Juno

Based on the play Juno and the Paycock by Sean O’Casey
directed by Nick Bowling
music direction by Doug Peck and Elizabeth Doran

BOOK BY
JOSEPH STEIN

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
MARC BLITZSTEIN

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BACKSTORY
YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS

YESTERDAY’S STORIES.
TODAY’S TOPICS.
You’ll recognize in this show a quintessential trait of the Irish culture—the lyrical balance of pain and laughter.

O’Casey agreed to a musical adaptation after seeing the success of his friend George Bernard Shaw’s play Pygmalion as the musical My Fair Lady. His play was adapted as the musical Juno with music and lyrics by Mark Blitzstein and book by Joseph Stein, opening on Broadway at the Winter Garden Theater on March 9, 1959. Directed by José Ferrer, choreographed by Agnes DeMille and starring Shirley Booth and Melvyn Douglas, it played a total of 16 performances.

While the musical Juno was a flop, Blitzstein’s score is considered one of his best. It was produced off-Broadway in 1992 at the Vineyard Theatre, featuring Anita Gillette and Malcolm Gets. In 2008, City Center’s Encores! offered a semi-staged production, which played for five performances with Victoria Clark and John Schuck.

“Comedy of Irish character and tragedy of Irish political life in fairly equal parts compose the substance of Sean O’Casey’s Juno and the Paycock.”

Dear Friends,
We’re thrilled to bring the musical Juno to Chicago audiences for the first time.

Based on the 1924 Sean O’Casey classic Juno and the Paycock, this musical was originally produced on Broadway in 1959. It closed after just 16 performances, never having a production in Ireland, you’ll recognize in this show a quintessential trait of the culture—the lyrical balance of pain and laughter.

The Juno design team has crafted an immersive setting that surrounds you with 1920s Dublin, and the intimacy of TimeLine’s home is a key element helping us bring the humor and heartache of the Boyle family to life.

It’s a story and a staging that we hope is the perfect cap on a 2013-14 season you have helped make one of TimeLine’s most memorable. I thank you for making this year so special and for joining us to unveil the beauty of Juno.

All the best,

[Signature]

From Artistic Director PJ Powers

a message

Juno and the Paycock and Juno

the play

TIMELINE OF CONFLICT IN IRELAND

1845-1855 A potato blight causes The Irish Famine; an estimated one million Irish die of starvation or disease.

1855-1860 More than two million Irish migrate to other countries, including the United States, Canada and Australia.

1858 The Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and the Fenian Brotherhood are founded. Fenian becomes the blanket term used for supporters of an Irish Republic.

1867 The poorly coordinated Fenian Rising fails. British spies ensure that most Fenian leaders are arrested before the rebellion takes place.

1879 The Irish Land League is formed; its aim is to abolish landlord and allow farmers to own their own land.

1880 Charles Stewart Parnell becomes chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP).

April 1881 British Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone proposes the Land Act to set fixed rates and leases for tenant farmers.

October 13, 1881 Parnell is arrested after his newspaper, United Ireland, attacks the Land Act. He will be released in May 1882.

May 6, 1882 The newly appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and Thomas Henry Burke are stabbed to death by a radical splinter group of the IRB, the Irish National Invincibles. The assassination, known as the Phoenix Park Murders, sets
Sean O’Casey, Marc Blitzstein and Joseph Stein

the artists

Sean O’Casey

Born John Casey on March 30, 1880 in Dublin, Ireland, to a lower middle class Protestant family, Casey would remake himself in many ways—from Gaelicizing his name to Seán Ó’Cathasaigh, to exaggerating the level of poverty in which he was raised. Self-dramatizing in his autobiography and in interviews obscures much of his biography.

In 1905 O’Casey joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). He helped establish the Irish Citizen Army and was a contemporary of many key figures in Irish nationalism, but left the army in 1914. His personal politics shifted to labor and trade unionism.

Marcus Samuel Blitzstein’s musical talents were apparent from an early age. His first performance was at age seven.

Blitzstein studied with both Nadia Boulanger and Arnold Schoenberg, although Boulanger was unhappy when he left her to study with Schoenberg. In truth, Blitzstein was more sympathetic to the musical philosophy of Boulanger than Schoenberg, with whom he was frequently at odds. Blitzstein’s own musical theories shifted, as his political theories changed, from more elitist music to populist music. He even authored an English translation of Bertolt Brecht’s The Threepenny Opera.

