, treated Trinity students to some of his shorter works last week, writes Caroline O'Leary

Former Trinity student John Boyne visited the Arts Block on November 15th, courtesy of the Literary Society.

Boyne has become a recognised figure on the Irish and World Literary scene since the publication of his most prominent book "The Boy in Striped Pyjamas"; which was a New York Times Bestseller and spent 57 weeks as the number 1 book in Ireland. Though written as a children's story, the novel had a huge crossover appeal to adults and received glowing reviews from publications such as the Irish Times, the Guardian and particularly the Irish Independent, who printed "Since I read this book, it has haunted me... it should be read by anyone who cares about modern Irish fiction, young or old, because it's that very rare thing - a book so simple, so seemingly effortless that it's almost perfect. I was left floundering, tears running down my cheeks."

Boyne was born in Dublin in 1971 in Dublin and studied English in Trinity College Dublin

before taking a course in creative writing at the University of East Anglia from 1994-95. Though positively received for his earlier works, it wasn't until his first children's book "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas" that he obtained widespread recognition and acclaim.

Set during World War Two, the story features the nine year old character Bruno, the German son of a Nazi commander at Auschwitz concentration camp and his unlikely friendship with a Jewish boy, Samuel, the "boy in the striped pyjamas"; who lives on the other side of the camp's chain-link fence.

Boyne entertained the Trinity audience for more than an hour with readings of his short stories (all under 500 words) and took questions from the crowd. Particularly crowd pleasing was a story where the protagonist stands by and watches his brother marry the woman he loves.

After the readings, the event continued on to the pub where Boyne socialised with members of the society until closing time.



Literary Society welcomes acclaimed Dublin playwright

Mark O'Rowe, of whose pen were born the exceptional *Howie the Rookie* and the marvellous *Terminalus*, as well as the screenplay for *Intermission* will be speaking for the Literary Society on the 29th of November at 7.30 in the Mairtin Ui Chadhain theatre. Essential for those interested in contemporary Irish theatre, all welcome.

The Debut Festival

Showcasing the considerable talents of the fourth-year Drama and Theatre Studies students: the Debut Festival at the Samuel Beckett Theatre. Words: Alice Gore

This week welcomes in the second of a three-week festival of plays directed by fourth-year Drama and Theatre Studies students. Showcasing their talents as directors, as well as that of their actors and technical designers to name just a few, all involved in the shows have been putting their hearts and souls into creating professional, entertaining and impressive pieces of theatre. Challenged by the space the Beckett theatre provides, the complexities of the plays and, at the end of the day, the need to gain the grade, all have a tough job on their hands. But the preparations have been going well and some great theatre is underway.

For those of you who didn't get a chance to see the two shows on last week, the festival has already presented *Grimms Tales* and *Macbeth*. *Grimms Tales*, directed by Daragh MacMathuna presented a fantastic amalgamation of nine well known fairy tales. Going back to original versions of the texts only to modify them, twist them, to personally rewrite them, Daragh made these popular stories and their mes-

sages once again new to their audiences: *Cinderella* was set in the 1980's and narrated by South-side Dublin Step Sisters; *Little Red Riding Hood's* loss of innocence was tracked through three different versions of the tale; and Alice's creation of her Wonderland witnessed.

Following this, Shane O'Reilly presented *Macbeth*. A popular story? Yes. But how about seen through the eyes of the witches? Taking the audience into a dark underworld, *Macbeth* witnessed the rise and fall of *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth* as they unsuspectingly journey through it.

Moving walls and witches on stilts, murders, passion and magic, this visually stunning adaptation of Shakespeare's Scottish play did not disappoint.

A troupe of singing, dancing, acrobatic clowns tear through the absurdity and horror of *The Great War* in *Oh What A Lovely War!* directed by Dan Herd and to be performed this week. A musical and visual spectacle, this show will at one moment have your sides splitting with laughter, whilst in at the next second make your jaw fall to the floor in disbelief. Come to be en-

tertained and educated as you watch the horrors of the War excruciatingly set aside popular wartime songs, sketches and speech of the era.

