



Teacher's Resources

THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE



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THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE

Sydney Theatre Company Education Resources 2010

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SYNOPSIS

Set in a backwater village in the west of Ireland, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* is a brilliant black comedy by award-winning Irish playwright Martin McDonagh.

Maureen, a middle-aged spinster, lives with her elderly, manipulative mother Mag. Maureen's sisters have flown the nest, escaping the drab family home, but Maureen, who has a history of mental illness, remains at home, trapped in a dysfunctional relationship with her mother.

The arrival of an invitation sparks hopes of a last-chance romance and offers Maureen the prospect of an escape to a new life. Things might just be looking up for her...but not if the interfering Mag has anything to do with it.

With hope scuppered and long-suppressed hatred unleashed, Maureen becomes intent on wreaking a terrible revenge, which will bring the play to its horrifying conclusion.

Loaded with savage irony, surreal humour and a touch of melodrama, Martin McDonagh's *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* looks at the malevolence of people leading hopeless lives.

(<http://www.sydneytheatre.com.au/stced/2010/beauty-queen>)

CREATIVE TEAM

Director – Cristabel Sved

Set & Costume Designer – William Bobbie Stewart

Lighting Designer – Verity Hampson

Sound Designer – Max Lyandvert

CAST

Mag – Judi Farr

Ray – Eamon Farren

Pato – Darren Gilshenan

Maureen – Mandy McElhinney.



THEMES

- Matricide
- Social Isolation
- Aged Care
- Escape
- Irish Culture



The Beauty Queen of Leenane can be summed up as a vicious and bitter power struggle between Mag and Maureen. As the play progresses, the audience first sympathises with one, and then the other, as they are equally abused and abuser.

AIM: To explore the themes of conflict and power.

IRISH DUELS

(Augusto Boal, 2002, *Games For Actors And Non-Actors* Routledge, p. 82)

Knees – Two players cover knees with hands. Players try

to touch opponent's knees without being tagged. One point for each touch, first to three touches is the winner.

Foot – Players must keep one foot off ground, while trying to touch the foot of the other player with their foot (careful if wearing shoes!). First to three touches is the winner.

Finger – Players keep one hand behind back and form a finger 'sword' with the other. Players must try to touch opponent on small of back. First to three touches is the winner.

Side-coach players to switch between 'foot', 'knee', 'finger' etc. As they switch, the players invariably mimic an Irish gig.

Discuss:

1. What did you experience in the duel? What was it like to win?
2. Why are these games called 'Irish duels'?
3. Does this game reflect elements of Irish culture?
4. What changes a game from being playful to becoming dangerous?

During the production watch out for how this game reflects the game that is played between Mag and Maureen.

“

MAUREEN: Drink!

MAG: I don't like it, Maureen.

MAUREEN: Would you like it better over your head?

”

Scene Two,
The Beauty Queen of Leenane.





ENEMY & PROTECTOR

(based on 'Friend & Enemy' Augusto Boal, 2002, Games For Actors And Non-Actors Routledge, p. 122-123)

Aim: to set up metaphor for Mag & Maureen's relationship & their conflicting roles as enemy/protector of each other

Walk freely about the space.

Choose one person to be your enemy and another to be your protector, without telling anybody what you have decided.

Get as close to the protector as possible, without physical contact.

Keep as far away from the enemy as possible.

Swap, so that the protector becomes the enemy and vice versa.



Improvise a scene between two characters.

Establish character and situation. For example, hairdresser and client in a salon.

Prompt the improvisers to switch from enemy to protector and back again.

Note, they must justify each transition.

Add a new character to the scene, who can choose his or her enemy/protector relationship to the two established characters upon entrance.

Prompt the improvisers to move between enemy and protector, noting the different alliances that appear.

Discuss:

1. Could anybody tell whether they were somebody's protector or enemy?
2. If so, did they change their behaviour to assist the other person?
3. By the conclusion of the game, you will have viewed one person as both protector and enemy. Is it possible for one person to be both, at the same time?

“

MAUREEN: Arsing me around, eh? Interfering with my life again? Isn't it enough that I've had to be on beck and call for you every day for the last twenty years? ”

Scene Two,
The Beauty Queen of Leenane.

Rehearsal rooms are full of reference images for character, set, theme and costume.



AIM: To develop an appreciation for how imagery and cultural references impact upon an actor's performance and a play's interpretation by a director.



