DANGING AT LUGHNASA

BY BRIAN FRIEL

Resources,
Content Warnings &
Self-Care Pack

GMCA

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND 11 OCT - 8 NOV 2025 royalexchange.co.uk

SHEFF!ELD THEATRES

Dancing at Lughnasa Resource Pack

This resource pack has been designed to support young audiences attending the performances of Dancing at Lughnasa. We've created this pack to give an insight into the play and the making of this production as well as explore some of the history and important themes surrounding it.

Contents

Pre-Visit Information: Page 3

About the Show: Page 4

Mundy Family Tree: Page 5

Cast & Creative Team: Page 6 -7

Rehearsal Photos: Page 8

Director & Cast Talk: Page 9

Costume Design: Page 10 - 12

The Summer of 1936, Time & Place: Page 13

Irish Independence: Page 14

Church, State & Women's Place: Page 15

The Dangers of Dance: Page 16

Lughnasa, Celtic Heritage, Harvest & Ritual: Page 17

Beyond Ballybeg - Uganda, Obuntu & African Spirituality: Page 18

Beyond Ballybeg - Uganda, British Empire & Leprosy: Page 19

Beyond Ballybeg, Fascism in Europe: Page 20

Modernity & Marconi: Page 21

Questions & Talking Points: Page 22

Soda Bread Recipe: Page 23

Coming Up at the Theatre: Page 24

Schools & Colleges Days: Page 25

Pre-Visit Information

Running Time

2hrs 35mins with a 20 minute interval

Content Warnings

Age Guidance: 12+. Themes include rape, animal cruelty, slurs, ableism and death. These are implied in the text rather than visually represented on stage.

For the most up to date content warnings, please visit the show webpage.

Travel Recommendations

Trams

If your school or college is near a tram stop you can get your students to us for just £1 each and £2 per teacher. A great way to save money on coaches and also give students the life experience of how a lot of our audiences use public transport to access our theatre. More information here:

<u>Fares</u> and passes for young people | Transport for Greater Manchester (tfgm.com)

Coaches

For all information about coach drops offs and parking please click <u>here</u>



Show Information 3

About the Show

On the outskirts of Ballybeg, County Donegal, the five Mundy sisters lives are bound by responsibilities and social expectations.

When influences from a wider, more modern world creep into their home, the sisters' are swept along in a sea of change and suddenly the life they know is gone for good.

Brian Friel's multi-award-winning drama is a powerful and moving exploration of reflection, memory and how the future will arrive no matter how much we resist.

In Friel's words:

In his notebook and pages including the first sketches for the play Brian Friel asks himself "What is the play about?" The answer: "The play is about dancing in the 30s."

"This nagging idea of Dance (naturalistic dance, dances as essential theatre, dance as complete self-expression) persists ... dance as memory – dance as dream-memory, dance as substitute for language."



About The Show 4

The Mundy Family Tree









Kate

Father Jack









Rose

Occupation: Knitter







Age: 32





(gloves)





Agnes

Occupation: (handmade Age: 35 Knitter



domestic work in the Mundy

Teacher

Priest (retired)

home

Occupation: N/A -unpaid

Occupation:

Occupation: Missionary

Age: 53

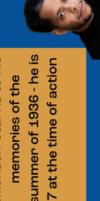
School

Age: 40

Age: 38



summer of 1936 - he is Age: An adult narrator Michael returns to his memories of the





The Mundy Family

Age: 33

The 5 Mundy sisters live together in the family Michael, the play's narrator, is Chris' son, his and Gerry were never married, Michael was father Gerry is a travelling salesman. Chris brother, Father Jack, upon his return from home in Ballybeg - they are joined by their his missionary post in Uganda.

raised by his mother and aunts in Ballybeg.