Directed by Christopher Collins *Find Me* by Olwen Wymark occupies the 8pm slot this week. A true and intensely disturbing story about a young autistic girl, this production uses a technique of multiple characterisation and ensemble work, backed by childlike animation, to create before the audience a vital and dynamic landscape. Through this, the audience journeys to witness life through autistic eyes in an attempt to "find" Verity Taylor. Come then, to see how Verity's troubling journey leads to her imprisonment into a maximum security hospital where she still remains to this day. First on show next week, is *Exit the King* by Eugene Ionesco directed by Zoe Ni Riordan. An absurdist comedy and take on *King Lear*, this play witnesses the end of *King Berenger's* reign. Unwilling to let his kingdom go and accept death, *Berenger* finds himself the victim of greater forces as the cycles of time and weather show that

Life must go on. As his crumbling kingdom finally collapses, watch, with humour and heartbreak, the illumination of the insignificance of modern man's existence in a universe run by chaos.

And last but not least, next week also presents *Antigone* by Jean Anouilh, directed by Liz Bragg. Stark and honest, this adaptation of Sophocles original exposes as timeless the themes of rebellion and the refusal to submit to authority. The Greek original stands side by side the 1940's Nazi occupation of France as *Antigone's* tragic fate becomes a triumph of the individual over tyranny.

Ambition and courage lie at the heart of each of these pieces so please come to support and enjoy the talents of your fellow students.

Performances show Wednesday to Friday, weeks 8 and 9. 6.00 pm / 8.00 pm. Tickets 8 euro (3 euro concessions), and available on the door or from the box office: 018962461.

A German master in London

Words: Nicholas Hamilton



Nachtessen in Dresden (Dinner in Dresden), 1983. Deliberately exhibited upside-down.
Oil on canvas. Kunsthaus, Zürich. Photo: Frank Oleski © Georg Baselitz. Royal Academy of Arts, London.

Unless you are a leggy supermodel or world-beating Formula One driver, as a German, it is not always easy to gain recognition in England. Having been awarded similar shows in other countries since the early 1990's, as he approaches the age of 70, Georg Baselitz, one of the leading German artists of the last fifty years, is being honoured with his biggest exhibition in Britain to date: a full-career retrospective at the Royal Academy, London.

Entering the exhibition, the viewer is greeted by the gesturing figure of Baselitz's carved wood, *Model for a Sculpture* (1979-80). When displayed in the West German pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1980, it was the cause of controversy; for many, the figure's outstretched right arm was too close to a Nazi salute for comfort and the black paint splashed across its upper lip, as across the rest of the body, in a seemingly random manner, recalled the appearance of Hitler.

While the gesture of the right arm does have echoes of a Nazi salute, the intention would appear to be ironic rather than affirmative or confrontational. The arm is bent slightly from the usual rigidity of a military salute and the palm of the hand is turned in a gesture of supplication. Far from being a statement of Nazi pride, this awkward, crudely carved, supine figure, with legs left uncut from the block, is an expression of humility and call to the outside world for help. The sculpture and its initial critical reception point out the difficulties faced by German artists, and society as whole, following World War II.

From the start of his career, Baselitz has rebelled against the tastes of his artistic peers as much as those of the general public. At a time, in the early 1960's, when the general mood in Germany was defined by a will to ignore or forget the past, in the hope that it would speed up national rehabilitation, Baselitz sought to confront and provoke his audience as much as possible. To this end he sought to create an expressionist language of his own. His "fracture" paintings of the 1960's, in which horizontal segments of two different subjects are brought together in one painting, provide a disorientating and disturbing viewing experience in which the two different subjects are made to join up, depicting often grotesque situations. In *Four Stripes - G. Antonin* (1966), a hybrid is formed between the image of two men and that of two dogs, which becomes conflated in the final segment of the painting, where a puppy sidles up to a man's exposed "bone."

The disruption to the image caused by the "fracture" paintings was a move towards the innovation for which Baselitz is best known: at the end of the 1960's, he began to exhibit his work upside down. His intention for so doing was to focus the viewer's attention on the expressive surface of the work rather than its subject. However, it is hard not to feel ambivalent about the success of such a strategy. Baselitz himself denies any knowledge of -and therefore responsibility for- the way in which viewers perceive his inverted paintings, saying that he does not know whether or not viewers correct the inverted images in their minds and that he can only speak for himself. The decision to exhibit his work upside down is highly subversive and while, at first glance, his

subjects appear incidental, they are, in fact, loaded. *Finger Painting -Eagle* (1972), for example, shows the national symbol of Germany, wings high above its head, soaring...straight for the gallery floor.