View the character and set reference images on the STC Ed website

Create similar collages based on your ideas of the themes of the production: Ireland, Mother/Daughter relationships, Romance, Isolation, Escape.

Compare your collages to others in the group.

Discuss:

What are the similarities/differences?

How might a play based on each person's different vision differ?

Log book: Using the different responses from the class, explain in your log books the notion of 'Director's interpretation.' How can you use the process of collecting images that relate to the themes of a script to inform choices for actors, director and designers?

“ A touristy-looking embroidered tea-towel hangs further along the back wall, bearing the inscription, ‘May you be half an hour in Heaven afore the Devil knows you’re dead’.

Martin McDonagh,
Stage directions, Scene One,
The Beauty Queen of Leenane.

Set & Costume Designer – William Bobbie Stewart

Lighting Designer – Verity Hampson

Sound Designer – Max Lyandvert

To deepen an understanding of how design works in live performance, we suggest you do the following in relation to the design as described throughout the play and envisaged by the reader, and then revisit after watching the performance to compare the choices made in this production with your original responses. (See post-show discussions for further follow-up).



AIM: To develop an appreciation for how design elements impact upon an actor’s performance and a play’s interpretation by a director.



Read McDonagh’s written stage directions for Scene One, which describe the set.

Draw a basic representation of McDonagh’s directions.

Note the elements of the design that stand out as crucial to the plot, revealing about the characters’ respective state of mind, or symbolic of their situation. For example, what is the significance of the inscription on the tea-towel, quoted above?

Add any changes McDonagh makes to the set throughout the play.

Swap your design with somebody else in the classroom. Use a different colour pen to heighten the impact of those design elements discussed. For example, the oven is ‘newer’ – can this be made to look ominous?

Discuss:

1. The reaction the set design should evoke the moment the audience enter the theatre.
2. Should the audience’s reaction to the set change during the play? When and why?
3. How do the characters relate to the set? Find examples in the stage directions or the dialogue to demonstrate the character’s relationship to their environment.
4. How do the actors relate to the set? How can they use their interaction with their physical environment to demonstrate or reveal their emotional state?



Create three set designs, one for a traditional proscenium arch theatre, one for a production in the round, and one for a production with audience members on two sides.

Discuss:

1. How does each different set design impact on the relationship of the audience to the characters?
2. How does each set design facilitate the power struggle between the characters?
3. What dramatic themes are enhanced by each set design?
- + 4. Build a scale model of your favourite design based on the Wharf One theatre specifications (found here: www.sydneytheatre.com.au/stced/resources/hsc).



IRISH DRAMA STUDENTS

1. Which other plays studied in Irish Drama could also be performed on this set?
2. What are the common themes found in Irish drama demonstrated by this set?
3. Is this set inherently or uniquely Irish?

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Post-production Resources

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“ Because he's a playwright, he's very particular about how the dialogue is spoken. The nuances, the rhythms, the repetitions are so specific, even with the four-letter words, that we wanted to get it exactly right. ”

Ralph Fiennes, Actor, on his role as Harry in McDonagh's film *In Bruges*.

The Beauty Queen of Leenane has many examples of what we might call understatement, as well as characters not saying what they mean, or not doing as they said they would. McDonagh also uses a great deal of repetition, and his language is carefully tuned to the Irish dialect; the colloquialisms as well as the manner of speaking.



AIM: To discover the impact of language on both form and content.

Find short examples of repetition within the dialogue.

For example, as Maureen enters at the beginning of the play:

MAG: Wet, Maureen?

MAUREEN: Of course wet.

MAG: Oh-h.

And as she enters in Scene Two:

MAG: Cold, Maureen?

MAUREEN: Of course cold.

MAG: Oh-h.

Discuss:

1. What is the subtext behind these exchanges of Mag and Maureen?
2. Why do you think they go through this 'ask and answer'?
3. What is the difference between what characters say and the way they say it? Which do you think is more important/effective?
4. Mag and Maureen echo each other often. What do you think their repetition reveals about them as individuals and about their relationship?
5. How much do you think the language 'makes' the play for the audience by revealing the circumstances as well as the characters? Think about the accent, as well as sentence structure.
6. Compare this play to a sitcom on everyday television. Are there any similarities?

THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE

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Compare McDonagh’s use of language and repetition with word play in other texts, such as Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Write a scene between two characters that share common words.

Re-Write the scene so that the common language between them causes the conversation to break down for comic effect.



Write complete gibberish for 20 secs.