5

The Mundy Family Tree

Cast



Rosemary Boyle Swing



Rachel O'Connell Rose



Martha Dunlea Chris



Kwaku Fortune Michael



Richard Galloway
Swing



Siobhan O'Kelly Maggie



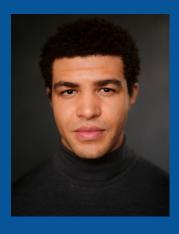
Frank Laverty Jack



Laura Pyper Agnes



Natalie Radmall-Quirke Kate



Marcus Rutherford Gerry

Meet The Cast

Creative Team

Director
Set & Costume Designer
Movement Director
Lighting Designer
Composer & Sound Designer
Casting Director
Associate Director
Birkbeck Assistant Director
Fight Director
Associate Lighting Designer

Elizabeth Newman
Francis O'Connor
Sundeep Saini
Chris Davey
Pippa Murphy
Arthur Carrington
Amanda Collins
Sadie Mears
Kaitlin Howard
Mark Distin Webster

Creative Team 7

Rehearsal Photos









All rehearsal photos by Johan Persson

Rehearsal Photos

Director & Cast Talk



"When choosing what play with Selina, it felt important to us both that we make a great play that asks big questions in small rooms. DANCING AT LUGHNASA does just that – and then some.

It's about faith, religion, memory, identity, family, duty, oppression, freedom, love – and it's deeply concerned with the roles women are asked to play, and the cost of living within, or outside of, societal rules.

It's intimate, nostalgic, funny and devastating, often all at once." Elizabeth Newman, Director

Watch the full interview with Elizabeth Newman & the Cast here



Elizabeth Newman

(Director) is a multi-award-winning theatre director and has directed over 100 theatre productions across the UK. She is Sheffield Theatres' Artistic Director. Before joining Sheffield Theatres July 2024, Elizabeth was Artistic Director at Pitlochry Festival Theatre. Notable productions include Faith Healer, for which she won Best Director in The Critic's Awards for Theatre in Scotland.

Alongside her work as a theatre director, Artistic Director and designer, Elizabeth has written numerous adaptations for the stage. A champion of new writing, her work has been acknowledged by the Writers' Guild of Great Britain.

Trailer & Teaser 9

Set & Costume Design by Francis O'Connor

Francis O'Connor trained at Wimbledon School of Art under Richard Negri (who designed our module theatre!). His career in the last thirty years has encompassed work across drama, musical theatre and opera.

Francis has designed numerous plays for the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. The Gate Theatre, Dublin. The National Theatre, London and The Royal Shakespeare Company. He has also premiered much new work with the Royal Court and Hampstead Theatre

"Francis, our set and costume designer, has worked not only on Friel's plays before, but with the man himself. That depth of connection brings an invaluable authenticity to the process.

In the Crucible and for the Exchange space, we're always thinking about how to invite the audience into the world, rather than building it around them. Being on three sides and in-the-round, literalism doesn't serve the work — instead, we aim for a theatrical reality. Something symbolic, suggestive. Metaphor is useful. Something that creates space for the audience to bring their imagination." - Elizabeth Newman, Director

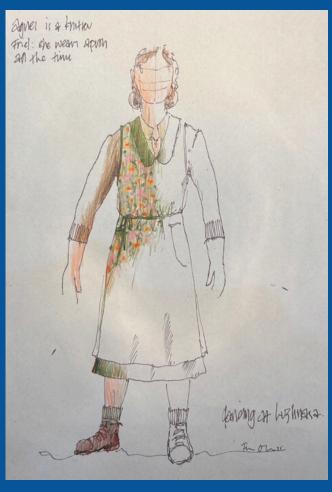
Thinking with Design

Where do you feel, in Director Elizabeth Newman's words, costume & set act as 'metaphor' in the play? How do they help us understand the story?

The sisters' dress is limited by their means - where can you see moments of self expression and invention in their costumes? What do these small details & differences say about their characters?

How do the character's costumes change between the play's first and final images? What does this suggest about the show?

