

THE UNIVERSITY THEATRE  
presents

# THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD

by  
**John Millington Synge**

Directed by **Glenn Cannon**

Scene Design by **Richard Mason**  
Costume Design by **Sandra Finney**  
Technical direction and lighting by **Daniel H. Ettinger**

The Characters:

Margaret Flaherty, called Pegeen Mike. . . . .	Colleen Cosgrove
Shawn Keogh, her 2nd cousin, a young farmer . . . . .	Lynn C. Daic
Michael James Flaherty, a publican, Pegeen's father . . . . .	William A. Baker
Philly Cullen, a small farmer. . . . .	Doyal Davis
Jimmy Farrell, a small farmer. . . . .	Patrick A. Gilbert
Christopher Mahon . . . . .	Anthony Soper
Widow Quinn. . . . .	Shawne Dervay
Sara Tansey . . . . .	Susie Speck
Susan Brady. . . . .	Mieko Miya
Honor Blake . . . . .	Jeanne Softcheck
Nelly Cusak. . . . .	Brenda Renfroe
Old Mahon, a squatter, Christy's father . . . . .	John McShane
Villagers. . . . .	John Pimentel
	Thomasina Tibayan
	Thomas Boyajian

The action takes place in Flaherty's public house, or shebeen, in County Mayo, in the west of Ireland, around 1906.

ACT ONE: Evening  
ACT TWO: Morning of the next day  
ACT THREE: Later that day

There will be two ten minute intermissions.

## A Glossary

"Playboy"—variously: a hoaxter, coaxter, athlete, wonder-man.

"Western World"—variously: the west of Ireland (as opposed to the East, or Dublin), or Western Europe vs. the Orient.

"Poteen"—a local drink made from barley; similar to white lightning.

"Loy"—spade used for sod-cutting and turning.

"Shift"—chemise or slip worn under petticoats.

"Stooks of the Dead Women"—low rocks near the coast, shaped like stacks of grain.

"A Bona Fide"—a traveler entitled to buy a drink outside of regular hours.

"Kharki Cut-Throats"—soldiers.

"Peelers" or "Polis"—police.

"Streleen"—sharp chatter.

"Streeler"—vagrant.

"Nursing a feast"—hungry.

"Turbary"—right to dig turf for fuel.

"Trick-o-the-loop Man"—man running games at a fair.

"Cockshot Man"—man at whom balls are thrown at a fair.

"Butt of my Lug"—lobe of my ear.

"Union"—workhouse.

"Gallous Latin"—noble Latin.

"Parish Public House"—Public house (local pub or bar).

"Western States"—U.S.A.

## Director's Notes:

### THE PLAYWRIGHT

John Millington Synge was born in 1871 near Dublin, attended Trinity College and the Royal Irish Academy of Music where he studied the violin. He eventually made his way to Germany, then to Paris, where W.B. Yeats found him and convinced him to return to Ireland and involved him in the formation of the Abbey Theatre.

Synge wrote only five plays before he died in 1909: "In the Shadow of the Glen," "Riders to the Sea," "Playboy of the Western World," "The Tinker's Wedding," and "Deirdre of The Sorrows." "Riders to the Sea" and "Playboy of the Western World" were sufficient to mark him a playwright of genius. His death of Hodgkins Disease while he was only in his mid-thirties was the greatest single blow borne by the Abbey Theatre in its early years.

### THE PLAY

When "Playboy" premiered at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in January, 1907, it was met by jeers and catcalls and riots, ostensibly triggered by Christy's line in the play, "It's Pegeen I'm seeking only, and what'd I care if you brought me a drift of chosen females, standing in their shifts itself, maybe, from this place to the eastern world?" W.B. Yeats, who returned to Dublin after the initial riots occurred, described it this way:

On the Monday night no word of the play had been heard. About forty young men had sat in the front seats of the pit, and stamped and shouted and blown trumpets from the rise to the fall of the curtain.



On the Tuesday night also the forty young men were there. They wished to silence what they considered a slander upon Ireland's womanhood. Irish women would never sleep under the same roof with a young man without a chaperon, nor admire a murderer, nor use a word like 'shift'; nor could any one recognise the country men and women of Davis and Kickham in these poetical, violent, grotesque persons, who used the name of God so freely, and spoke of all things that hit their fancy.

