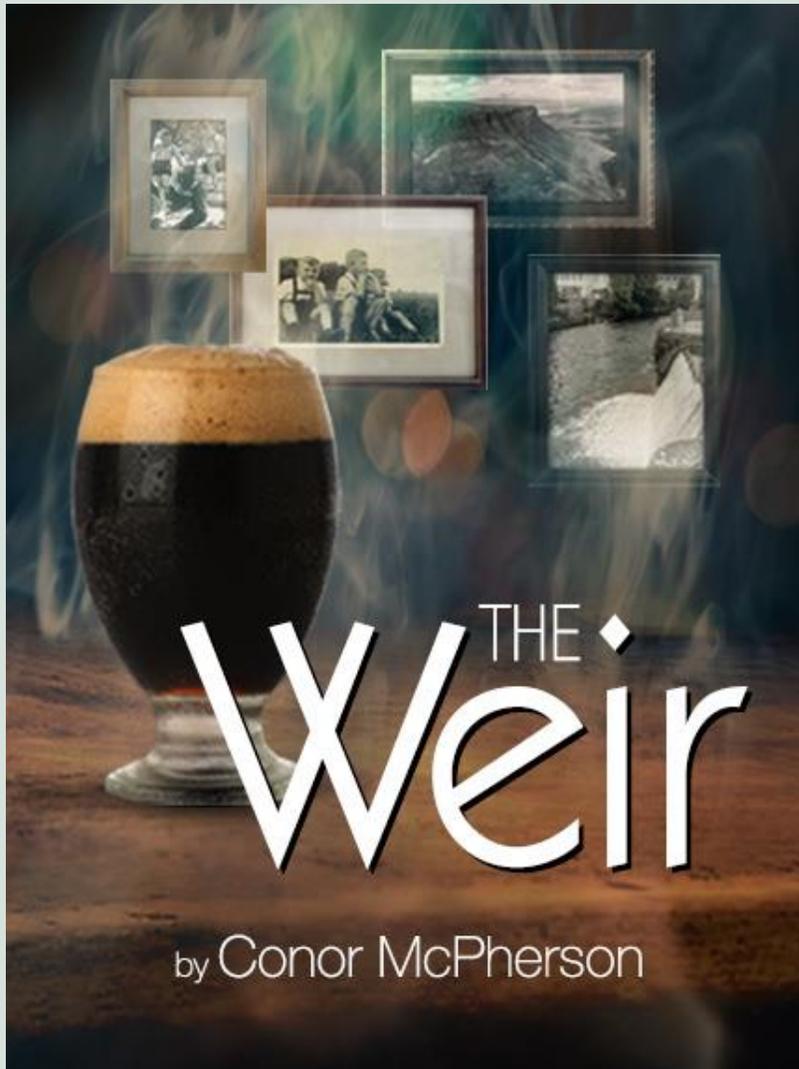


Jewel Theatre Audience Guide



directed by Susan Myer Silton

by Susan Myer Silton, Dramaturge
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I was quite young and I was visiting my granddad in Leitrim. Sitting in the local bar with my Dad and Granddad, I saw this farmer come into this little tiny pub in this tiny hamlet in Jamestown, County Leitrim.

He just went in behind the bar and poured himself a pint of Guinness and there was something about that image that stayed with me.

That's the opening of the play – it sort of says everything about a place that you can just walk in and walk behind the bar, pour your own drink and put the money in the till. It says everything about the community.

~ Conor McPherson

ABOUT THE PLAY

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Jack Mullen (David Ledingham) 50s, a mechanic and garage owner

Brendan Byrne (Wiley Naman Strasser) 30s, the owner of the bar that is the setting for the play

Jim Curran (Shaun Carroll) 40s, the local handyman

Valerie (Katherine Stein) 30s, a visitor from Dublin

Finbar Mack (Louis Lotorto) late 40s, a real estate developer and innkeeper who was born and bred in Sligo and is now residing outside the area

SETTING AS DESCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR IN THE TEXT

The play's action takes place in Brendan Byrne's bar, which is located in a cottage on his farm at the foot of Knocknarea Mountain in County Sligo, Ireland.