Costume Design 10



Agnes Mundy



Rose Mundy

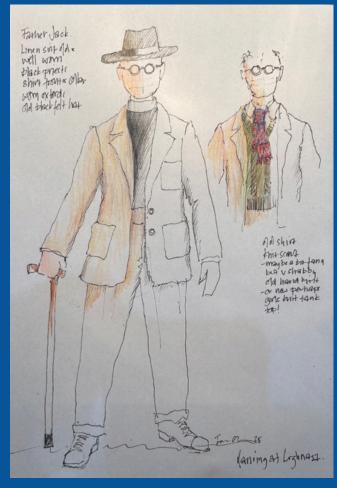


Kate Mundy



Chris Mundy

Costume Design 11



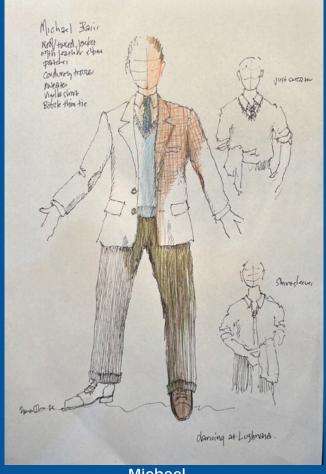


Father Jack



Gerry Evans

Father Jack



Michael

12 Costume Design

The Summer of 1936 – time and place in the Republic of Ireland

Dancing at Lughnasa, like many of Friel's plays, is set in the fictional Ballybeg (a name derived from the Irish for 'little town'), in County Donegal.

Donegal is the Republic of Ireland's most northerly county, with a landscape defined by high ground sloping steeply to the sea, a land of rough pasture, upland bog and water. Following 1922, the county was settling into geo-political shift, landing as a new borderland on the new dividing line between the 2 Irish states.

Michael's memories take us back to the summer of 1936, a time that can be characterised by the modernisation and industrialisation of everyday life, the rise of fascism across Europe between the two World Wars, and historic change in Ireland.

The play is set 15 years after the Irish War of Independence & 1 year before the 1937 Constitution which marked the formation of the Republic of Ireland - a time of searching and building of a new national identity.

The following pages offer insights into the socio-historic context to the play which may be of interest when thinking about the play's themes.

Irish Independence - War, a New State & the Question of Identity

England first invaded Ireland in **1169**, the Tudor's full conquest of Ireland in the **17**th Century brought Ireland under English monarchy & parliamentary rule which lasted for centuries. This led Friedrich Engels to observe in a letter (1856) to Karl Marx that "Ireland may be regarded as the first English colony".

Fought between **1919** and **1921**, for the cause of Irish independence from British colonial rule, this was a guerrilla and sectarian conflict involving Irish republicans, Ulster loyalists and British government forces. It brought about the creation of Northern Ireland, which remained part of the United Kingdom, and the Irish Free State, which would later become the Republic of Ireland.

After the Irish War of Independence, an **Anglo-Irish treaty** (1922) was signed which provided for a self-governing Irish state. The Free State was established as a dominion of the British Empire. It comprised 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland. Northern Ireland, which was made up of the remaining 6 counties, exercised its right under the Treaty to opt out of the new state.

In **1931**, the Parliament of the United Kingdom relinquished nearly all its remaining authority to legislate for the Irish Free State. This had the effect of granting the Free State internationally recognised independence. It was a further time of transition as the Free State moved from constitutional monarchy to a constitutional democracy (a republic).

When a new state is formed, one of the questions it must answer is: Who are we?

When Eamon de Valera (Ireland's first Prime Minister) was writing up the new Irish constitution in 1937, religion was his primary solution to build up a story of national identity. He turned to the Catholic Church to stand as the moral high ground for the nation.

Church, State & Women's Place

While women (like Kate) played a crucial role in the War of Independence, including fighting alongside male comrades, carrying dispatches and providing medical care, the closening ties between the Catholic Church and Irish State created a regressive climate for feminist politics and women's rights.

- 1929: Censorship of Publications Act is passed, banning and censoring out parts of books that were immoral or indecent. The act also established the Censorship of Publications Board, which is still functioning in 2015 as a source of sifting immoral literature out of the public eye.
- 1932: The marriage bar is enacted, forcing women National School teachers to retire after getting married.
- 1935: Conditions of Unemployment Bill is passed with support from De Valera. The bill "gave the Minister for Industry and Commerce authority to limit the number of women employed in any given industry and limit the type of industries that could employ women."