Argue with a partner using only gibberish; use what you’ve written to start you off and prompt you if you get stuck.



Improvise a scene in which one person says a line, and the other must repeat it, but can interpret it completely differently.

Improvise a scene where each character must speak line about, and each line must start with the word that finished the line before. For example, A: I went to the shops. B: Shops? Did you buy anything? A: Anything I could get my hands on.

Discuss:

1. Which game did you find the hardest/easiest? Why?
2. Did you feel more or less of a connection with the other person when you were sharing a language, and understanding that language in the same way?



Develop a glossary of words or phrases that are uniquely Irish.

Determine the meaning of each word by its context.

Decide whether these words or phrases would change in meaning if used in a different context.

Note the rhythm of the dialogue in phrases such as, “I be scared what if me hand shook and I was to pour it over me hand” from Scene One.

Find other examples of Irish sentence structure.

“

MAG: So why should you be speaking English in Ireland?

MAUREEN: I don’t know why.

MAG: It’s Irish you should be speaking in Ireland. ”

Scene One, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*.

Discuss:

1. What impact does McDonagh's use of Irish words, phrases or sentence structure have on the development of the characters?
2. What impact does McDonagh's use of Irish words, phrases or sentence structure have on the development of the situation, or world, of his characters?
3. What are some examples of 'Australianisms'? For example, "Yeah, no..."



Person A looks through the Irish Glossary developed in the previous activity and finds a word that nobody in the group knows.

Everybody writes their own, made-up definition on a scrap of paper.

Person A also writes down the glossary definition (though avoid dictionary-speak!)

Person A reads out the alternative definitions.

Each person votes for the definition they believe is the correct one.

If somebody guesses the true definition, Person A receives no points.

The creator of a made-up definition gets one point for every vote towards that definition.

The glossary is passed on and Person B assumes the role of Person A.

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

The Beauty Queen of Leenane can be summed up as a vicious and bitter power struggle between Mag and Maureen. As the play progresses, the audience first sympathises with one, and then the other, as they are equally abused and abuser.

AIM: To explore the themes of conflict and power.

Find snippets of text that demonstrate the power struggle between the characters, such as the one quoted.

Discuss:

1. How is the struggle for power between the characters fought out in the play?
2. When and how do things become dangerous for Maureen and Mag?
3. How does McDonagh achieve moments of danger and dramatic tension?

IRISH DUELS

(Augusto Boal, 2002, *Games For Actors And Non-Actors* Routledge, p. 82)

Re-visit the Irish Duels activity from the pre-production resources.

1. How does this game reflect the game that is played between Mag and Maureen?

ENEMY & PROTECTOR

(based on 'Friend & Enemy' Augusto Boal, 2002, *Games For Actors And Non-Actors* Routledge, p. 122-123)

Aim: to set up metaphor for Mag & Maureen's relationship & their conflicting roles as enemy/protector of each other

Re-visit the Enemy & Protector Activity from the pre-production resources.

Discuss:

1. What similarities did you notice between this game and the themes of conflict and shifting allegiances in *Beauty Queen*?

“

MAUREEN: Drink!

MAG: I don't like it, Maureen.

MAUREEN: Would you like it better over your head?

”

Scene Two,
The Beauty Queen of Leenane.





Each character is a protector of another and an enemy to another at different stages throughout the play.

Find three moments when a character shifts from one to the other.

Discuss:

1. Identify any moments where the catalyst for the shift in role is momentous.
2. Identify any moments where it is unjustified.
3. Identify any moments where it is unknowing.

“

MAUREEN: Arsing me around, eh? Interfering with my life again? Isn't it enough that I've had to be on beck and call for you every day for the last twenty years? ”

Scene Two,
The Beauty Queen of Leenane.



View comparative visual texts that focus on adult children who have never left home and/or who have strained relationships with their parent/s:

Mother & Son, ABC

Steptoe & Son, BBC

Two & A Half Men, Channel Ten

Malcolm In The Middle, Channel Ten



Look for the variety of ways Mag and Maureen seek to gain the upper hand: violence, lies, revelation of their secrets in front of Pato, etc.

Each person reveals three 'facts' about themselves; two are true, one is a lie.

The others look and listen for clues that give away which 'fact' is a lie.



Discuss:

1. Is it easier or harder to tell when somebody is lying if you know them well?
2. Is it easier or harder to tell when somebody is lying if the lie is more significant?
3. When are you exaggerating and when are you lying?
4. There are varieties of lies: straight-out lies, 'white' lies, lying by omission are a couple. Which do you think is the most harmful form of lying, and why?
5. When do the characters lie to each other?
6. What drives the characters to lie?
7. What do they want from the other character?