But one of Synge's biographers, David H. Greene, notes the following:

John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* has gone down in the annals of the theater as a blow struck unwittingly for the freedom of Irish writers nine years before Ireland herself was to strike for freedom on the political front. The story of the *Playboy* riots has never been told completely, but everyone is aware that the tumults which greeted the actors during the first performances in Dublin were repeated later on in half a dozen American, Canadian, and English cities. Although the cue for brickbats was the reference in the third act to "a drift of chosen females, standing in their shifts," the trouble lay not so much in the implication that Irish maidens would stoop to such immodesty as in the fact that Ireland herself was being sniped at with the boldness of which only a native son is capable. The years of growing nationalism in which Ireland was whipping herself into a fury of self-pity which would culminate in bloody Easter Week was no time for a dramatist with an English name and a Protestant faith to make merry with her from the stage of the very theater she had become accustomed to look to for vindication and encouragement.

So Irishmen hooted down and very nearly silenced the play which was to be generally acclaimed the most perfect production of their national theater . . . . We may examine Synge's sources and determine how much of the material of the play is indigenous to Ireland or merely libellous of it. We know that he worked over the *Playboy* with great patience and unflagging persistence for seven years before he was satisfied with it and left at least ten complete drafts of the play, each one written over and corrected until it had become almost illegible. We know also that although Synge was in the main reworking an authentic story which he had picked up on his first visit to the Aran Islands in May of 1898 and subsequently printed in his Aran notebook, he also was not aware that his audience might consider his play a bold dramatization with satirical undertones.

Probably the most important comments of all are those by Synge himself in his preface to the published play:

In writing *The Playboy of the Western World*, as in my other plays, I have used one or two words only that I have not heard among the country people of Ireland, or spoken in my own nursery before I could read the newspapers. A certain number of the phrases I employ I have heard also from herds and fishermen along the coast from Kerry to Mayo or from beggar-women and ballad-singers nearer Dublin; and I am glad to acknowledge how much I owe to the folk-imagination of these fine people. Anyone who has lived in real intimacy with the Irish peasantry will know that the wildest sayings and ideas in this play are tame indeed, compared with the fancies one may hear in any little hillside cabin in Geesala, or Carraroe, or Dingle Bay . . . . In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple, and such speeches cannot be written by anyone who works among people who have shut their lips on poetry. In Ireland for a few years more, we have a popular imagination that is fiery, and magnificent, and tender; so that those of us who wish to write start with a chance that is not given to writers in places where the springtime of the local life has been forgotten, and the harvest is a memory only, and the straw has been turned into bricks.

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant to the Director: Miki Kim.

Production Stage Manager: James P. Cusack.

Light Crew: Victor Holliday, Patrick Kelly.

Stage Crew: John Pimentel.

Set Construction: Danny Anderson, Robert Chung, Thomas Boyajian, Patrick Kelly, Ralph Matsada, John Hiroshi, Dale Toyama, Kathy Dwyer, Jeri Goo.

Properties: MayField Drorbaugh, Cindy Wilburn.

Costume Construction: Virginia West, Crew Head; Gayla Gould, Ellen Boggs, Margaret O'Neil, Candy Williams, Carol Hioki, Cynthia Wilburn, Jane Ulyshen, Katherina Largosa, Pam Young, Jayme Peterson, Shirley In, Kathryn Yamamoto.

Costume Crew: Gayla Gould, Margaret O'Neil.

Photography: Diane Chong, Stanford Chong.

Program: Eric Pourchot, Billie Ikeda (University Relations Office).

Publicity: Eric Pourchot, Lynne Nakamura.

House Manager: Dale Grocholski.

Box Office: David Furumoto, Catherine Fancher, Norman Gibson, Adele Nakata.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:** Thanks to Michael Tamaru and Billie Ikeda of the University Relations Office for the design and layout of the University Theatre's 1978-79 season announcement, and to Suzanne Bowen of Graphic Media Design for the poster design.

**FACULTY:** Edward Langhans, Chairman; Glenn Cannon, Director of the Theatre; Carl Wolz, Director of Dance; Mark Boyd (on leave), James Brandon, Dennis Carroll, Bernard Dukore (on leave), Sandra Finney, Tamara Hunt, Terence Knapp, Richard Mason, Kathleen McClintock, Yasuki Sasa.

**LECTURERS:** Emily Adams, Patricia Harter, James Hutchison, Jacqueline Kellett, Earl Kingston, Karen Masaki, Donna Pelle, Elizabeth Wichmann.

**STAFF:** Arthur Caldeira, Sandie Izawa, Takeo Miji, Nancy Takei.

**GRADUATE ASSISTANTS:** Bill Baker, Penny Bergman, Robert Bethune, James Cusack, Daniel Ettinger, Victor Holliday, Cinda Jay, Eric Pourchot, Rex Reynolds, Douglas Rosentrater, Virginia West, Peggy Wettig.

*Notice: Smoking is not allowed in the auditorium nor may photographs or recordings be made during the performance.*



# THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD



October 6, 7, 8  
12, 13, 14, 15, 1978

Kennedy Theatre  
University of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii