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Culture Ireland to celebrate throughout the US in 2016

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Macnas

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Irish artists have consistently played a crucial role in determining, shaping and questioning Irish culture and identity. The Abbey Theatre, founded in 1904 by W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and J.M. Synge has seen works by all three, along with Sean O'Casey, Brian Friel, Tom Murphy and Marina Carr, to name but a few, grace its stage asking big questions about [Ireland](#), its history, character and identity. Friel, along with Seamus Heaney and Tom Kilroy, also asked big questions with *Field Day* during a notoriously difficult period in Irish history. Another difficult period in Irish history saw writer and poet Pádraic Pearse, on Monday, April 24th, 1916 at the General Post Office in Dublin, read the Proclamation setting out a vision for an Irish Republic. The Rising might not have succeeded, but politically and culturally Pearse and his fellow dissidents got the ball rolling. And it has been rolling ever since. 2016 sees Ireland celebrate and commemorate this historic occasion with the best of contemporary and classical Irish productions, and Culture Ireland are ensuring if the world can't come to the party, then the party will go out to the world.

"I Am Ireland," a year-long worldwide initiative by Culture Ireland as part of the Ireland 2016

Centenary Programme, will feature hundreds of artists from the worlds of theatre, dance, cinema, literature and the visual arts spanning the globe with major tours, performances and exhibitions of Irish arts and culture. In the [United States](#), Great Britain, Canada, Australia and elsewhere, there will be a special focus on key cultural dates such as St Patrick's Day, Bloomsday and dates of historic relevance. A celebration through contemporary arts, "I Am Ireland" reflects on Ireland's cultural journey over the last one hundred years. Supported by Culture Ireland, who promote Irish arts worldwide, under the Irish Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, "I Am Ireland" will offer support to artists in excess of €2 million/\$2.25 million.

Worldwide Culture Ireland is supporting over one hundred projects in 2016. In the United States some of the Irish artists and US arts organisations involved in the programme include:

- ▶ The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts which presents a three week season of [events](#) entitled "Ireland 100: Celebrating A Century Of Irish Arts & Culture." This season is being supported by the Embassy of Ireland in Washington, DC.
- ▶ In New York the Irish Arts Center will host leading Irish artists with a programme featuring music from the excellent Camille O'Sullivan, dance from Arcane Collective with their Beckett-inspired "Return To Absence," playwright Deirdre Kinahan's "Wild Sky," and photography from Andrew Duggan on the theme of Proclamation.
- ▶ The Irish Arts Center at the Baryshnikov Arts Center will also present The Corn Exchange Theatre Company's production of Eimear Mc Bride's critically acclaimed "A Girl is a Half Formed Thing," adapted for the stage and directed by Annie Ryan.
- ▶ Landmark Productions/Wide Open Opera's new opera by Enda Walsh & Donnacha Dennehy, the superb "The Last Hotel," will be presented at St. Ann's Warehouse, Brooklyn.
- ▶ A curated programme of Irish writers will tour to US festivals and venues, with Solas Nua Washington DC presenting an Irish Book Day as well as the 10th Anniversary Capital Irish Film Festival.
- ▶ Ireland's national theatre, The Abbey Theatre will tour Sean O'Casey's classic, "The Plough and The Stars"
- ▶ Druid Theatre Company will present Martin McDonaghs "The Beauty Queen of Leenane"
- ▶ Gare St Lazare Ireland present their Beckett Season 2016
- ▶ Macnas, the internationally acclaimed Irish spectacle and street performance company, will be at large at the 2016 South by South West Festival in Texas.

In addition, the Lincoln Center, New York Live Arts, The New York Library for Performing Arts, Abrons Arts Center in New York, Boston's Arts Emerson and the Hyde Park Art Center Chicago are among many other US arts and cultural organizations taking part in the 2016 "I Am Ireland" celebrations.

Irish Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Aodhán Ó Ríordáin TD, announcing the "I Am Ireland" programme said, "It is for our artists and their talents that Ireland is known globally. Ireland has been home to many creative geniuses whose work is applauded worldwide and for 2016 the Irish Government is committed to a special programme to share globally the treasures created by our artists. As we commemorate the centenary of this momentous time in our nation's history, I am delighted that promoting our artists overseas, through Culture Ireland, plays such a prominent role in our Ireland 2016 programme." The announcement of the programme and funding for "I Am Ireland" comes as Culture Ireland celebrates 10 years in existence. During those years Culture Ireland has supported over 4,000 projects to present in over 100 countries reaching over 20 million audience members.

Inspired by the opening line of one of Pearse's poems, "Mise Eire," "I Am Ireland" speaks of a contemporary Ireland, of young and established artists, influenced by Ireland's geographic position, history and cultural journey over the past one hundred years. It's a tradition of innovation and excellence. A tradition that continues to this day.

For further information visit cultureireland



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