8. How does the writer create dramatic tension in his exploration of the fragility of truth in the play/character's state of mind? (with specific reference to Maureen's speech in Scene 8 beginning, "To Boston. To Boston I'll be going. . .")



Watch *Lie to Me* on Channel Ten, which talks about the science behind the detection of lies.

Research lie detectors and other methods employed to pick up lying.

✚ **Write or devise** a story or scene where a lie is told, resulting in dire consequences for one of the characters.

Consider:

What drives the lying character to tell their lie?

What do they want from the other character?

✚ **Write or devise** a story or scene with the title "Ask no questions and I'll tell no lies".

In many ways, the relationship between Mag and Maureen echoes the evil mother figure found in many well-worn fairy tales. Yet there are so many real-life situations that parallel *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* that it may almost be considered a docudrama. So, is it more disturbing if the characters in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* are reminiscent of evil fairy tales, or if they are normal people in a recognisable situation?

“

In the original production, the characters were monstrous — gorgons out of a Greek myth or ogres out of a Grimm fairy tale.

”

Cary M. Mazer, Reviewer

“Good and Dirty”

<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~cmazer/leenane.html>

FAIRY TALES

AIM: To view fairy tales as inspiration for tragedy, not just as children’s stories.

Watch these links to youtube videos that show parallels to *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*.
Rapunzel, by Faerie Tale Theatre.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OSTcHolqKY&feature=related>



The Wicked Witch of the West melting.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kwojbxw7014>

Find other fairy tales that have similarly evil mother figures or twisted familial relationships.

Compare the sanitised version of Disney fairy films and modern stories with the original versions written by Grimms.

Discover McDonagh’s early writing life, when he spent a lot of time writing short stories, often with a twist on a traditional fairy tale.

Research *The Pillowman*, another of McDonagh’s plays, in which a writer is questioned when a series of child murders in his town replicate his fairy tales.

Read *Hooky the Cripple* by Mark ‘Chopper’ Read, a gruesome fairy tale.

Watch or read *Wicked*, an example of a fairy tale inspiring a story about its context.

Discuss:

1. Is 'fairy tale' an accurate or misleading title for this genre?
2. Could *Beauty Queen* be classified a fairy tale?
3. What other adult fairy tales can you think of?
4. Does Hooky's personal context justify his actions in *Hooky the Cripple*, as the moral of the story seems to suggest?
5. If so, can the same be said for Maureen?
6. *Wicked* is another example of a story providing a context for actions that are seen as wicked in the original version, *The Wizard of Oz*. Is it successful?



Choose a well-known fairy tale and re-write it as an adult or disturbing fairy tale.

Either re-write the events of the fairy tale as it is known,

or create a back story that provides greater context (perhaps justification?) to the actions of the characters in the original fairy tale. For example, McDonagh re-wrote *The Pied Piper* to include a scene where a little boy meets a menacing man on the side of the road, and shares his food with him. As thanks, the man chops off the little boy's toes. Later, when the Piper leads the children of the town to their deaths, the little boy is unable to keep up because of his injury, and so is ultimately saved. (<http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/3996/McDonagh-Martin.html>)



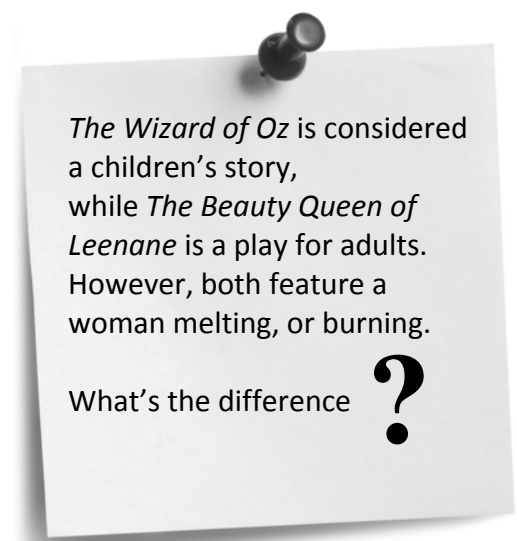
Re-write *Beauty Queen* as a short fairy tale.



Turn *Beauty Queen* into a short fairy tale for the stage.