Such attitudes were embedded in the **1937 Constitution** which marked women's place as within the domestic home:

- Article 41.1.1. The State recognises the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law.
- Article 41.1.2. The State, therefore, guarantees to protect the Family in its constitution and authority, as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the Nation and the State.
- Article 41.2.1. In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.
- Article 41.2.2. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that
 mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in
 labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.

'[The sisters'] dance is the dance of the misplaced, of proud, gifted, bravely energetic women whose lives are misshapen by an Irish society that will as it changes, destroy the life they have struggled to achieve.'

- Bridget O'Toolee

The Dangers of Dance

The sister's dance throughout - moving their bodies in moments of freedom & expression. Friel's choice to set the play in 1936, 1 year after the Public Dance Halls Act was passed, emphasises a radical revolt inherent in their dance.

Anxiety about the corrupting nature of public dances preoccupied the Irish clergy in the 1920s and 30s. Perceived as a catalyst for immoral behaviour, and often credited with the increase in illegitimate births, Catholic bishops pressed for the strict regulation of dances as a matter of national urgency.

The Irish Government's **Public Dance Halls Act** (1935 – 1 year before the play is set) brought in requirements for licensing of all dancing venues, effectively ending the traditional custom of crossroads (outdoor) and night dances. The creation of the Act highlights the Church's significant influence on Irish policy making, and a sign that the new nation would be distinguished less by its Celtic traditions than by its conservative Roman Catholicism

The Evils of Dancing (extract)

Statement of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland issued at their Meeting in Maynooth on 6 October, 1925

There is danger of losing the name which the chivalrous honour of Irish boys and the Christian reserve of Irish maidens had won for Ireland. If our people part with the character that gave rise to that name, we lose with it much of our national strength, and still more of the high rank we have held in the Kingdom of Christ.

Purity is strength, and purity and faith go together. Both virtues are in danger these times, but purity is more directly assailed [...] and **there is no worse fomenter of this great evil than the dancing hall.**

Dances may lower or destroy the moral tone of the whole countryside."

Dal gCais (extract)

by Junior Crehan, 1977

The way of life at Markham's Cross and the country house dance was rooted in our traditions and culture. But this way of life was ended in the mid-1930s [...].

The Dance Hall Act had closed our schools of tradition and left us a poorer people. In addition to this, in the 1940s, the rate of emigration increased rapidly. The youth saw nothing in their own country but poverty, and Government and Church collected their Dance-Hall dues from a falling population. The countryside was once more going through that terrible silence which it had suffered after the Famine, the silence of a departing people and a dying of music and song.

Lughnasa, Celtic Heritage, Harvest & Ritual

Friel sets the play in the festival of Lughnasa - a festival of harvest with pagan roots. The backdrop reverberates with alternative histories of Ireland - those that preceded colonialism and the Church - and with them possible futures.

Lughnasa - Cross Quarter Day Lughnasadh (Lughnasad, Lughnasa, Lugnasad, Lúnasa) - pronounced Lou-na-sa.

Throughout Ireland, the festival of Lughnasa was held in early August celebrating harvest. With Celtic roots (pre-Roman conquest, earliest written records of Lughnasa date to the 15th century), practices remained in Ireland in the 20th Century.

In Celtic mythology the god Lugh (sun god), one of the chief gods of the Tuatha De Danann, established the Lughnasadh festival as a funeral feast and games commemorating his foster-mother Tailtiu. She died on August 1st of exhaustion after clearing the plains of Brega for farming. The games held in Tailtiu's honour culminated in a funeral pyre at the harvest's end.

An oral account of Lughansa, 1942 Gortahork, County Donegal

As I remember it, I heard people say that it was on the first Sunday of the month of Lughnasa they used to have a great day on the tops of the hills about here looking for bilberries. The Sunday was set out specially for the young people, to go off to the hills as soon as the mid-day was eaten, and they would not return again until twilight had fallen. [...]

After reaching the top of the hill they would sit and eat their lunches. They used to bring flat cakes of oatmeal and milk for the day. Then they would go here and there over the hill looking for bilberries. [...] When they returned from their gathering of bilberries they had a strange custom. They all sat down on the hill-top and the boys began to make bracelets of bilberries for the girls. [...]