Blitzstein married novelist Eva Goldbeck on March 2, 1933. Blitzstein was open with Eva about his homosexuality and their marriage was primarily an intellectual rather than a sexual relationship. The two shared a genuine emotional bond and Blitzstein valued Eva’s input and unrelenting honesty. However, their marriage was not free of troubles. Blitzstein feared Eva might leave him for someone with whom she could have a physical relationship, they were both prone to depression, and she was anorexic. When Eva died of breast cancer on May 26, 1936, he was devastated. He wrote The Cradle Will Rock in a mere five weeks as a tribute to Eva.

Blitzstein died in Martinique on January 22, 1964. He had been drinking with three sailors who used sex to lure him into an alley, where they beat him. He died of the injuries.

Joseph Stein

Joseph Stein was born in New York City on May 30, 1912 to Jewish parents who had emigrated from Poland, and he grew up in the Bronx. He graduated from City College of New York in 1935 and earned a Master’s degree in Social Work from Columbia University in 1937. He worked as a psychiatric social worker from 1939 until 1945, while writing comedy on the side.

An encounter with Zero Mostel led him to start writing for radio personalities, including Henry Morgan, Tallulah Bankhead, Phil Silvers and Jackie Gleason. He later started working in television for Sid Caesar, joining the writing team of Your Show of Shows that also included Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, Carl Reiner and Larry Gelbart.

His greatest success came from writing the book for the 1964 musical Fiddler on the Roof, for which he won two Tony Awards and later wrote the screenplay for the film adaptation. Stein’s other Broadway credits include Zorba, Alive and Kicking, Mr. Wonderful, The Body Beautiful, Take Me Along, Irene, Carmelina, The Baker’s Wife, Rags and Laughing. He was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame in January 2008 and died on October 14, 2010 at the age of 98.

The Ulster Volunteer Force is founded, unifying several Loyalist groups.

The Dublin Lockout begins when United Tramway Company owner William Martin Murphy demands his employees renounce membership in the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union or be fired. The union responds by calling a strike and Murphy responds back Gladstone’s attempts to get a favorable vote from Parliament on Irish Home Rule, or self-governance.

1886 Gladstone’s Home Rule bill is defeated. While the bill would not have established Irish independence, it does propose an Irish governing body, which Parnell and the IPP have been seeking.

1890 Parnell is named as a co-respondent when his mistress, Kitty O’Shea, is divorced. The IPP splits and Parnell is removed as leader because of the divorce scandal.

1891 Parnell dies.

1893 Gladstone’s second Home Rule bill is defeated.

1903 The Wyndham Land Act is passed, giving landlords incentive to sell land. The Act is designed by conservatives in Parliament to kill the Home Rule movement through kindness, by extending land ownership possibilities.

1905 Sinn Féin (“Ourselves”), an Irish Republican party, is founded.

1908 Jim Larkin and James Connolly found the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union.

1910 Edward Carson becomes leader of the Irish Unionists.

1913 A third Home Rule bill is defeated.

1910 To Back Gladstone’s efforts to get a favorable vote from Parliament on Irish Home Rule, or self-governance.
Ireland in Turmoil

**Juno** takes place during the key moment of transition as the Revolution is ending and the Civil War is beginning.

Audiences who attended Sean O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock* in 1924 would have been intimately familiar with the issues of the play. Those living in Dublin had seen violent conflict in the streets, knew the poverty of Dublin tenements, and had seen the Nationalist movement dissolve into a violent civil war. Ireland and England had a fraught history over Irish self-governance. An early fracture can be traced to Henry VIII’s split with Catholicism, while Ireland remained Catholic. Conflict was exacerbated over centuries as the Irish lost land to a variety of British nobility. Ireland effectively was colonized by English and Scottish Protestants, even as Catholics, mostly poor, remained the majority. Punitive laws that prevented Catholics from holding office and limited their land ownership contributed to public discontent.

Protestants were most well established in the north of Ireland, a region known as Ulster. As the Irish War of Independence (also known as the Irish Revolution) began, Protestant groups that supported union with England (such as the Ulster Unionists) began to form. However, to characterize the conflict as one based solely on religion would be an oversimplification. Presbyterian were also banned from holding public office. Indeed, many key figures in the fight for Irish Home Rule were Protestants such as Charles Stewart Parnell and the poet W.B. Yeats.