Discuss:

1. Do the characters in *Beauty Queen* easily assume stereotypical fairy tale roles?
2. Does a moral appear when *Beauty Queen* is looked at as a fairy tale?
3. How would you change the story to turn this plot into a children's tale?



The Wizard of Oz is considered a children's story, while *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* is a play for adults. However, both feature a woman melting, or burning.

What's the difference



DOCUDRAMA

AIM: To discover personal, social, historical and cultural context.

Download and read the 'undercooked lamb chops stabbing' case: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/woman-who-stabbed-mother-over-undercooked-chops-free/2005/09/14/1126377376381.html>

Research further articles that reveal similar stories of normal people seemingly overreacting to a trivial incident, as well as articles that reveal abuse of the elderly, familial tensions, etc.

Read the other two plays in the Leenane Trilogy, both of which also feature familial murder. In *A Skull in Connemara* a man is suspected of bashing his wife's skull, and in *The Lonesome West*, a man shot his father.

Discuss:

1. Why someone would kill his or her own mother/father/spouse?
2. Are there situations that you believe justify murder or violence?
3. Do you think McDonagh was expressing his inner rage? **Research your response!
4. McDonagh wrote the first draft of *Beauty Queen* in a short period of time as a male in his mid-20s. Do you think he successfully writes older female characters?
5. If so, what was his personal social context that enabled/s him to do so?

+ **Write** a scene/story based on your research/discussion.



Use a real-life article, such as the 'undercooked lamb chops stabbing' mentioned above, as the basis for a short story, creating a context for each of the characters by determining their personal history and their relationship with other character/s.

Invent a turning point in the relationship between the characters in your story, and write about it three times: firstly in a way that biases the reader towards one character, secondly to bias the other character, and thirdly attempting a balance, so the reader swings between the characters.

Interview your mother about her relationship with her mother.

Write a short piece on your relationship with your own mother.

“

In McDonagh's plays, even the most seemingly normal person can turn out to be a sociopath.

”

Jumana Farouky,
'Martin McDonagh: The Dark Master',
Time, April 2008.



Use a real-life article, such as the ‘undercooked lamb chops stabbing’ mentioned above, to create a scene of the climatic moment.

Ask students to present their scene using a different genre (comedy, realism, mime, melodrama), or allow everybody to work through the same process by beginning with a realistic scene and morphing through various genres.

Develop a context for each of the characters by determining their personal history and their relationship with the other character/s in the scene.

Invent three turning points in the relationship, and turn these moments into short scenes.

Note, these can also be done using a variety of genres, to discover opportunities for comedy and tragedy within one situation.

Play each moment three times; once allowing one character the audience’s empathy, the second time allowing the other, and the third attempting a balance, so the audience swings between the characters.

Discuss:

1. Is it easier to create biased scenes or neutral scenes? Why?
2. Which genres did you find the most difficult? Why?



Select a combination of genres and empathy-creators from the repertoire of scenes created that would most fairly represent each character in court. **For example**, Scene One is comic, and the audience empathises most with Character A. Scene Two is a musical, and the audience is evenly balanced in terms of their empathy. Scene Three is a mime, and the audience empathises most with Character B.

Culminate with the original scene, as taken from the article, using realism.

Discuss:

1. How does genre impact our levels of empathy?
2. Are Mag and Maureen evenly comic, and evenly tragic characters?



Retain the emotional context for the characters and their relationship created earlier.

Improvise a scene of boring domesticity (cleaning the house, sitting still watching TV etc).

Repeat the scene as exactly as possible when prompted.

Continue to repeat the domestic scene, while thinking about the turning points and context created earlier.

Build your emotions inwardly until you find a trigger in the domestic scene to begin the climatic scene based on the article.

Discuss:

1. How did the class react to the climatic scene after watching the turning points, compared with their reaction after the domestic scene?
2. Do we continue to pity Maureen at the conclusion of the play?
3. If so, do we pity her because we empathise with her personally or with her situation?
4. If we read or watched Scene Seven in isolation from the remainder of the play, how would our reaction to Maureen be different?

“ A touristy-looking embroidered tea-towel hangs further along the back wall, bearing the inscription, ‘May you be half an hour in Heaven afore the Devil knows you’re dead’ . ”

Martin McDonagh,
Stage directions, Scene One,
The Beauty Queen of Leenane.