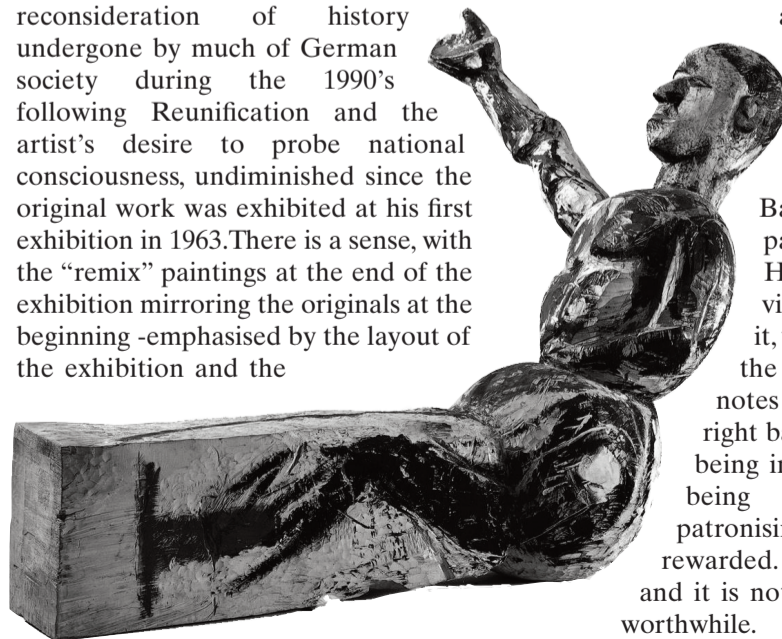
Since the 1990's, Baselitz has been engaged on what he describes as a "remix cycle"; reworking motifs primarily from the start of his career. Encompassing small-scale pen and ink drawings, and large-scale paintings, the "remixes" are more quickly worked than the originals. While some are little changed in terms of content, others depart significantly from the original work, such as *Big Night Down the Drain (Remix)* (2006) which substitutes the main figure for the unmistakable face of Hitler. As with the other "remixes"; it is a work that demonstrates the reconsideration of history undergone by much of German society during the 1990's following Reunification and the artist's desire to probe national consciousness, undiminished since the original work was exhibited at his first exhibition in 1963. There is a sense, with the "remix" paintings at the end of the exhibition mirroring the originals at the beginning -emphasised by the layout of the exhibition and the

hang, which pairs *Oberon (Remix)* (2006) with the original along the axis of the gallery rooms- of having come full circle; of a senior artist closing the circle on his career and putting his house in order. However, Baselitz himself seems conflicted about the position of his career, commenting, in the same interview, "I am no longer a beginner, maybe my art is coming to its end" and "I do not feel I have come to the end nor done my best work yet?"

Acknowledging its often ungainly character, as well as its sustained divergence from prevailing tastes and movements, in a different interview, ahead of the Royal Academy show, Baselitz described himself as a painter of "bad art"; it might have been closer to the mark to say "difficult art." Quite simply, given his often murky palette

and abrasive technique, it is sometimes quite difficult to make out what Baselitz has painted.

However, if the viewer sticks with it, with the help of the exhibition notes that find the right balance between being informative and being didactic or patronising, they will be rewarded. It is not pretty and it is not easy, but it is worthwhile.



Modell für eine Skulptur (Model for a Sculpture), 1979-80

Georg Baselitz, Limewood and tempera, Ludwig Museum, Cologne. Photo: Jochen Littkemann. © Georg Baselitz. Courtesy of the Royal Academy of Arts, London.



Words: *Caroline O'Leary*

Recording skylines of Ireland

Autumn Donadea Forest by Eoghan Kavanagh. Photo courtesy of the Skyline Gallery.

Photography has always struggled to be recognised as an art form. The invention of the camera allowed other artists to move away from the exact duty of portrait painting into more expressionist and creative methods, while photography took over the responsibility of recording life. This has led to difficulty in attempts to have art recognised as art in its own right, with even the success of popular photographers such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Diane Arbus and more recently Annie Leibovitz (of Rolling Stone and Vanity Fair fame) being based almost entirely on their skilled portrait work. However, some photographers have begun to break the mould and move away from portraits to more creative and expressive subjects.