TIME

The playwright specifies that the play is set in the present day. Jewel Theatre's production is set in 1997, the year the play premiered.

No playwright knows what their play is even about until actors start performing it.

~ Conor McPherson

SYNOPSIS

“Although any of the five stories in *The Weir* would work beautifully as an actor’s audition piece, the genius of the play lies in the sequencing and into relation of those stories, and in the subtle interaction of the characters”: Kevin Kerrane, “The Structural Elegance of Connor McPherson’s ‘The Weir’.”

Warning. The following synopsis contains spoilers. Please do not read if you don’t want to learn what happens in the play.

The play opens with Jack Mullen entering a small, rural pub in County Sligo, Ireland, on a windy evening in late spring. He walks behind the bar and tries to pour himself a Guinness from the tap, but it is broken. He then opens a bottle instead, consults a price list, and puts money in the till for it. Brendan Byrne, the publican, soon arrives with a bucket of peat to add to the fire. The men drink while discussing the events of their respective days, including the incessant wind, an earlier visit by Brendan’s sisters to urge him to sell some of the family farmland, Jack’s winnings that day from off-track betting on horses, the broken Guinness tap, and the impending influx of tourists from the Continent, whom they call the “Germans”. Their talk soon turns to Finbar Mack, who left the community 18 years earlier to open a hotel, the Arms, in Carrick, a city on the River Shannon about 34 miles southeast of Sligo. Finbar has been building a fortune by using an inheritance from his father to buy and sell property in the burgeoning housing market brought on by the Celtic Tiger, an economic boom that started approximately four years before the time of the play. Finbar’s latest coup was to sell Maura Nealon’s home, which has stood empty the many years since her death, to a young woman from Dublin whom he plans to introduce to them when he brings her to the bar later that night.

Jack speculates that Finbar may have designs on the woman and is bringing her around to flaunt his wealth by comparison to their more-or-less subsistence living, as well as his allure for the opposite sex. Brendan is offended by this because Finbar is married; he and Jack are single, as is their friend Jim Curran, who is expected soon. When Jim arrives, the two men ask him about Finbar and the Dublin woman. Having seen the two earlier that day in Carrick, Jim attests to her attractiveness and says that she is in her thirties. Finbar shortly enters the pub with Valerie and introduces her to the men. He wastes no time trying to impress her by boasting of his accomplishments since he left the community, telling Valerie that the others are jealous of him because, “I went to the town to seek my fortune. And they all stayed out here on the bog picking their holes”. In addition to his boasting, Finbar’s constant hovering over Valerie confirms Jack’s and Brendan’s suspicions of his intentions, exacerbates their resentment of him and sharpens the underlying tension.

Competing for Valerie's attention, Jack regales her with his philosophy about gambling while the others enjoy making fun of him. After she tells them that Finbar has been squiring her around and giving her the history of the place, the men show Valerie the old photographs covering the pub's walls. They point out themselves, their ancestors, the town, the old abbey, and the weir, explaining how the weir, which was built on the River Sligo in 1951 to regulate the water, transformed the area by generating power to modernize it. They talk of the weir and its relationship to Maura Nealon's house, which Valerie has just purchased. Brendan brings up the fairy road that runs beneath the home, and the "ring of trees" or fairy fort in his top field, which encourages the others to chime in with fairy stories from the area.