Several economic and social factors also played a key role in the movement toward a self-governing Ireland. Anglican landlords, mostly absent, divided and subdivided the land on which tenant farmers strived to grow enough to stay alive. In addition, land management was poor and tenant farmers were evicted. The potato famine of the 1840s contributed to unrest among those who didn’t leave the country. Those who did leave the country were able to send money back to fund Republican causes.

Bad labor practices and poor pay in early shipping and industrial work led to organized unions and strikes, which could turn violent. Union organization would translate into the organization of early Republican militias.

There also was a movement to retain Irish culture and language, which, along with Irish sports organizations, contributed to a patriotic national identity.

After several attempted risings and failed votes on Home Rule, the Easter Rising of 1916 served to galvanize the Irish public and the Irish nationalist movement. Small armed groups of the Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army occupied a key number of buildings in Dublin, including the General Post Office. But after six days of siege, they surrendered. Ninety people were executed by firing squad, including leaders of the Rising such as James Connolly. Connolly was injured in the fighting and was tied to a chair for his execution. The harshness of these deaths outraged the public and contributed to many smaller Republican groups beginning to coordinate, leading to the Irish War of Independence.

The events surrounding O’Casey’s Dublin Trilogy can be broken into roughly three time periods of conflict:

- **(1919-1921)** The Anglo-Irish War or Irish War of Independence (also called the Irish Revolution)—the fight between the Irish Republican Army and British troops over Irish independence, ended by the Anglo-Irish Treaty.
- **(1921-1923)** The Irish Civil War, during which Republicans disagreed over whether Ireland should be part of the United Kingdom with home rule or a completely independent republic. The IRA split into pro-treaty (those who favored home rule while remaining with the United Kingdom) and anti-treaty (those who wanted complete independence) factions. The pro-treaty (Irish Free State) faction took over government operations after the British turned them over as part of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Anti-treaty factions began fighting the new Free State government. The Irish Civil War meant that former IRA compatriots found themselves on opposite sides, frequently resulting in individuals killing former friends.

*Juno* takes place during the key moment of transition as the Revolution was ending and the Civil War was beginning. Not all British troops had withdrawn and the IRA faction that would become the Free State Army was poised to take over.

**April 3, 1916** Pearse orders Irish Volunteers to prepare for maneuvers on April 23, which is Easter Sunday.

**April 20, 1916** The Irish Volunteers begin to arm. **April 21, 1916** James Connolly is arrested by locking out workers. On August 31, Larkin is arrested and clashes erupt along the picket line between Dublin Metropolitan Police and strikers. Two people are killed; 200 constables and numerous civilians are injured. This is the first Sunday in Irish history known as “Bloody Sunday.” The Irish Citizen Army is founded by Connolly to protect Dublin workers. The Irish Volunteers form.

1914 The British government makes plans for military action against the Ulster Volunteers, a group in the north of Ireland favoring union with England, should they protest the Home Rule bill. On March 20 at Curragh, the primary British military base in Ireland, Commander-in-Chief Arthur Paget tells officers that they may stand down if they have Irish family or face dismissal if they are not prepared to follow orders. Of 70 officers, 57 choose dismissal. While not technically a mutiny, it is a public relations disaster. Prime Minister Asquith claims no military action against the Ulster volunteers had ever been contemplated. Among Irish Republicans, the incident creates doubt about the sincerity of British plans for Home Rule. Irish Home Rule is slated to become law, but is suspended for the duration of World War I.
Tenement Life

W

ile playwright Sean O’Casey only briefly lived in a Dublin tenement with a friend between 1920 and 1921, the time period became highly influential on his writing as the setting for his Dublin Trilogy. The buildings that became tenements were originally constructed as grand homes, built by wealthy 18th Century Anglo-Irish Protestants. After the Acts of Union in 1800, which merged the Irish and British Parliaments, most left Ireland to be close to the seat of power, now located at Westminster in England.