Eoghan Kavanagh of the Skyline Gallery in Naas, Co. Kildare is one such photographer who has moved outside the usual studio setting to capture the light and beauty of the world through his lens. Kavanagh specialises in landscape photographs of the Irish countryside, and through meticulous research and

attention to detail, creates images that literally glow with colour and the natural beauty of the countryside. Often rising at 4am when scouting, Kavanagh will spend all day observing possible locations and the effects of the light, weather and seasons on one area. "I enjoy the freedom of shooting outdoors. I tend to research places before a shoot and return with my equipment often before sunrise to make the most of the light." This method often means that Kavanagh will spend all day on location for only three or four perfect shots, but the resulting images of rugged landscapes saturated in soft light and colour are exceptional examples of the ability of the photographer and the potential of photography as a medium.

To ensure the best result possible, Kavanagh forgoes modern digital and even older film cameras in favour of a method called plate photography, whereby the large film sheet is attached to large plate that is inserted into the camera (similar to the first professionally used cameras in Victorian times.)

Although far more complicated than other methods, plate photography

ensures that every detail of the scene is captured, especially the extraordinary light that prevails in all of Kavanagh's work. This can however lead to other problems, "Physically it can be arduous, the equipment is heavy and in bad weather this can cause difficulties." These problems are not helped by the fact that much of Kavanagh's work is done in the West of Ireland, where conditions are known to be unpredictable at best, but can also yield the greatest rewards, "[My favourite work] would be a picture from my landscape collection entitled Blue Rocks, I took this on a stormy day in Fanore, Co. Clare."

A problem many photographers have is the value of a photograph is diminished by the ready availability of copies and prints. The Skyline Gallery attempts to counter this problem by keeping a rigid control of the prints created.

Laura Kavanagh, sister of Eoghan and his business partner in the Skyline Gallery, explains that "We try to limit the production of prints to 50 per large image, though this can vary. Each print is created to order and is hand printed by Eoghan himself to ensure the best quality possible."

Inspired by a long interest in contemporary art space, she developed the idea of creating temporary art spaces in normally empty places and, last June, successfully rented an alley in Temple Bar and exhibited a number of Skyline Gallery works which were enthusiastically received by the public. So successful was the idea that the Temple Bar Trust have begun to advertise available temporary exhibition areas in the area to all artists.

Photography, like all art forms, is not for everyone and some inherently will enjoy its results more than others. However, Kavanagh and the Skyline Gallery represent an inspiration that is accessible to nearly everyone and represents it in the highest quality possible. Whether for decoration, appreciation or just vague Irish nostalgia, Kavanagh's photos are approachable by all and truly deserve to be called works of art.

ConTemporary Art, Art in Vacant Spaces by the Skyline Gallery runs from 6 December until 24 December 3-4 Cows Lane, Temple Bar, Dublin 8. Skyline are offering a 10% discount on any print to Trinity College students.

ART EVENTS

In Search of Ireland in 1913: exhibition of the first coloured photographs taken in Ireland.

National Photographic Archive, Meeting House Square, Temple Bar, 12 November 2007 - 21 January 2008. Free Admission

Annual Christmas show at the Oisín Gallery

The Oisín Gallery, Westland Row. Until the 22nd December.

Journey: collection of surrealist works by James O'Dowd.

Mill Theatre Gallery, 10 November - 12 December 2007.

Dublin Midnight: Streams of light

Photographs of Dublin at night by Pip Side. Dublin Gallery, Powerscourt Townhouse, South William Street.

Christmas Exhibitions from the Stone Gallery

"Winter Group Show", Stone Gallery, 70 Pearce Street, 20th November - 19th January. "Pink Noise", Unit 3/4, Cows Lane, Temple Bar, 22nd November - 1st December.

Festive Treats: Christmas Dinner

Christmas is coming and the geese are getting fat... though with college breaking up over a fortnight before December 25th it's hard to get into that all important Christmas mood before heading back home to mistletoe and wine. Trinity News however, has the solution to make you feel festive... put on an apron, roll up your sleeves and with our easy guide astound your friends with a hassle free Christmas Dinner...

Words: Beth Armstrong

Traditional Christmas dinner is a delicious affair, and despite what many mums say, it doesn't necessarily involve you slaving around the kitchen. The mouthwatering image of Turkey, stuffing roast potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce and an assortment of vegetables finished with Christmas pudding is definitely do-able with a spree at a supermarket and some cheats along the way.

The Turkey:

Although a scary prospect, it's actually easy to cook a turkey, that is if you don't choose a full bird, but go for the easier, more manageable option of a turkey crown or breast. Easy to buy and with much less stress about cooking time, there is also minimal carving involved.