Jack begins, talking about an incident involving Maura Nealon's mother, Birdie, that occurred in 1910 or 1911. Birdie was a popular, widowed woman who lived with her children in the home at that time. She had a reputation from childhood as a practical joker, so no one took her very seriously. One day she heard knocking on the door of the home, but when she went to open it, no one was there. At first, she thought it was someone retaliating for a practical joke she played on them, but it started happening every day. Maura could hear it too, but when she asked Birdie if she ought to answer the door, Birdie would discourage her, saying it was nothing. However, one very dark, moonless night when the wind was whistling under the doors, Birdie didn't let Maura go up to bed, insisting that she sit with her by the fire. The knocking started up again softly, low down near the bottom of the door. Maura offered to answer the door, but Birdie wouldn't let her. The knocking then shifted to the back door, and then to the window, but Birdie still wouldn't let Maura see what it was. It stopped after that, but when the fire went down, Birdie wouldn't go to the shed outdoors to get more turf for the fire. She and Maura just sat there until the others returned, well after midnight. Birdie told no one what had happened, but had a priest come by to bless the house when only she and Maura were home.

Years later, Jack continues, "Maura heard from one of the older people in the area that the house had been built on what they call a fairy road". Jim explains that it wasn't really a road, but "a row of things", from the fairy fort up in Brendan's top field, to the old well, the abbey further down, and into the "pebbly beach in the cove". The legend was that the fairies would come down that way to bathe. Since Maura Nealon's house was built on that road, Valerie speculated that the fairies must have wanted to come through.

After the priest blessed the house, the knocking didn't return until the weir was going up some 40 years later. "There was a bit of knocking then," Jack recounts, "and a fierce load of dead birds all in the hedge and all this, but that was it".

After a few laughs and another round of drinks, Finbar reluctantly starts a story of his own at Jack's urging. Eighteen years ago, before he left the area, he received a call from a neighbor, Mrs. Walsh, whose daughter, Niamh, was playing with a Ouija board and had become terrified by the specter of a woman only she could see, staring at her from the top of the stairs. He goes to the Walsh's home, where he, Niamh, and her mother are soon joined by a priest, who blesses the home, and a doctor, who

sedates the girl. After Niamh is settled, Mrs. Walsh receives a phone call from her married son, who lives in another town. He tells her that an elderly neighbor who used to mind Niamh and the other sisters when they were younger, and who had been bedridden, had fallen and been found dead at the bottom of the stairs. Later that night Jack returned home where he lived alone. He was sitting at the fire having a last cigarette before he went up to bed and became overcome with a sense that there was something on the stairs behind him that led to the second floor. "At the time," Finbar recalls, "I couldn't turn around. I couldn't get up to go to bed". He sat there looking at the empty fireplace, unable to move to rebuild the fire or light another cigarette until the sun came up, "in case something saw me".

The Walshes moved away after that, and so did Finbar, down to Carrick. He would never have another cigarette, nor would he ever return to Sligo to live. "Didn't want the loneliness maybe, you know?"

Finbar finishes his story, retires to the restroom, and returns to begin another story to lighten the mood. Nuala Donnelly, a young chambermaid at his hotel, is getting married there the next day. She is the daughter of Declan Donnelly, a friend of Jim's who died about 10 years earlier. Nuala's fiancé is two decades older, and Finbar describes in amusing detail the squalor he has lived in since his mother died – a mess Nuala will have to clean up. He suggests it is how Jack, an older bachelor himself, must be living. The others enjoy this and raise their glasses again.

Jim recalls a story about him and Declan Donnelly doing a gravedigging job many years ago for a priest in Glen, a town many miles from Sligo. The story is humorous at first, but soon makes a harrowing turn. They've just dug a grave for the deceased, a middle-aged man, when Declan goes to get a tarp to cover the hole, leaving Jim alone in the graveyard. A man walks out of the church towards him and angrily claims that Jim has dug the grave in the wrong spot. He takes him to the recently set tombstone of a little girl. The man insists that the deceased is to be buried with the girl, not in the grave that the priest told them to dig, the family grave where the parents are already interred. The man then strokes the little girl's grave and walks back into the church. When Declan returns, Jim tells him about the man, whom Declan did not see. They cover the grave, leave the graveyard, and make the long drive home.

