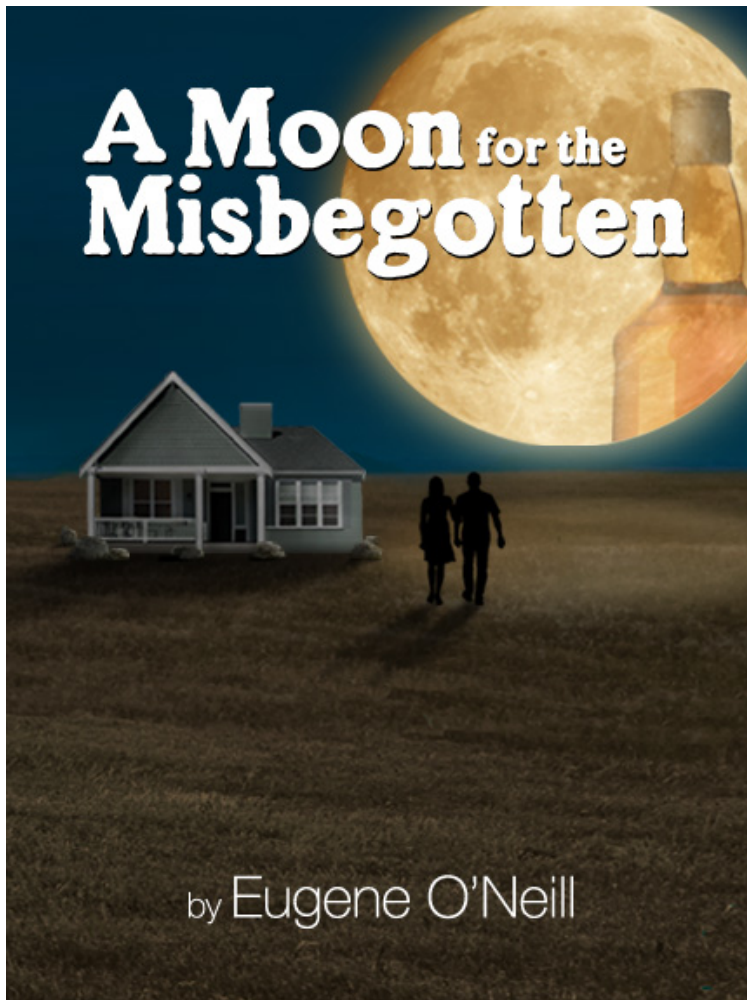


Jewel Theatre Audience Guide
Addendum: Phil Hogan Character Description



directed by Joy Carlin

by Susan Myer Silton, Dramaturge
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PHIL HOGAN

Phil Hogan, played by Howard Swain, is father to Josie and her three brothers, Thomas and John, who are offstage characters in the play, and Mike Hogan, who is escaping the farm and his father at the play's opening. Thomas is a sergeant on the Bridgeport, Connecticut police force and John is a bartender in Meridien. Since they escaped from their father's farm, neither maintains contact with him. Like his brothers before him, Mike worked fulltime on the farm. The day the play begins, he is sneaking off to join Thomas. Phil drove his sons away with his fierce aggression—none but Josie and her mother could stand up to him—and by overworking them without pay. He has been a widower for the past two decades, when his wife died in childbirth. An Irishman, he is Jim Tyrone's tenant farmer, and runs a hardscrabble pig farm with Josie's help. He and his daughter are close, sharing a deep bond and caring love for one another.

Robert Dowling, in his *Critical Companion to Eugene O'Neill* (2009), writes:

Out of all of the Irish characters in the O'Neill canon, Hogan perhaps most resembles Cornelius "Con" Melody after his transformation back into his "shanty" Irish persona in the final scene of *A Touch of the Poet*. Hogan, who appears as the offstage character Shaughnessy in *A Long Day's Journey into Night*, is based on the real life James O'Neill, Sr.'s tenant farmer John "Dirty" Dolan. His stereotypical Irish personality—pugilistic, drunken, and conspiratorial—offended many "lace-curtain," or upper-class Irish members of the audience when *A Moon for the Misbegotten* was first produced in the Midwest in 1947.

