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U.Va. Drama Launches 'RecentWorks' Series with 'By the Bog of Cats,' Symposium

October 8, 2010 — The University of Virginia Department of Drama kicks off its new "RecentWorks" Series with Marina Carr's "By the Bog of Cats" and a guest artist residency with Irish actress Olwen Fouéré.

The play runs Oct. 21 through 23 and Oct. 26 through 30. All shows begin at 8 p.m. in the Helms Theatre; tickets are \$10 for the public and \$5 for U.Va. faculty, staff and U.Va. Alumni Association members.

Greed, abandonment, betrayal, love and sacrifice are at the core of this powerful and imaginative retelling of the Greek tragedy "Medea." The Greek countryside is traded for the dark, dense and mysterious bogs of Ireland as Hester Swane, daughter of an Irish traveler, battles to hold onto what she feels is rightfully hers while all the while inching toward an inevitable and explosive fate. "By the Bog of Cats" is directed by Marianne Kubik, associate professor of movement in U.Va.'s College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences' Department of Drama.

"The play has been on our 'to-do list' for a number of years," said Kate Burke, associate professor of voice and speech. "It's a play of powerful contrasts and very timely with its themes of alienation and isolation of the Roma people or gypsies in France, Italy and other parts of Europe and the conflict that arises between their wandering lifestyle and that of the residents in the regions they inhabit."

Burke met with the playwright last spring while on sabbatical in Ireland and facilitated the production and residency at U.Va.

Fouéré, one of Ireland's major actresses, will be a guest artist in residence in the Drama Department Oct. 26 through 30. Fouéré originated the role of Hester Swane at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin; Carr wrote "By the Bog of Cats" for her.

"The exposure of our students to Fouéré and her extensive experience to this form of theater-making will be invaluable to all our students, and especially to the M.F.A. students who have taken a class we offer on devised work," Burke said.

During her residency, Fouéré will participate in a symposium, "Encountering the Other: The Irish Traveller," on Oct. 27 at 4 p.m. in the Helms Theatre. The event is free and open to the public, but tickets are required and are available at the **U.Va. Arts Box Office** [[link to http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu](http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu)]. A reception will follow the symposium in the Culbreth Theatre lobby.

Besides Fouéré, symposium participants include:

- Marc Conner, professor of English and modern Irish literature at Washington & Lee University
- Peadar Little, a native Irish language speaker and teacher
- Victor Luftig, U.Va. associate professor, Department of English, Irish Literature
- Kate Burke, U.Va. associate professor of voice and speech, will act as moderator

Fouéré will join Kubik and cast members in a post-show discussion on Oct. 28. She also will meet with students one-on-one to talk about her experiences in relation to their theater aspirations. Fouéré often engages in creating devised works, a collaborative form of theater not crafted by a playwright but developed by the actors through improvisational exploration. The performance is fixed by the time of presentation.

The Department of Drama's new "RecentWorks" Series is supported by the Office of the Vice Provost for the Arts and the Provost's Arts Enhancement Fund and features recent plays by new playwrights.

Tickets for the play and symposium are available at the U.Va. Arts Box Office, located in the Drama Building. Call 434-924-3376 on weekdays from noon until 5 p.m., or visit www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu. A \$3.50 processing fee applies to Internet and phone orders.

Note that the Helms Theatre is now reserved seating. A seating chart is available on [the box office website \[link to www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu\]](http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu).

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