A few days later, Jim's mother brings him the newspaper. In the obituary for the man whose grave Jim and Declan dug is his photo, which Jim says is the spitting image of the man he'd met in the graveyard. Jim decides he must have been a brother or other relative. "I didn't think about it for ages," Jim recalls, "until one night Declan told me he'd found out why the priest from Glen was looking for a couple of Carrick fellas, for the job. The fella who'd died had had a bit of a reputation for em ... being a pervert. And Jesus, when I heard that, you know? If it was him. And he wanted to go down in the grave with the ... little girl. Even after they were gone. It didn't bear ... thinking about. It came back when you said about Declan's girl".

The bar is silent until Finbar chides Jim for telling such a terrible story. Jim explains that he had been drinking from a notoriously potent bottle of poitin, which Jack allows might give anyone hallucinations. Still, Jim feels he had a physical encounter.

When Valerie, visibly upset, asks where the ladies' room is, Brendan takes her to the main house because the one in the bar is out of order. While the two of them are gone, Jack reprimands Finbar for denigrating Jim when Finbar's story was also disturbing. He challenges him about his intentions with Valerie, a notion that Finbar both rebuffs and then tries to turn back onto Jack. The argument, which Jim tries to diffuse, escalates until Jack overrides Finbar's offer to buy a round to settle things down, and buys the drinks himself.

When Valerie and Brendan return, Jack and Finbar have made amends, and the three men apologize to Valerie for upsetting her. She replies that hearing their stories has moved her to tell her own: "It's important to me. That I'm not ... bananas". She talks of her nine-year-old daughter, Niamh, a bright, happy child who, puzzlingly, was plagued by night terrors. Niamh would hear sounds of children knocking in the walls and saw a man standing across the street, starting to move to her. "She used to even be scared that when she got up in the morning that Mammy and Daddy would have gone away and she'd be in the house on her own. That was one she told Daniel's [her husband's] mother. And all the furniture and carpets and everything would be gone. So I told her after that if she was worried at all during the day to ring me, and I'd come and get her, and there was nothing to worry about. And she knew our number. She knew ours and her Nana's and mine at work. She knew them all".

Then Valerie tells how Niamh, an avid swimmer, hit her head in a pool during a swim meet. Valerie got to the pool late from work, only to learn Niamh had been brought to an adjacent room where an ambulance man was trying to resuscitate her. "They were going to put her on a machine in Beaumont [hospital] and try to revive her there. But the ambulance man knew, I think. She wasn't breathing, and he just knew, and he said if I wanted to say good-bye to her in the ambulance in case I didn't get a chance at the hospital. And I gave her a little hug. She was freezing cold. And I told her Mammy loved her very much. She just looked asleep, but her lips were gone blue and she was dead. And it had happened so fast. Just a few minutes".

Valerie describes how unreal it was, how at the funeral, she thought she could lift Niamh out of the coffin and end it all, and how her husband buried himself in his work. She spent months walking around aimlessly, sitting in the house, or laying in bed for hours, trying to stay asleep.

One morning when Valerie was in bed and her husband Daniel had gone to work, the phone rang. She let it ring for a long time. It eventually stopped, but when it started up again, she answered it, thinking it might be Daniel. The line was very faint, like a crossed line. She heard voices, but she couldn't make out what they were saying. Then she heard Niamh calling "Mammy" and asking her "to come and collect her".

Valerie wasn't sure whether she was dreaming or if Niamh's death had been a dream.

She asked where Niamh was, and Niamh thought she might be alone in the bedroom at her Nana's house. She was scared, she said. There were children knocking in the walls and the man was standing across the road, about to come to her.

Valerie dropped the phone and drove to her mother-in-law's in just the t-shirt she slept in, barely able to see because she was crying so much. She said that she knew Niamh wasn't going to be there, that wherever she was, there was nothing she could do about it, but "If she's out there, she still needs me".

