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A Near Impossible Task

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Few would dispute that when it comes to Theatre Festivals Edinburgh and Dublin are still the major players. Melbourne too has gained a considerable reputation, but for most The Edinburgh Fringe and Dublin's Fringe and Theatre Festivals are still the barometers. On the evidence of 2012 this would appear to be richly deserved with the bar set incredibly high. In terms of the sheer depth and scope of performances and productions, 2012 was an outstanding year. All of which makes writing a year in review problematic.

A year in review can often sound like the voice of God, surveying with 20-20 vision and speaking with an authority that is as false as it is inaccurate. Looking back to praise the good and the great, so many outstanding productions and performances can fall by the wayside, ignored as if they didn't matter. In truth a few didn't matter. Yet it always needs to be remembered that many shows were not seen and may well have been worthy for inclusion.

Of those which were seen here are some of the outstanding plays, productions and performances to grace the Edinburgh and Dublin Fringes, as well as The Dublin Theatre Festival during 2012.

Outstanding Productions: *The Boys of Foley Street* (Anu Productions); *Tissue*, (Muchmuchmore Theatre Company); *DruidMurphy's Tom Murphy Trilogy: Famine, A Whistle in the Dark, Conversations on a Homecoming* (Druid Theatre Company)

Outstanding Performances: Stephan Brennan, (*Halcyon Days*); Alicja Ayers (*Shibari*); Stefaine Preissner (*Solpadeine is my Boyfriend*); Samuel Edward Cook (*Glory Dazed*); Nigel Barber (*Hearts on Fire*)

Outstanding Direction: Garry Hynes (*DruidMurphy Trilogy*); Louise Lowe (*The Boys of Foley Street*); Andy Newman (*Tissue*); Ali Boag (*Hearts on Fire*); Una McKeivitt (*Singlehood*); Peter Sheridan (*Beyond The Brooklyn Sky*)

Outstanding Performance Art/Theatre: *Mystery Magnet* by Miet Warlop; *How A Man Crumbled* by Clout Theatre

Outstanding Cabaret/Burlesque/Musical Review: *The Ladyboys of Bangkok, The Showstoppers*

Outstanding New Plays: *Singlehood* by Una McKeivitt; *Solpadeine is my Boyfriend* by Stefaine Preissner; *Halcyon Days* by Deirdre Kinahan; *Shibari* by Gary Duggan; *Beyond The Brooklyn Sky*

by Michael Hilliard Mulcahy; *Glory Dazed* by Cat Jones; *Hearts on Fire* by Adam Usden

Outstanding Dance: *Constellations* by Paper Dolls; *(remor)* by Res de Res

Outstanding Music/Musical: *This Is How We Fly*; *FLATPACK* by Ulysses Opera Theatre.

Outstanding Comedy: *Totally Wired!*; *BiPolar* by Loretta Maine; *Smart Casual* by David Mills; *An American Girlfriend* by Laura Levites, *Straight to DVD* by Pony Dance

Outstanding Solo Performances: Silvia Gallerano (*The S**t*); Stefaine Preissner (*Solpadeine is my Boyfriend*); *White Rabbit*, *Red Rabbit*

This list is far from exhaustive. Rather it aims to highlight something of the diversity, originality and range which Festival season has to offer. If fortune smiles upon you, check out these shows should you be fortunate enough to find any playing at a theatre near you. Better still, check out the Festivals in 2013. They are an experience not to be missed.

Good luck to all for 2013.



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