The best bet is to go to a good-quality supermarket such as Dunnes or Marks & Spencers and it is generally agreed that buying fresh is a better option than frozen. The label should provide you with information on how many people the turkey will feed. When home, if cooking on the same day, do not put the turkey in the fridge as it's best to put it in the oven at room temperature.

Cooking time depends on how many people the turkey will serve, so do check the packaging. Place the turkey in a roasting tin, rub with butter, season with salt and pepper, add some water to

the roasting tray and cover loosely with tinfoil – don't put the tinfoil on too tight – you don't want dry meat. You can tell when a turkey is ready by inserting a fork into the meat.

If the juices run clear with no sign of pink, it is ready. If you're unsure, keep it in the oven for another half an hour. Allow the turkey to "rest" for half an hour after you take it out of the oven, et voila.

Roast Potatoes:

Crispy roast potatoes go perfectly with Christmas turkey. To make, firstly par-boil your spuds for about eight minutes and stop before they are cooked through. When they are ready and you have drained the water from the pot, put the lid on and give the potatoes a shake. Pour a generous amount of oil into your roasting pan and put in the oven for it to heat up.

While this is happening, Heston Blumenthal, the Michelin starred chef suggests turning the parboiled potatoes in a small amount of flour. Add them to a roasting tray and cook for 45 minutes, when they are cooked, drain off the oil and add to your plates.

Brussel Sprouts:

Love them or loathe them, brussel sprouts belong on your plate during Christmas dinner. Nigella Lawson com-

ments that "the cause for complaint comes from over-cooking. When a sprout is allowed to keep a bit of bite, it has a nutty freshness." To cook simply boil them for five minutes. They are best served with shallots (or onions) and bacon. While the sprouts are boiling, fry five finely chopped rashers of bacon, along with five shallots (or two onions). When the sprouts are ready, drain them, add them to the shallot and bacon mixture and serve.

Stuffing:

Rather than go to the bother of actually stuffing a turkey, all supermarkets now stock a choice of stuffing selections (such as sage and onion or chestnut and pork) you just put in the oven along with your roast potatoes.

Gravy:

As turkey is a dry bird, gravy goes with it wonderfully. To make your gravy, use the roasting juices from your turkey. Or alternatively, you can buy ready made poultry gravy from any good supermarket, which is ready to serve, all you need to do is heat it in the handy microwave!

Cranberry Sauce:

An American culinary invention, cranberry sauce adds a delicious, fruity taste to turkey. Don't bother making your

own, as most supermarkets stock it. All that needs to be done is to warm it in the microwave and serve alongside your dinner.

Dessert:

Traditional Christmas desserts include Christmas cake, Christmas pudding (complete with brandy butter) and sherry trifle. To be honest these, though yum, can be a chore to make. Fall back on your local supermarket for your dessert choice and add some ice-cream to end your meal on a festive and scrumptious high note.

To drink:

The experts suggest that turkey, though a white meat, should actually be served with red wine. Many suggest Pinot Noir, which should be served cold, as the fruit flavours compliment the dryness of the Turkey. However, if red just makes you sleepy, apparently the best white to pair with Christmas dinner is a dry Chardonnay.

The table:

Set it as you wish, but Christmas Crackers are a must, especially for the hats and cheesy jokes. Have some carols on as background music and pour yourself a big glass of wine to say well done. Happy Christmas... Ho Ho Ho!



Edibles is proudly sponsored by Lincoln's Inn.

Lincoln's Inn is a traditional style pub situated in Lincoln Place, Dublin 2, right behind Trinity College. Known for its connections to James Joyce and Nora Barnacle and previously an "institution" with Trinity College students, its re-opening offers another great option to students across Dublin! Call 016762044, or email info@lincolnn.ie for info.



Festive Treats: Mulled Wine

Along with Christmas lights, sleigh bells and mince pies, the festive spirit also brings the weather of Jack Frost. So when it's chilly outside with a hint of snow in the air, nothing is better than a seasonal glass (or two) of mulled wine. Trinity News presents the definitive recipe...