The men sit quietly, stunned. Then each question if had been a dream, or a hallucination, or even a wrong number. Brendan alone believes and defends Valerie.

After a few minutes, Finbar reluctantly leaves, asking Valerie to come with him. She declines. He departs with Jim, leaving Brendan, Jack and Valerie to continue talking while sharing in a brandy nightcap. Valerie asks Jack if he is married or has children. He replies, telling a story that Brendan has heard before, about a woman whose heart he broke. They were engaged, and she moved to Dublin to start a new life for them. He was reluctant to leave Sligo, so he'd visit her only periodically just to have sex. He stopped taking her calls and answering her letters. Eventually she married someone else. As her wedding wedding, as she walked down the aisle with her new husband, Jack caught her eye and gave her a grin that said, "Enjoy your big gorilla cause the future's all ahead of me". She looked at him like he was just another wedding guest. "And that was that. And the future was all ahead of me. Years and years of it. I could feel it coming. All those things you've got to face on your own. All by yourself".

Devastated, Jack left the church and wandered the streets. He stopped in a bar where the bartender saw his distress and made him a sandwich: "Someone I didn't know had done this for me. Such a small thing. But a huge thing in my condition. It fortified me, like no meal I ever had in my life".

Jack finishes his story by describing the isolation of his daily life, working alone in his garage, "thinking about what might have been ... there's not one morning I don't wake up with her name in the room".

As Jack gets ready to go, he tells Valerie that her company inspired his story. Brendan readies the bar for the next day, talking about how miserable he will be when the Germans come, stuck behind the bar while his friends drink elsewhere to avoid them. He describes eloquently how he will watch the shadow from the Knock move along the floor as the sun goes down.

As they leave the bar, Valerie promises to return with Jack and Jim to keep Brendan company. With one final volley at the Germans, Brendan closes the door behind him

I often think that for a play to really work, and for people to love it, it has to be like a little snow globe – where you can look into it and it's a perfectly contained world that has its own logic. And The Weir has that.

It's a complete world.

~ Conor McPherson

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Conor McPherson was born in Dublin, Ireland, on August 6, 1971, to a family with roots in County Leitrim. He was raised in Coolock, a mostly working-class village on Dublin's Northside. His father was a business and accounting teacher, and his mother was a housewife and worked part-time in a shoe shop. He has two sisters, one older and one younger.

He grew up in a predominantly Catholic culture, telling the *Guardian Weekly* in its February 15-21, 2001 issue, that in school, "the same teachers who taught us religion also physically attacked us". He "became used to being hit by an adult every day," and feels that the Irish Catholic experience contributes to the difference between English and Irish plays: "Protestants are told they're free to protest. So, [English] playwrights argue that their work has a political validity – Pinter, Hare, Brenton, Edgar, Wesker, etc. – whereas Irish writers are mostly a bit scared."

McPherson's family would visit his grandfather, who lived in County Leitrim, on weekends and holidays. He'd listen to his grandfather's folktales of fairies and other supernatural beings. This helped feed his interest in ghosts, vampires and zombies when he was eight or nine years-old. He also became intrigued by theatre when watching his cousin, Garrett Keogh, acting in Dublin in 1962; Keogh has since appeared in several of McPherson's plays.

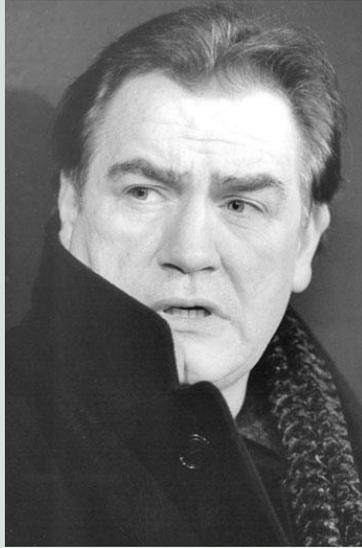
McPherson started writing short stories as a teenager. His plan, however, wasn't to be a writer but instead a guitarist in a band. His parents had other ideas, as he told Maddy Costa of *The Guardian* on September 13, 2006. Concerned that he might become "completely directionless," they sent him to the prestigious University College in Dublin (UCD), where he studied philosophy and English because "I thought they would probably be easy".