Louis Scheaffer paints a detailed picture of Dolan in *O'Neill: Son and Playwright* (1968), the first volume of his two-book biography:

The previous summer [in 1912] his father had added to his holdings a small farm near the swampy bottom of Niles Hill Road, thereby acquiring a new tenant, John ("Dirty") Dolan, pig farmer and unregenerate individualist. O'Neill took both a writer's and a fellow Irishman's delight in Dirty Dolan, cunning, suspicious, fond of whiskey, and endowed, as *Long Day's Journey* puts it, with a "terrible tongue." He was a squarish tree-trunk of a man, bandy-legged, with arms like massive branches; ruddy-faced from the sun and all his drinking, he had soft blue eyes and a habitual grin that gave him a deceptive genial look. His farm might have been lifted intact from the Irish countryside: chickens, ducks and baby pigs wandering through the house, freshly laid eggs in corners of the rooms, an old piece of harness tossed aside. Often one would see Dolan half-asleep, in drunken contentment, on his hay mower as his spavined mare trudged up and down the field. Once, when he had to enter the hospital but refused to bathe, a friend proceeded to wash his dirt-encrusted feet as Dolan howled, "You're taking my toes off!" James O'Neill constantly grumbled about his new tenant and the difficulty of prying the rent out of him (twenty dollars monthly), but, like his sons, relished this prime specimen of Irish peasantry.

The New York Times published an article by Tom Verde on October 7, 1996 entitled, "Eugene O'Neill Center May Get Remains of Tycoon Who Chased Him Off It". It is about, among other things, a beach owned by Edward Crowninshield Hammond (see character description Addendum for T. Stedman Harder), upon which Eugene regularly trespassed and was just as regularly booted off. Gene immortalized the beach in a romantic poem, "Upon Our Beach", written for his then-girlfriend Beatrice Ashe in the summer of 1914.

The article describes the real-life confrontation between Dirty Dolan and Hammond that was the basis for both the disagreement between Harder and Phil Hogan in *Moon for the Misbegotten* and Shaunessey and Harker, their counterparts in *Journey*.

A supposedly true confrontation between Hammond and a local Irish pig farmer named Dolan provided O'Neill with his material.

According to O'Neill biographers, Hammond accused Dolan of letting his pigs wander onto the estate to wallow in a pond that supplied the household with ice in the winter. Dolan responded by accusing Hammond of enticing the animals through a hole in the fence and threatened to sue the millionaire after one of the pigs contracted tuberculosis after wading in the pond.

A fictionalized version of the story is told in the beginning of *Journey* by Edmund Tyrone to his brother James (the same James Tyrone of *Moon For the Misbegotten*) and his father and mother, James Sr. and Mary. He relates that Harker, an offstage character (and the same character as T. Stedman Harder of *Moon*), visits Shaughnessy, another offstage character (and a precursor for Phil Hogan in *Moon*), who is raising pigs on farmland owned by James, Sr. The story is recounted by Edmund Tyrone in the beginning of O'Neill's play, *A Long Day's Journey into Night*, which he wrote from 1939 to 1941. Edmund is the younger of the two sons of James and Mary Tyrone; Jamie, the elder, is the same James Tyrone, Jr. of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Harker (the same character as T. Stedman Harder of *Moon*) visits Shaughnessy, who is James, Sr.'s tenant farmer. In the excerpt from *Journey*, reprinted below, Mary Tyrone is MARY, James Tyrone, Sr. is TYRONE, Edmund Tyrone is EDMUND and James Tyrone is JAMIE.

MARY *To the boys.* What were you two grinning about like Cheshire cats when you came in? What was the joke?

TYRONE *With a painful effort to be a good sport.* Yes, let us in on it, lads. I told your mother I knew damned well it would be one on me, but never mind that, I'm used to it.

JAMIE *Dryly.* Don't look at me. This is the Kid's story.