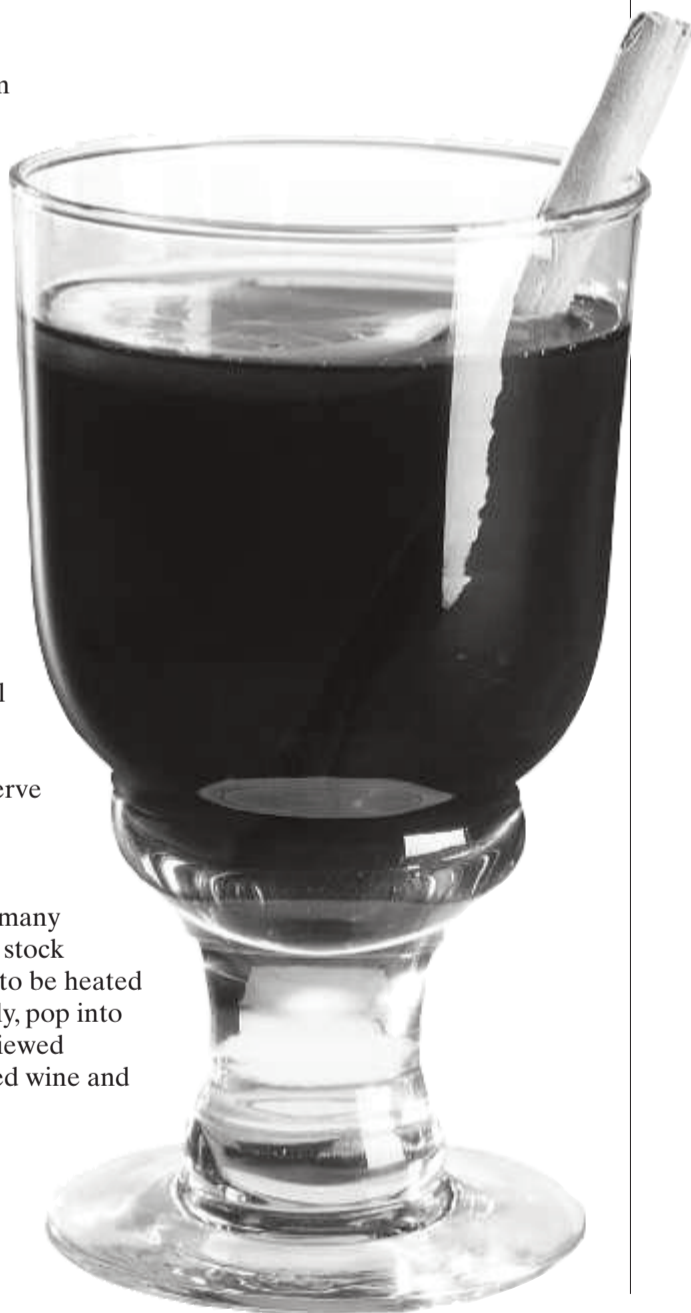
Ingredients:

- 1 bottle red wine
- 60ml (4 tablespoons) dark rum
- 1 orange, quartered, each quarter stuck with 1 clove
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- A pinch of nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon muscovado or demerara (brown) sugar
- 1 tablespoon honey

Method:

Add all ingredients to a large saucepan and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved. Turn off the heat and strain through a sieve or colander, serve and enjoy with mince pies.

If this seems too much effort, many supermarkets and off-licenses stock mulled wines which just need to be heated in the microwave. Alternatively, pop into Cornucopia (this edition's reviewed restaurant) for delicious mulled wine and homemade mince pies!



Bite-size Beckett. Peter Brook. THEATRE P14

REVIEW:



Photo: Emer Groarke

Cornucopia
19 Wicklow Street
Dublin 2
677 7583

Word: Beth Armstrong

Cornucopia, just off Grafton Street, is one of the best kept secrets of Dublin vegetarians. Non-vegies normally turn their noses in the air at the idea of eating at a place with no carnivore choices available, but with expertise in the vegetarian market dating back to the 1980's, Cornucopia knows its stuff, and can tempt vegies, and non-vegies alike.

As well as amazing breakfast dishes including omlettes, porridge and granola choices along with delicious pancakes available with all types of berries, Cornucopia also offers a huge array of salads, a variety of soups and warm dishes (such as aubergine lasagne) available at lunchtime, so it is definitely worth a try any day of the week.

However, it is in the period running up to Christmas that it attracts the most attention, for Cornucopia claims to make the best mince pies in Dublin. Its festive option of homemade mince pies and mulled wine is available for the bargain price of €4.50, and is on offer throughout the Advent season. Huge and deliciously spicy with a fabulous crumbly texture, the mince-pies aren't so rich as to leave you feeling sickly afterwards. Topped with light-as-a-feather whipped cream, these festive pies are out of this world.