Studying for his degree in philosophy taught him, as he told Costa, "that what you have to accept is that you don't know anything, that you're ignorant, which is a very liberating place to be". The plays of David Mamet, which he discovered in a literature class, would change his life: "The day I read *Glengarry Glen Ross*, that was it," he said. "I knew exactly what I was going to do." Early in the 1990s, as a member of UCD Dramsoc, the college's dramatic society, he began to write and produce his own plays, the first of which were parodies of Mamet's works. He tutored his fellow students and worked part-time in a shoe shop to make ends meet, but the writing and directing he started while in school would shortly become his life's work.

With a group of fellow students from Dramsoc, he founded Fly by Night Theatre Company in Dublin, which produced several of his plays, some of which he acted in, directed, or did both: *Radio Play – Concerning Communication* (1992) *A Light in the Window of Industry* (1993), *Inventing Fortune's Wheel* (1994), *The Light of Jesus (aka The Good Thief)* (1994), *The Stars Lose their Glory* (1994), *Rum and Vodka* (1994), and *This Lime Tree Bower* (1995), which went on to play the Bush Theatre in Dublin.

In the same time frame, McPherson's presented his dissertation, "Logical Constraints and Practical Reasoning: On Attempted Refutation of Utilitarianism," earning him a master's degree in philosophy, specializing in ethics, from UCD in 1993.

McPherson's early plays were scripted, direct address monologues, where a single character or several characters spoke to the audience instead of one another. The two that put him on the map before his breakthrough with *The Weir* were *This Lime Tree Bower* and *Saint Nicholas*. In *This Lime Tree Bower*, three young men from a Dublin seaside town overlap their recollections of an ill-fated night that included a rape, an embarrassing episode at a college lecture, and a robbery done for retribution that ties the stories together. *St Nicholas* was McPherson's first work to premiere in London. It opened in April 1997 to critical and box-office acclaim at the esteemed Bush Theatre, thanks in part to McPherson's great fortune in being able to cast the highly regarded and talented Brian Cox.



Brian Cox as "The Man" in *St Nicholas*, 1997

St Nicholas consists of a solo monologue by an aging, jaded theatre critic who recounts his obsession with a young actress, and how it leads to a journey into a macabre world of vampires from which he barely escapes. Brian Cox took the role to The Matrix Theater Company in Los Angeles in 1999 and then to Primary Stages in New York.

A playbill for the production of *St. Nicholas* at The Matrix Theatre Company. The playbill is yellow and features a black and white portrait of Brian Cox. The text on the playbill includes: "International Stage, Film and Television Star and Two-time Winner of Great Britain's Highest Acting Award, the Olivier"; "Brian Cox"; "Starting in"; "St. Nicholas"; "by"; "Conor McPherson"; "JULY 31, 1999"; "8:00 PM"; "A BENEFIT PERFORMANCE AND LIMITED ENGAGEMENT FOR"; "The Matrix Theatre Company"; "7657 Melrose Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90045"; "Reservations: 323 / 852-1445". A biographical note about Brian Cox is also present on the right side of the playbill.

Playbill for *St Nicholas* at The Matrix Theatre Company, Los Angeles, in 1999

This Lime Tree Bower and *St Nicholas*, along with other early plays, *Rum and Vodka* and *The Good Thief*, have been described as "plays of dissipation" by theatre writer Eamonn Jordan. They, like *The Weir*, also deal with the supernatural.