EDMUND *Grins.* I meant to tell you last night, Papa, and forgot it. Yesterday when I went for a walk I dropped in at the Inn—

MARY *Worriedly.* You shouldn't drink now, Edmund.

EDMUND *Ignoring this.* And who do you think I met there, with a beautiful bun on [British slang for drunken spree], but Shaughnessy, the tenant on

that farm of yours.

MARY *Smiling*. That dreadful man! But he is funny.

TYRONE *Scowling*. He's not so funny when you're his landlord. He's a wily Shanty Mick, that one. He could hide behind a corkscrew. What's he complaining about now, Edmund—for I'm damned sure he's complaining. I suppose he wants his rent lowered. I let him have the place for almost nothing, just to keep someone on it, and he never pays that till I threaten to evict him.

EDMUND No, he didn't beef about anything. He was so pleased with life he even bought a drink, and that's practically unheard of. He was delighted because he'd had a fight with your friend, Harker, the Standard Oil millionaire, and won a glorious victory.

MARY *With amused dismay*. Oh, Lord! James, you'll really have to do something— TYRONE Bad luck to Shaughnessy, anyway!

JAMIE *Maliciously*. I'll bet the next time you see Harker at the Club and give him the old respectful bow, he won't see you.

EDMUND Yes. Harker will think you're no gentleman for harboring a tenant who isn't humble in the presence of a king of America.

TYRONE Never mind the Socialist gabble. I don't care to listen—

MARY *Tactfully*. Go on with your story, Edmund.

EDMUND *Grins at his father provocatively*. Well, you remember, Papa, the ice pond on Harker's estate is right next to the farm, and you remember Shaughnessy keeps pigs. Well, it seems there's a break in the fence and the pigs have been bathing in the millionaire's ice pond, and Harker's foreman told him he was sure Shaughnessy had broken the fence on purpose to give his pigs a free wallow.

MARY *Shocked and amused*. Good heavens!

TYRONE *Sourly, but with a trace of admiration*. I'm sure he did, too, the dirty scallywag. It's like him.

EDMUND So Harker came in person to rebuke Shaughnessy. *He chuckles*. A very bonehead play! If I needed any further proof that our ruling plutocrats, especially the ones who inherited their boodle, are not mental giants, that would clinch it. TYRONE *With appreciation, before he thinks*. Yes, he'd be no match for Shaughnessy. *Then he growls*. Keep your damned anarchist remarks to yourself. I won't have them in my house. *But he is full of eager anticipation*. What happened?

EDMUND Harker had as much chance as I would with Jack Johnson.

Shaughnessy got a few drinks under his belt and was waiting at the gate to welcome him. He told me he never gave Harker a chance to open his mouth. He began by shouting that he was no slave Standard Oil could trample on. He was a King of Ireland, if he had his rights, and scum was scum to him, no matter how much money it had stolen from the poor. MARY Oh, Lord! *But she can't help laughing*.

EDMUND Then he accused Harker of making his foreman break down the fence to entice the pigs into the ice pond in order to destroy them. The poor pigs, Shaughnessy yelled, had caught their death of cold. Many of them were

dying of pneumonia, and several others had been taken down with cholera from drinking the poisoned water. He told Harker he was hiring a lawyer to sue him for damages. And he wound up by saying that he had to put up with poison ivy, ticks, potato bugs, snakes and skunks on his farm, but he was an honest man who drew the line somewhere, and he'd be damned if he'd stand for a Standard Oil thief trespassing. So would Harker kindly remove his dirty feet from the premises before he sicked the dog on him. And Harker did! *He and Jamie laugh.*

MARY *Shocked but giggling.* Heavens, what a terrible tongue that man has!

TYRONE *Admiringly before he thinks.* The damned old scoundrel! By God, you can't beat him! *He laughs—then stops abruptly and scowls.* The dirty blackguard! He'll get me in serious trouble yet. I hope you told him I'd be mad as hell—

EDMUND I told him you'd be tickled to death over the great Irish victory, and so you are. Stop faking, Papa.