In the years that followed there was a crash in property values. A Georgian house purchased for £8,000 in 1791 sold for £500 in the 1840s. Slum landlords broke up the aristocratic houses into apartments for the urban poor. Thus houses built to be spacious and airy single-family homes were divided into cramped rooms with thin walls, little light and neighbors within earshot.

A tenement of seven rooms might house a family in each room, meaning 40 to 50 people could be living there.

There was clear evidence that the building owners knew the houses were structurally unsound.

In the wake of the tragedy, an investigation was launched. The 1914 Report of the Departmental Committee into the Housing Conditions of the Working Classes in the City of Dublin found that “the existing conditions of tenement life are both morally and physically bad.”

On September 2, 1913, Church Street tenement houses 66 and 67 collapsed and seven people where killed. An image of the Church Street tenement collapse from the Illustrated London News. (The National Library of Ireland)

The report also found that 50 percent of the working class population lived in tenements or “second- and third-class small houses.” The second- and third-classes were defined as homes that were structurally at risk or were unfit for human habitation.

A tenement room on Francis Street, circa 1913. (National Archives of Ireland)

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A tenement room on Francis Street, circa 1913. (National Archives of Ireland)

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The IRA swears allegiance to Dáil Éirann. (The National Library of Ireland)

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A tenement room on Francis Street, circa 1913. (National Archives of Ireland)
During rehearsals, Artistic Director PJ Powers (PJP) interviewed actor Marya Grandy (MG), who portrays the title character in Juno. This is an edited version. To read the entire interview, visit timelinetheatre.com/juno/resources.htm.

PJP: Acting runs in your family, correct? Was performing a big part of your childhood? When did you know you wanted to make performing your life’s work?

MG: Yes, and it definitely influenced me. I loved watching rehearsals, and helping my dad run lines. Everything about performing spoke to me. My parents love to tell the story of when they were doing summer stock at the Dorset Playhouse when I was about 2 or 3, and apparently on one of their breaks during tech, I strode on to the stage and belted out “Yankee Doodle.” I have no memory of this, but I also cannot remember ever having wanted to do anything else.

PJP: You spent many years in New York before moving to Chicago in 2011. What do you consider a highlight of your work there?

MG: I’d have to say getting to create the role of Lin in The Great American Trailer Park Musical Off-Broadway was one of the highlights. I had been friends with David Nehls (the composer) for years, and to get to share that experience with him, to say nothing of being part of an original musical from the ground up, was absolutely thrilling. There was a two-story billboard in midtown Manhattan with my face on it, which I still haven’t recovered from, and we recorded a cast album, which was something I had always wanted to do.

PJP: What touches you most about the story of Juno Boyle and her family?

MG: I think Juno loves her family, but she is very tunnel-visioned with regard to her own survival, so she doesn’t really know her family, and it’s particularly poignant where their children are concerned. Missed connections break my heart, and this show is full of them.

PJP: What’s it like working on a show that is so intimately staged?

MG: I love it. With Juno, which is essentially about a family, it is so important to have everything fine-tuned with regard to the inner workings of that family, whether it’s with stolen glances, a raised eyebrow, or how someone pours a cup of tea. Subtlety like that is very hard to convey everything.

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“Juno loves her family, but she doesn’t really know her family. Missed connections break my heart, and this show is full of them.”

On Friday, March 14, more than 300 of TimeLine’s friends and family gathered in the ballroom of the Ritz Carlton Chicago for our most important fundraiser of the year—Step Into Time: Hollywood 1939. It was a magical night of celebrating the golden age of the silver screen while raising funds vital to the ongoing success of TimeLine’s work.

With the incredibly generous support of many individuals and organizations, we raised more than $150,000 in net proceeds to support TimeLine’s mission and programming, making this our most successful event to date.

Guests enjoyed a dinner of sizzling barbecue in the glamorous setting of the Ritz Carlton Chicago. A live auction, fashioned or pristine, kicked off with a performance of the numbers from Thoroughly Modern Millie. The evening culminated in a beautiful musical tribute to the movies of 1939, directed by Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling.

On behalf of event co-chairs John Sirek and Juliet Hart, thank you to everyone who helped to make Step Into Time: Hollywood 1939 a smashing success!
TimeLine Theatre’s 2014-15 Season

the flexpass

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[TimeLine] is known for taking care of its patrons. It is a theater that audiences trust.
— Chris Jones, Chicago Tribune

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