Set & Costume Designer – William Bobbie Stewart

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To deepen an understanding of how design works in live performance, we suggest you do the pre-performance design activities in relation to the design as described throughout the play and envisaged by the reader pre-performance, and then revisit after watching the performance to compare the choices made in this production with your original responses. (See post-show discussions for further follow-up).



AIM: To develop an appreciation for how design elements impact upon an actor’s performance and a play’s interpretation by a director.



POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

1. How accurately did the design elements follow McDonagh’s written stage directions?
2. In your opinion, which design choices served the play and which didn’t? Provide specific examples.
3. Were there any surprises in the design?
4. What was the most effective design element? (Lighting, costumes, or set) Why?
5. What dramatic features were heightened by William Bobbie Stewart’s set design? (for example, claustrophobia, isolation, impoverishment)
6. How did the design support the narrative; the shifts in time and plot direction?
7. How did the design assist the creation of characters and the relationships between characters?
8. How did the design raise the stakes (heighten the emotional intensity) for the characters?
9. How did the characters interact with the design?

Wicked Games

Family life is torture in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, writes Elissa Blake.

"They f—k you up, your mum and dad." So wrote one poet and there's a mountain of anecdotal evidence besides. But at what point is a child entitled to retribution?

The poet - Philip Larkin - didn't elaborate but English-born Irish playwright Martin McDonagh does in brilliant fashion in his 1996 drama *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. Set in the mountains of Connemara, County Galway, the play tells the darkly comic tale of Maureen Folan, a plain and lonely woman in her early 40s who shares a dank little cottage with Mag, her conniving mother.

Mag's interference in Maureen's first and possibly only chance of a loving relationship - with roving former local lad Pato Dooley, who now lives in London - sets a train of events in motion that lead inexorably towards the play's celebrated denouement.

"It's almost like a fairytale," says director Cristabel Sved, whose production of the play is the season opener for the Sydney Theatre Company's education arm, STCEd.

"You've a lonely woman-a virgin -living in an isolated cottage on top of a muddyhill, quite divorced from the rest of village. There's a man riding to the woman's rescue and a wicked old woman out to stop him. It's funny but it's also really cruel."

And McDonagh, she explains, is a specialist when it comes to cruelty on stage. His other plays include *The Lonesome West* and *ThePillowman*, both driven by psychological and physical violence.

"He's very influenced by slasher movies and Grand Guignol [gory horror tales that were a staple of French popular theatre in the late 19th century]," Sved says. "You actually see Maureen torturing her mother onstage. It is incredibly confronting and he puts it all out there for you to watch. In that respect it's classic 'in yer face' theatre."

Depicting that cruelty while maintaining the play's comic and melodramatic strengths is one of the biggest challenges facing any director of the play,Sved says.

"When Iwas casting it. Iwas aware that we had to have actors with comic ability and the dexterity you need to portray tragic depth and I think we've got that in this cast," she says.

AFI award-winner Judi Farr plays Mag. MandyMcElhinney - recently returned from the US tour of *A Streetcar Named Desire* starring CateBlanchett - is Maureen. Darren Gilshenan is love interest Pato Dooley with Eamon Farren as his terminally bored little brother Ray.

"It's very complex, what these characters are doing to each other," Sved says. "They're at war, really, most of the time, manipulating eachother horribly.You need actors with a lot of emotional and physical dexterity to portray that."

"It's so much fun , being vile," McElhinney chimes in. "Especially to Judi Farr,who is one of the nicest people in the business. Maureen and Mag know how to push the other's buttons. They find entertainment in it. We've been in stitches reading through it ."

Another challenge lies in representing a very particular vision of Ireland on stage. McDonagh's Ireland is rooted in fantasy and reality, Sved says .

"McDonagh wasn't born there. His is a very constructed Ireland, made out of romantic notions and memories and stories and the like," she explains. "At the time he was writing it, in the mid-1990s, there was a clash of the old and the new in Ireland, and having Maureen and Mag living in that space is a way of playing that out.

"It's also quite an eccentric world in a way; there's madness hovering around in the background all the time."

Sved believes the high school audience (*Beauty Queen* is on this year's HSC Drama syllabus) will get a lot from the play.

"It's fast-moving and it's confronting. I think students who come to see a stage drama will be surprised how like some of the films they're watching it is."

McElhinney relishes the prospect of working in front of young and switched-on audiences.

"Young audiences are so involved with anything they watch in theatre. When you've got them, it becomes a real exchange."

Elissa Blake, SMH Metro, Jan 29 2010



Mag



Marek