When that was done a man, or maybe a girl, would be named to sing a song. [...]

After the singing they would begin the dancing. According to the old talk, they had no instrument for music at all; they had to make do with lilting. In those days boys and girls were good at lilting, and they would make enough music for those who were dancing

Beyond Ballybeg - Uganda, Obuntu & African Spirituality

Ryanga, the Ugandan village Jack lived and worked in, like Ballybeg, is a fictional creation – a metaphorical space which sits between the real and symbolic. While Friel's representation of tribal practices is limited by it's non-specificity, it reflects tenants of Obuntu, African spirituality which underpins the spiritual & metaphysical outlook of Ugandan tribes.

Knoetze defined African spirituality as 'a holistic concept that stemmed from the historical, cultural and religious heritage of Africa, and includes among others, folktales, beliefs, rituals and culture'. It encompasses proverbs, names of people and places, sacred places, customs, festivals, ceremonies, norms and values passed across generations.

Expressed as **Obuntu in Uganda or Ubuntu in Southern Africa**, African Spirituality encompasses philosophical beliefs and values surrounding the interconnectedness between people and the natural environment, collectiveness, community, and caring.

The principles of holism and non-dualism in African spirituality emphasise the interconnections between the physical and spiritual, visible and invisible, and the living and the dead. The family is central in African spirituality and distributes reciprocal duties, tasks, and responsibilities according to positional status in the kinship system.

Pre-colonisation, the supreme God was named differently in various cultures. The Jopadhola of Eastern Uganda refer to the omnipotent God as Were. In Western Uganda, the Cwezi-kubandwa religion was most prominent in Bunyoro Kingdom (Doyle). In Central Uganda, the Baganda refer to the supreme creator as Katonda — the father of gods. There are various gods (balubaale) who are understood as guardians of nature. For example, Musisi is responsible for earthquakes, Mukasa for the lake, & Nagaddya for marriage and harvest.

Spirituality was also characterised by the African cosmology, where people recognised the presence of local spirits in every local scenery like the lakes, forests, rocks, mountains, plants and natural occurrences like rainfall, drought, earthquakes (Chepkwony). There was and is a belief in life and death and the communication to ancestors through omens, divination and dreams. Other sacred religious objects included drums, spears, baskets, and attires.

Beyond Ballybeg - Uganda, British Empire & Leprosy

Uganda & British Empire

Uganda was a colonial creation that was formed by joining the kingdoms of Buganda and Bunyoro. In 1894, Uganda became a protectorate of the British Empire and was administrated by the British until 1962. In the 1920s, Uganda was home to numerous tribes, with the Baganda being the largest ethnic group, followed by other groups like the Soga, Acholi, Banyankole, Batoro, and Karamojong. Other prominent tribes included the Luo people and the Batwa. These tribes, along with many others, were already established in various regions of Uganda, though the specific tribal demographics were evolving, particularly due to colonial policies and interactions.

World War 1 East Africa East African campaign -

Jack briefly served as a British Army Chaplain with the British troops in WW1 East Africa campaign.

Part of the African theatre of World War I The East African campaign was a series of battles and guerrilla actions, which started in German East Africa (GEA) and spread to portions of Mozambique, Rhodesia, British East Africa, the Uganda, and the Belgian Congo. The campaign all but ended in German East Africa in November 1917 when the Germans entered Mozambique and continued the campaign living off Portuguese supplies

During the East Africa campaign, British Empire forces lost over 10,000 men. German losses were about 2,000. East Africans suffered the most. One estimate is that around 100,000 carriers and camp followers died on both sides. There were also thousands of civilian casualties.

Leprosy In Uganda

In 1927, the first Secretary of British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, Mr. Frank Oldrieve, toured East Africa. He found that 924 people were being treated for leprosy. The Government Medical Officer estimated an incidence of two per thousand of the population.

Legislation enforced the segregation of people with leprosy. There were Leprosy Camps in Busiro, Teso, Budo and Bunyoro. They had no fixed staff, but the Government Medical Officer of the district and members of his staff visited the hospitals, dispensaries, and camps to treat people.