When the Royal Court Theatre's artistic director, Stephen Daldry, commissioned *The Weir*, he had one caveat: that the new drama not be a monologue. Scott T. Cummings, a theatre scholar and critic, described the resulting script as "McPherson's characteristically cheeky response to the call for him to write characters who talk to each other instead of the audience. He has them tell stories." The difference, though, is that they are telling their stories to one another, not to the audience. By his own admission, McPherson had misgivings about writing the dialogue that connects the tales in *The Weir*. He told Kevin Kerrane, author of "The Structural Elegance of Connor McPherson's 'The Weir'," "I remember when I was working on the interaction following Jack's first story and leading into Finbar's story. I worried that the seams would show, and I thought: 'O God, I have to pull off this trick three more times.'" His main concern, he says, was the structure within the stories. Despite his qualms, he succeeded wonderfully: the "genius of the play," according to Kerrane, "lies in the sequencing and interrelation of those stories, and in the subtle interaction of the characters".

The following passage, which describes *The Weir*, lists McPherson's subsequent plays and films, and discusses his work as a director, is excerpted from *The Theatre and Films of Conor McPherson* by Eamonn Jordan.

The spectacular success of *The Weir* at the Royal Court in July 1997 brought McPherson to the attention of the global theatre community. Ian Rickson's [the director's] production of *Weir* was staged initially in a forty-seat venue at the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs that was temporarily located at the Ambassadors Theatre, while the Royal Court's Sloane Square premises underwent renovation. *Weir* is regarded by many as one of the most significant plays of the twentieth century. McPherson was only twenty-five when he wrote it.

Numerous successes followed with plays like *Dublin Carol* (1999), *Port Authority* (2001), *Shining City* (2004), *The Seafarer* (2006), *The Birds* (2009) – a loose adaptation of Daphne Du Maurier's novella of the same title, *The Night Alive* (2013), and most recently, *Girl from the North Country* (2017), a play with music by Bob Dylan. Although McPherson was born, reared and remains resident in Ireland, unusually for an Irish writer, the majority of McPherson's works have been premiered at some of London's most prestigious venues: the Bush, Royal Court, National Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, the Young Vic (a co-production with Belfast's Lyric Theatre) and Old Vic. Dublin's Gate Theatre, when under Michael Colgan's artistic directorship, has also played a pivotal role in McPherson's career, hosting the Royal Court's touring productions of *Weir* and *Shining*, mounting their own production of *Carol* not long after its Royal Court opening, staging a revival of *Weir* directed by Garry Hynes in 2008, and commissioning new work like *Port, Come on Over* (2001) and *Birds*. The much-lauded Steppenwolf Theatre Company has mounted productions of four different McPherson plays in Chicago.

Apart from Ian Rickson taking directorial responsibility for *Weir* and *Carol*, rather unusually, McPherson has directed the first production of every other new work, declining to follow the advice given to most playwrights to avoid directing the premiers of one's own works. It is probably fair to say that very few, if any, of McPherson's peers have had such extensive backing from such a range of highly regarded theatre companies and hosting venues across the timeframe of his career. Staging productions of new work by very reputable writers even in the most established and well-funded venues invariably proves to be a very risky business, particularly in the highly competitive London theatre scene, where there are so many options from which the paying public can choose. There is little tolerance for anything less than the highest production standards; consistently accomplished and engaging new work that may be a little overwritten or have some rudimentary flaws is simply not going to draw enough people into the theatres.

Also unusual is not only McPherson's hit rate with untested writing, but also the fact that his work transfers with such frequency from a London to a New York venue, sometimes with many of the same cast members. Strikingly, time lags between the original production and transfers is regularly very brief. For example, *Alive* opened at the Donmar Warehouse in June 2013, before transferring to the Atlantic Theatre in New York in December 2013. Other productions of *Alive* quickly followed, including Henry Wishcamper's [the director's] production in Chicago at Steppenwolf's Theatre in September 2014, another at the Geffen Playhouse, Los Angeles, directed by Randall Arney in February 2015, and in October 2015, McPherson directed another production of this play, which was co-produced by the Dublin Theatre Festival and Belfast's Lyric Theatre, with a completely new cast. Most plays hardly ever get produced, and the few that do, hardly see the light of day again; fewer again receive the range of subsequent productions opportunities that McPherson's writing achieves.

