

Press Release

10 January 2018

The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII

By Mary Moynihan, Deirdre Kinahan, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Paul Kennedy
Imagined recreation of moments from the lives of women in WWII

'Brilliant, moving, eye opening journey into stories of women's bravery tonight. Well done to all involved', Sarah Glennane, audience Member

Following on from a highly successful run in Germany as part of an international tour, ***The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII*** can now be seen at the Theatre Royal, Waterford on 15 February and at the Playhouse Theatre, Derry on 24 February 2018.

The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII is a creative reimagining of moments from the lives of women during WWII recalling stories of bravery, sacrifice and love amidst the horror of war, as women stood up against fascism and totalitarianism, and refused to accept oppression. The performance is followed by a post-show discussion with the artists and invited guest speakers to explore powerful women's stories in history, and themes of gender equality and peace.

Women's stories that have inspired the performance include **Mary Elmes** (1908-2002), a Cork woman who was the first Irish person honoured as 'Righteous Among Nations' for her work saving Jewish children from the Nazi gas chambers during World War II; **Ettie Steinberg** (1914-42) the only female Jewish Irish citizen known to have been murdered in Auschwitz; **Marta Hillers** (1911-2001) from Germany who wrote her autobiography *Eine Frau in Berlin (A Woman in Berlin)* under the name 'Anonyma' (Anonymous), detailing her experiences of the last days of WWII as she and over one million other women were raped and abused by Allied soldiers of the Red Army; **Neus Català Pallejà** (b.1915) from Spain, a member of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War, an active collaborator with the French Resistance during WWII and the only living Spanish survivor of Ravensbrück concentration camp for women; **Maria Eugenia Jasińska** (1906-43) from Łódź in Poland who worked for the resistance and gave up her own life rather than 'name names'; and **Dolores Ibárruri, or La Pasionaria** (1895-1989), from Spain, a revolutionary leader, political activist, communist and crusader against fascism during the Spanish Civil War who created the famous cry 'They Shall Not Pass'.

Audience Feedback

- 'It was just brilliant! The two actors were phenomenal. Well done to everyone involved!' – Niamh Clowry, audience member
- 'Such a moving piece of theatre. The performances were excellent.' – Sabina Coyne Higgins
- 'The piece of theatre was so moving I cried. What wonderful stories and very important.' – Raphaela Kula, audience member, Germany

- 'The emotive performances pulled me in immediately to each story. Thank you.' – Nicole Nagel, audience member, Germany
- 'Beautiful performances from the actors, I loved it.' – Zee Uptis, Audience Member
- 'I think the work Smashing Times are doing is brilliant. Important issues being addressed while maintaining a level of artistic excellence is great.' – John Paul McGrogarty, audience member and director
- 'Thank you to Smashing Times for wonderful performances and presentations. It has been a pleasure to have you at the festival.' – Ralph Wurfel, audience member and festival coordinator, Theaterlabor, Germany

What the papers say on the work of the company:

Sunday Independent

- 'Fascinating, executed by the innovative and dynamic Smashing Times Theatre.'

The Irish Times

- 'The plays are true theatre... Extraordinary. Smashing Times must continue with it'

Performance Details

Thursday 15 February 2018 Theatre Royal Waterford, 8pm. Booking: +353 (0)51 853 626. <http://www.theatreroyal.ie/events/the-woman-is-present> Tickets: €17.00/€15 conc.

Saturday 24 February 2018 Playhouse Theatre, 5-7 Artillery St, Derry/Londonderry 8pm. Booking: 0044(0) 28 7126 8027, <http://www.derryplayhouse.co.uk/events/details/the-woman-is-present-womens-stories-of-wwii/851> Tickets: £10

The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII

By Mary Moynihan, Deirdre Kinahan, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Paul Kennedy

Directed by Mary Moynihan and Bairbre Ni Chaoimh

Cast: Róisín McAtamney and Thérèse Mullan with Margaret Toomey, Ella Brady, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Romana Testasecca featuring on film.

Production Team: Tara Doolan, Set Design and Projection/AV Programme; Risa Ando, Costume Design, Cillian McNamara, Lighting Design

For further information please contact

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Directors: Dr Eric Weitz, Bryony May, Edwina Albrecht, Sandra Berger, Mary Lawlor, Olivia O'Hagan

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