Beyond Ballybeg - Fascism in Europe

At moments across the play we feel the tremors of fascism's rise in Europe reach the hearth of the sisters' rural home - including in a children's song & Gerry's joining of the International Brigade.

The Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War began 17 July 1936 with a military coup, led by army generals Emilo Mola & Francisco Franco, aimed at overthrowing the country's democratically elected republic. Splintering the country into 2 sides and a 3 year war (1936-39), the bloodiest conflict western Europe had experienced since the end of World War 1.

The right-wing Nationalists included ultra-reactionary monarchists (Carlists), fascists (Falangists) as well as traditional conservatives & Spain's landed aristocracy. Their message was that Spain needed to be purged and purified, a return to traditional social and moral values. Franco's army received military support from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

The Republican forces (Loyalists) too included a broad spectrum of political positions from moderate democrats, liberals, and socialists to more radical Leftists, such as Communists (both of the Stalinist and Trotskyist varieties) and Anarchists.

International Brigade

The International Brigades were volunteer military units of foreign anti-fascist fighters who came to Spain to support the elected Republican government during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) against a Nationalist military revolt. Organized by the Communist International, these brigades drew about 35,000 volunteers from over 50 countries, although only about 20,000 served at any one time.

The Second Italo-Abyssinian War

The Second Italo-Ethiopian War, also referred to as the Second Italo-Abyssinian War, was a war of aggression waged by Italy against Ethiopia, which lasted from October 1935 to February 1937. Italy invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in October 1935. Mussolini launched the war as part of his vision of building the next great Roman Empire - a defining narrative of Italian Fascism.

Modernity & Marconi

The sister's radio, fondly named Marconi, is the source of all the music in the play. With a life and name of its own it has the presence of a character. A rare luxury in the Mundy house, it's stuttering sounds mark the modernisation of rural life.

Radios in Ireland

Guglielmo Marconi, a Nobel Prize-winning Italian electrical scientist, was granted the world's first patent for a system of wireless telegraphy, and developed the first transatlantic radio signal in 1901. The Marconi radios connected people from across the world in a way that had never been done before.

A few high-power radio transmitters were placed across the world, and one made its way into Athlone, Ireland in 1932, allowing the entire country to receive stronger broadcasting signals. In 1932, only 5% of households owned radios, which increased by 100,000 people by the time the transmitter was created in Athlone. The stronger signals didn't translate into accessibility, and as Sean Dorman observed in his book Valley of Graneen: Sketches of Donegal (1944), radios were still a rare commodity in rural Ireland.

Valley of Graneen: Sketches of Donegal (1944)

For a time I allowed my radio to continue playing, assuming that it would have the interest of a novelty. There are many wireless sets in the Donegal highlands, but not in the valley of Graneen where the people are too poor to afford them, and whenever I passed any of them, working in a field or on a turf stack, I would be asked for the latest news about the war

The Rise of Industry

Ireland had been a predominantly agricultural society, founded in small farmsteads. When the Irish free state was established in early 1920s it had a very small industrial sector – in 1926 only 13% of the labour force was engaged in industry & only 10% in manufacturing.

Spurred by the economic war with Britian, and resulting policy of strong protection against imports, 1930s saw the first phase of sustainable industrial growth in the Irish Free State. Manufacturing employment more than doubled between 1931-1951 — quickly changing the social landscape. Imagine, for example, what it felt for Chris to leave the family home and enter a factory — a previously unimagined space in the local community.

Questions

'The women dance. They are not, all the time, victims of their culture.