The same year as the premiering of *Nicholas* and *Weir*, saw the release of McPherson's screenplay for the multiple-award-winning film, *I Went Down*, a work commissioned by director Paddy Breathnach and producer Robert Walpole. McPherson's work in film as writer/director has been ongoing with *Saltwater* (2000 [a version of Bower]), *The Actors* (2003) and *The Eclipse* (2009), which was co-written with Billy Roche and was very loosely based on Roche's short story "Table Manners" from *Tales from Rainwater Pond* (2006). In 2017, BBC Northern Ireland broadcasted the three-part drama, *Paula*, with Alex Holmes directing a superb cast, including Denise Gough in the lead role. Like many other contemporary writers, McPherson is just as comfortable as a film and television-maker as he is a performance-maker. And like many of his playwriting peers, McPherson is as much influenced by film, screenwriters, and film directors as he is by his theatrical predecessors, traditions, practices, and genres. As I write, he is involved in the adaptation of Eoin Colfer's *Artemis Fowl* (2001), to be directed by Kenneth Branagh for Walt Disney Motion Pictures films, with a late 2019 release date.

The list below enumerates awards that McPherson's respective works have received, as well as work he has done that post-dates Jordan's book, which was published in 2019. It comes from his artist profile with Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago.

Plays include *The Lime Tree Bower* (Dublin/Bush Theatre; Meyer-Whitworth Award), *St Nicholas* (Bush Theatre/Primary Stages, New York), *The Weir* (Royal Court/Duke of York's/Walter Kerr Theater, New York; Laurence Olivier, Evening Standard, Critics' Circle, George Devine Awards), *Dublin Carol* (Royal Court/Atlantic Theater, New York), *Port Authority* (Ambassadors Theatre/Gate Theatre, Dublin/Atlantic Theater, New York), *Shining City* (Royal Court/Gate Theatre, Dublin/Manhattan Theater Club, New York; Tony Award nomination for Best Play), *The Seafarer* (National Theatre/Abbey Theatre, Dublin/Booth Theater, New York; Laurence Olivier, Evening Standard, Tony Award nominations for Best Play) and *The Veil* (National Theatre).

Theatre adaptations include Daphne du Maurier's *The Birds* (Gate Theatre, Dublin/Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis) and August Strindberg's *The Dance of Death* (Donmar at Trafalgar Studios).

Work for the cinema includes *I Went Down*, *Saltwater*, *Samuel Beckett's Endgame*, *The Actors*, and *The Eclipse*.

Forthcoming screen work includes an adaptation of John Banville's *Elegy for April* for the BBC to be broadcast this year [2014].

Awards for his screenwriting include three Best Screenplay Awards from the Irish Film and Television Academy, the Spanish Cinema Writers Circle Best Screenplay Award, the CICA Award for Best Film at the Berlin Film Festival, the Jury Prize at the San Sebastian Film Festival and the Melies d'Argent Award for Best European Film.

More recent information is provided by Curtis Brown, McPherson's representatives in the UK:

Conor is currently working on the screenplay *Double Cross* for Paul Greengrass. His original television drama *Paula*, developed with Cuba Pictures and BBC NI for BBC2, aired in May 2017 to brilliant reviews. *The Girl from the North Country*, with music from Bob Dylan, had its world premiere at the Old Vic theatre in 2017, transferred to the West End in 2018 and arrived on Broadway in 2020. Conor currently has several projects in development, including a film adaptation of *Girl From The North Country* with Blueprint Pictures/New Regency.

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