As an accompaniment, Cornucopia offers home-made mulled-wine which warms up your insides with a delicious spicy Christmassy taste. Be warned, however, seating is minimal and the place is popular. So, if you're after a scrumptious seasonal treat, take a dander down Wicklow Street to Cornucopia, but avoid the lunchtime rush.



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Mrs Fixit

Good Advice

Dear Mrs Fix-It,
As an avid reader of your column, I wonder whether anyone has ever complained about the excellent advice that you dispense.

Yours, Cecelia.

Dear Cecelia,
Once it transpired that I told a young lady to follow up on advances that a young man had made towards her. Alas, the young man was younger than she had admitted, and, well, you can see where I'm going with this. They'll be reunited in a few years, when he's finished his Leaving Certificate and she's finished her parole. Apart from the above unfortunate case, all of my readers have gone on to live happy, crime-free lives.

X-Rated

Dear Mrs Fix-It,
At present, I finish various forms of correspondence in different ways. With friends, I sign off with an "x". With acquaintances, it's my name and an "x". In formal situations I just use my full name. However, while writing an email to my professor, I inadvertently typed an "x" next to my name. Now he won't look me in the eye during tutorials. What can I do?
x Anne-Marie

Dear Anne-Marie,
Student Records Office is just off Front Gate. Go to them and demand that "X" be placed in front of your name. Thus forward claim that it's your initial. Pretend you really liked *Xena: Warrior Princess* or something. Granted, you will get some strange looks, and maybe lose some friends. It doesn't matter. The price of a new student card is nominal. The price of a shame-free education is not.

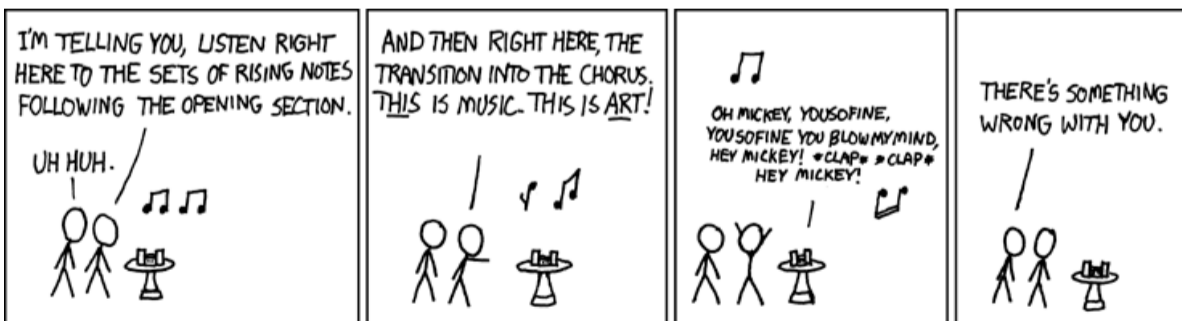
Fashionista or Fashion Disaster?

Dear Mrs Fix-It,
My mother and I constantly argue about my fashion sense. She says I'm misguided, I counter by saying that I'm expressing myself sartorially. It never resolves itself. The crux of the problem is thus: I like to wear navy and black at the same time. Am I a fashion maverick or poorly co-ordinated? Yours, Jason.

Dear Jason,
Surely you must have more important questions to occupy your mind. Nonetheless, never let it be said that I don't give all-around advice. So, navy suit + black hair = yes. Navy hair + black suit = no.

Have you got problems of your own that need fixing? Email Mrs Fixit at mrs.fixit@trinitynews.ie

xkcd.com no.237 / 193



St Vincent names her album for now-defunct television show Arrested Development. INTERVIEW P3

HOT



Christmas Cheer: Lights in Grafton St.! Parties to go to!

Best. Festive. Season. Ever.

digitalswordfish.wordpress.com :A successor to twentymajor? Host to the funniest conspiracy theories this side of the New Year.

Nude: Lunchtime is horrible, breakfast is fantastic though: Coffee and Porridge for €3.25.

Library Guilt: Packed desks, worried faces, hiding books. End of term brings out the worst in everyone. flash.



Plimsolls: Relegate them to the back of the wardrobe. The rain has no place for light footwear.

"So, what're your plans for New Year?": A seemingly harmless question, that strikes fear into the hearts of the unprepared.

NOT