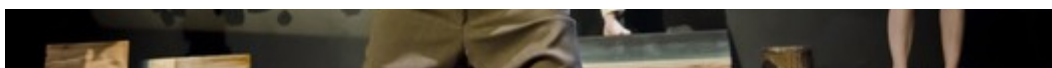


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# Dublin Theatre Festival 2015: a dark 'Star of the Sea' shines ever so bright

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Morgan Cooke & Ionia Ní Chróinín in *Star of the Sea* by Moonfish Theatre Company  
*Photo by Marta Barcikowska used with kind permission of Moonfish Theatre Company*

## Star of the Sea by Moonfish Theatre Company

Rating: ★★★★★

In a land in love with sorrow cultures and language clash in Moonfish Theatre Company's haunting production "Star of the Sea," freely adapted from Joseph O'Connor bestselling novel of the same name. Set in 1847 aboard the ship the Star of the Sea as it journeys from Cobh to New York during the Great Famine, "Star of the Sea" follows a twice scorned servant, her landlord's weak willed son and a suspected killer as they head to the brave new world. Their day of reckoning looms on the horizon and their journey might end with another stone being placed upon a cairn. Or perhaps redemption might just be found in the unthinkable. In this meta-theatrical, bilingual production told through English and Irish, Moonfish Theatre Company bring it all to the stage and their excellent ensemble deliver outstanding performances in what is unquestionably an exquisite piece of theatre.

With scenes broken by the clanging of a bell, “Star of the Sea” retains something of the novel’s structure of interwoven chapters as it moves effortlessly forward and back through time. Text, projected onto a small screen reminiscent of a torn sail features frequently, often functioning to offer abbreviated translations of the Irish dialogue or to mark stages of the voyage. With a rich tapestry of song, music, sound and voice set against cleverly executed moments of heightened theatricality “Star of the Sea” prompts the imagination to fill in the spaces it deliberately leaves open. If some spaces are difficult to fill, overall the experience is all the more richer because of them.

With its production team wisely included in the devising process, Moonfish Theatre Company have crafted a multi layered production to equal their multifaceted story. Stagecraft is excellent throughout with lighting designer Matt Burke, sound designer Pat Hargan and costume designer Cherie White along with Máiréad Ní Chróinín who pens live translations onstage, operating as a technical ensemble, each showing consummate skill. Co-directors Ionia Ní Chróinín and Máiréad Ní Chróinín with more than a nod towards Brecht in places, marry “Star of the Sea’s” clever meta-theatricality with often strong, naturalistic performances from possibly the most multi-talented ensemble to be found anywhere. Aside from the rare lapse where voices struggled to be heard, bi-lingual performers Simon Boyle, Morgan Cooke, Grace Kiely, Zita Monahan and Ionia Ní Chróinín shift effortless between times and characters, offering musical accompaniment and song to compliment their all round outstanding performances.

Haunting, harrowing and deeply moving, “Star of the Sea” is a poignant portrait of a people exiled at home, blighted by hunger, cruelty and death. Richly detailed, wonderfully theatrical and deeply evocative, “Star of the Sea” is a truly impressive and ambitious production that’s almost poetic in its breadth and beauty.

“Star of the Sea” by Moonfish Theatre Company runs at The Draíocht, Blanchardstown until October 26th as part of the [Dublin Theatre Festival 2015](#).

Show begins at 8.00 pm

Tickets €18

Be advised: this show contains brief nudity.

For further information visit [Dublin Theatre Festival](#)

For further information on their forthcoming tour of “Star of the Sea” visit [Moonfish Theatre Company](#)

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