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**THE DRUID IRELAND THEATER COMPANY OF GALWAY RETURNS WITH
THE BAY AREA PREMIERE OF *THE WALWORTH FARCE*
WEDNESDAY–SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18–22, AT ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE**

***Sightlines*: Post-performance talk with members of the company on
Friday, November 20 at Zellerbach Hall**

BERKELEY, October 9, 2009—**Druid Ireland**, the “world-class company rooted in the cultural fabric of Galway” (*The Irish Times*), returns to Berkeley with **Enda Walsh**’s award-winning *The Walworth Farce* **Wednesday–Sunday, November 18–22, at Zellerbach Playhouse**. One of the most innovative playwrights of our day, Walsh’s *The Walworth Farce* won the 2007 Edinburgh Fringe Festival’s prestigious Fringe First award and has been called “a theatrical experience that claws at the imagination for days afterwards” (*Variety*). Disguised as an old-fashioned high farce, complete with rapid costume changes, cross-dressing and mistaken identity, *The Walworth Farce* lurches from moments of high comedy to shocking realism, a contrast in frenetic, madcap slapstick and the deeper, darker concerns that are revealed when an outsider enters the realm. The four-person play features a man, Dinny, and his two sons, Blake and Sean, living in a squalid apartment in a South London housing project, and a grocery clerk. The play within a play, or rather a farce within a tragedy, has been acclaimed by critics and audiences in New York, London, Edinburgh and Galway. The production is in the midst of an international tour that will go to six countries. Directed by Ireland’s **Mikel Murfi** with an eyesore of a set and costumes by **Sabine Dargent** and lighting by **Paul Keogan**, the cast includes **Michael Glenn Murphy** (Dinny), **Tadhg Murphy** (Sean), **Raymond Scannell** (Blake) and **Mercy Ojelade** (Hayley).

A *Sightlines* post-performance talk with members of the company will take place at **Zellerbach Playhouse on Friday, November 20**. This talk is free to ticketholders.

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THE WALWORTH FARCE

Enda Walsh's *The Walworth Farce* was commissioned by Druid Ireland in 2003 and premiered at the Town Hall Theatre Galway in March 2006. The production received remarkable notices and work began almost immediately to get the production to the Edinburgh Festival the following year, where it was a huge hit, winning the prestigious Fringe First award and playing to sold-out houses. The American premiere was given at St. Ann's Warehouse, New York, in April 2008 with Mercy Ojelade taking over the role of Hayley (she will be in the Berkeley cast). The production went on to the National Theatre in London and then the Dublin winning high praise at each stop with "language that swaggers with vitality" (*The Guardian*). The play explores the nature of theater and of being Irish as well as the true or not so true stories that family members tell each other that harden into family lore.

Born in Dublin, **Enda Walsh** is a prolific writer for radio, film and theater. In addition to the 2007 First Fringe award for *The Walworth Farce*, his *The New Electric Ballroom* won the same prize the following year with his *Bedbound* beginning the trend in 2000. In film, his screenplay titled *Hunger* won the Camera d'Or in Cannes 2008 for best first feature film. Although Walsh's work is quite popular in Europe, it has not been produced often in the United States. His next project is a film adaptation of one of his plays. "It's a comedy," he told *The New York Times*, "set in a suicide chat room."

Mikel Murfi is making his Druid Ireland debut as a director but has acted in company productions of *The New Electric Ballroom*, *Lyndie's Gotta Gun* and *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration*. The Irish-born Murfi received theater training at l'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, Paris, and has directed for the Galway Arts Festival and the Lyric Theatre in Belfast, among others. He has appeared in more than a dozen television and major motion films.

DRUID IRELAND

Druid Ireland was founded in Galway, Ireland, in 1975 and was the first professional theater company in Ireland outside of Dublin. For more than three decades, Druid Ireland has

been at the forefront of Irish theater and, since 1982, has toured extensively every nook and cranny in Ireland and internationally with performances in London, Edinburgh, Sydney, Perth, Washington DC, New York and Tokyo. The company made its Bay Area premiere at Cal Performances November 2008 with two plays by John Millington Synge that the *San Francisco Chronicle* stated “was the real thing.”

Druid Ireland presents both classic and new dramatic works, drawing heavily from the Irish dramatic repertoire. The company has worked with celebrated contemporary Irish playwrights as well. In 1996, Martin McDonagh’s debut play, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, was premiered in Galway in a joint production between Druid and Royal Court Theatre. The play subsequently was presented in London, Sydney, Dublin and on Broadway, where it won four Tony Awards, including a Best Director award for **Garry Hynes**, the founding and current artistic director of Druid Ireland, and the first woman to win the award. In the past 15 years, Druid Ireland has premiered 23 new plays, 14 of which were the professional debut for the writer, demonstrating the company’s commitment to new writing.

At the Galway Arts Festival in 2005, Druid Theatre Company did the unprecedented: it produced all six plays of John Millington Synge on the same day, in a production called *DruidSynge*. The production has since toured to Dublin and Inis Meáin, Ireland; Edinburgh, Scotland; Minneapolis and New York, where it was heralded as “the highlight not just of my theatre-going year but of my theatre-going life” by Charles Isherwood of *The New York Times*.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Druid Ireland** theater company on **Wednesday–Friday, November 18–20**, at **8:00 p.m.**; **Saturday, November 21**, at **2:00 p.m.** and **8:00 p.m.**; and **Sunday, November 22**, at **3:00 p.m.** at Zellerbach Playhouse are priced at \$72.00. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information,

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call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced three hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, three hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Wednesday-Friday, November 18–20, 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, October 11, 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, October 12, 3:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Playhouse, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Dana St., Berkeley

Theater

The Walworth Farce

Druid Ireland

Mikel Murfi, director

Program: Druid Ireland theater company from Galway will perform the West Coast premiere of Enda Walsh's award-winning *The Walworth Farce* at Zellerbach Playhouse.

Tickets: \$72.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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Friday, November 20

Sightlines

Zellerbach Playhouse, UC Berkeley Campus

Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Druid Ireland post-performance talk with members of the company. *Sightlines* is a continuing program of pre- and post-performance discussions with artists and scholars, designed to enrich the concertgoer's experience. These events are free to ticketholders.

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