TYRONE Well, I'm not tickled to death.

MARY *Teasingly.* You are, too, James. You're simply delighted!

TYRONE No, Mary, a joke is a joke, but—

EDMUND I told Shaughnessy he should have reminded Harker that a Standard Oil millionaire ought to welcome the flavor of hog in his ice water as an appropriate touch.

TYRONE The devil you did! *Frowning.* Keep your damned Socialist anarchist sentiments out of my affairs!

EDMUND Shaughnessy almost wept because he hadn't thought of that one, but he said he'd include it in a letter he's writing to Harker, along with a few other insults he'd overlooked. *He and Jamie laugh.*

O'Neill's original idea for his sequel to *Journey* was that it would be a comedy, built around the Shaughnessy-Harker story. He labeled it the "Dolan play" in his first notes of 1941-42, and titled his outline, which he called a scenario—after the technique he learned from George Pierce Baker at Harvard (see Audience Guide, p. 13)—with the same name. Virginia Floyd reprinted an excerpt from O'Neill's Work Diary, dated October 28, 1941, in her book:

S[haughnessy]. play idea, based on story told by E[dmund]. in 1st act of L[ong]. D[ays]. J[ourney]. I[nto]. N[ight]—except here Jamie principal character & story of play otherwise entirely imaginary, except for J[amie]'s revelation of self.

The Dolan play would reintroduce the anecdote from *Journey*, but with Hogan in place of Shaughnessy. This switch accomplished something O'Neill needed to do in his final published play, namely, to write of his family from a perspective of grace, compassion—even appreciation—in place of the vitriol of *Journey*. Judith Barlow quotes from an August 11, 1936 entry in the diary of Carlotta Monterey O'Neill, Eugene's third (and last) wife, where she stated that her husband wanted to write "a *comedy* of his Father!", adding that it would be "A lovable, *kind* comedy!" John Raleigh is not alone among scholars of O'Neill who compare Phil Hogan with O'Neill's

own father. Raleigh sees him as “a kind of final tribute to James O’Neill”—that the two share “vitality,” “survival powers,” a penchant for “role-playing”, a large capacity for whiskey, and a love for their family. Barlow found a deleted line from the typescript of *Moon* quite revelatory in this regard: Jim tells Josie: “Your Esteemed Old Man would have made a hit on the stage, Josie. No kidding. He’s a natural born actor—.” James O’Neill, Sr. was a well-known and very successful actor.

Floyd supports the notion that James O’Neill is Phil Hogan’s prototype:

The assertion may seem incongruous, but Hogan is a partial portrait of the author’s father, James. Like him, he is miserly with his sons and carefully hides the whiskey he himself heartily enjoys. He is continually acting and posturing; in the second act he assumes the role of drunkard to trick Josie. Hogan has three sons, with whom he is always in conflict. His wife died giving birth to the third son; similarly, Ella O’Neill experienced a kind of psychological death after her third son’s [Edmund’s] birth. Hogan, outraged because God did not spare his wife, left the Catholic church, scorning it, its clergy, and its followers. He has a type of father-son relationship with Jim Tyrone, reluctantly sharing his whiskey with him and facilely dispensing words of advice.

Michael Mannheim, in his 1982 book, *Eugene O’Neill’s New Language of Kinship*, identifies Phil Hogan’s “primary function throughout the play” as that of a “comic plotter and manipulator“. His two great motivations are to bring T. Stedman Harder to his knees under a shower of rapid, scathing verbal bullets, and to assure that his beloved daughter marries the man she loves and will be taken care of, even if that means he will lose her as a beloved companion and partner in working the farm. Father and daughter each hide their deep bond and strong affection for one another behind a snarky posture at the outset of the play, but Josie soon displays her soft heart and her father his tender love for his daughter.

I would add another function of the character: to represent, in his conflict with Harder, three of O’Neill’s ongoing motifs: the Irish-English conflict, the evils of capitalism and industrialism, and New England Yankee bias against the Irish, which was directed towards his family by elitist New Londoners.

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