Something exists whereby people can get outside their history, their given, fated narratives.' Robert Welch

- What did the moments of dance make you feel? Friel said the play explores "dance as substitute for language" what do you think the sisters say through dance? Are there things they cannot say in words if so who or what silences them? Is dance always a poorer 'substitute for language' or can something be gained by communicating without words?
- Why do you think Friel set the play during the festival of Lughnasa?
- How is Father Jack changed by living in Uganda? What connections between the people of Ryanga & Ballybeg are suggested by the play (you might think about the use of ritual & dance)? What do you think the play suggests we should learn from the people of Ryanga?
- Dancing at Lughnasa is a memory play, framed by Michael's narration. How is memory used as a framework in the play? What does this play tell us about the nature of memory?
- All the music in the play comes from the radio, Marconi. Embedded within the home the radio has the life of a character. What role do you think the radio plays in the story?
- Where do you feel the women's lives are 'misshapen' by society and in what moments do they challenge oppressive forces, where do they find freedom?
- How do you think the play explores national identity? Does this feel relevant to you today?

Questions 21

Soda Bread Recipe

<u>Ingredients:</u>

340g wholemeal flour

½ tsp salt

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

290ml buttermilk

Method:

Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.

Tip the flours, salt and bicarbonate of soda into a large bowl and stir.

Make a well in the centre and pour in the buttermilk, mixing quickly with a large fork to form a soft dough. (Depending upon the absorbency of the flour, you may need to add a little milk if the dough seems too stiff but it should not be too wet or sticky.)

Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead briefly. Form into a round and flatten the dough slightly before placing on a lightly floured baking sheet.

Cut a cross on the top and bake for about 30 minutes or until the loaf sounds hollow when tapped. Cool on a wire rack.

Soda Bread Recipie 22

Coming Up at Royal Exchange Theatre



Singin' In The Rain

Director Raz Shaw returns to the Exchange, following his smash hit production of THE PRODUCERS; with SINGIN IN THE RAIN - a musical packed with iconic songs such as Make 'em laugh, Good Morning, Moses and of course the iconic title tune Singin' In The Rain.

A timeless masterpiece, and perhaps one of the greatest musicals ever made, this charismatic, tapdancing extravaganza tells the story of the highs and lows of Hollywood through the eyes of the infamous Don Lockwood, Lina Lamont, Cosmo Brown and Kathy Selden as a radical move is made from silent movies to the 'talkies'.

Seamlessly blending song and dance the audience will find themselves in the heart of the action of this muchloved musical on the Exchange's iconic in-the-round stage.

This is one Christmas show not to be missed!



Road

By Jim Cartwright, featuring Lucy Beaumont, Shobna Gulati, Lesley Joseph, Johnny Vegas, and with special guest Sir Tom Courtenay on film.

Jim Cartwright's award-winning masterpiece invites you to join the inhabitants of this derelict northern road on an unforgettable journey. Shockingly relevant to our lives today, the play's visceral, eloquent poetry paints a tough world with tenderness.

Directed by Artistic Director Selina Cartmell, this revival marks the 40th anniversary of the play. In this exhilarating theatrical experience, audiences explore the Royal Exchange before taking their seats in the theatre.

'You want something different. Stay, I mean it.'

Schools & Colleges Days

Our Schools & Colleges Days offer an exclusive performance for students with additional activity for young people to get involved in, helping bring each play to life. Watching theatre with a room of peers brings an electrifying energy to our shows, supporting students in laying claim to the space, performance, and theatre.

ROAD - Tuesday 10 March 2026

Explore the legacy of Thatcher's Britain as Johnny Vegas leads the audience through a promenade experience of Jim Cartwright's ROAD 1PM performance, followed by a Q&A with members of the cast

Pricing: Show and Q&A – £15 per ticket.

1x free teacher ticket per 15 students.

Book via this <u>short form</u> from Monday 29 September

KING LEAR - Wednesday 21 October 2026

An intimate view of David Threlfall's searing portrait of a king unable to distinguish truth from lies.

A morning of on stage demonstrations & workshops with the creative team Performance, followed by a Q&A with members of the cast

Pricing: Whole day — £20 per ticket

Pricing: Show and Q&A — £15 per ticket

1x free teacher ticket per 15 students

Content of the day TBC, keep informed by filling out this short form.



Schools & Colleges Days 24

Tag us

@rxtheatre 📵 😝 😉 🗗

Stay in touch

- wisit royalexchange.co.uk
- call 0161 833 9833
- email engage@royalexchange.co.uk

