

Joy, Theatre Royal Brighton, Dublin, Theatre

My name is Joy and I'm 56

**(How was the show?)**

It was great I was working as usher on the show today so it was my first time to see it. I've actually seen it in Dublin though, a few years ago

**(What is your earliest experience of Theatre going in Brighton)**

Well I've only been in Brighton for a year so I've only seen a couple of shows in Brighton before working in the theatre so my first experience in Brighton was to see 'Eternal Love' in this theatre.

I am (from Dublin). How have I seen it (theatre) evolve in Dublin for example? It would have been not very experimental. It would've been, I'd say, behind the UK in terms of physical theatre and just how theatre has evolved in the last 20 years. I remember seeing a show in, I think, the early 1980s in Dublin which was 'The Great Hunger' by Tom McIntyre and that showed a real shift in how theatre was done, because it was a real physical theatre and there was a lot of improvisation and it was not a straight forward story kind of script. So that marked a big change.

It was memorable and initially it got very bad reviews and then that changed and it ended up going on a world tour, it was with the Abbey theatre at the time and it ended up touring all over the world and being recognised as a really good show, it was just, I think, that people weren't expecting it.

**(What was your favourite production growing up?)**

Oh, gosh... its really hard to say, Dublin has a big festival on in September and I've seen lots of shows from everywhere. I would say some of the shows that I've seen, that have come for the festival have been pretty incredible.

**(Why would you say, if you had to pick one it was your favourite?)**

Well I think the shows that I've enjoyed the most, and I cant think, exactly of one right now, but the shows I enjoy most are the ones that surprise me, that just, I'm not expecting what happens. You know, when everything comes together I suppose, when the acting and the directing and the scenery and the lighting and everything is spectacular together, that's the kind if theatre, and when you forget you're in a theatre.

**(How would you say your interest in theatre arose?)**

I think my first memories are probably of being really young and going to the local church musicals and I think that's kind of where I started to enjoy going to the theatre and then being taken to the pantomime.

(Have you ever had an unusual experience at the theatre)

Many times, yes! (Could you go into more detail about that?) Yeah, I'm trying to think of a particular show I saw, it was a very well known American director, and the music was by Tom Waits, the actors moved across the stage diagonally. It was incredibly stylised and stunningly beautiful. It was a spectacle as much as it was a show and a story.

(Would you say you've ever seen anything, risqué?)

Ooh yes, lots of times, I suppose, you know, the first show that I saw I suppose I would consider 'risqué' in Dublin would've been *'Equus'* way back in the 80s.

(Could you describe the way it came across as risqué?)

Well because it had nudity in it and it was an unusual subject I suppose.

(Biggest influence on you going to see theatre?)

You mean a person? I think it was very much myself because my family weren't particularly 'theatre goers' I just loved theatre from the first time I was in a theatre I fell in love with theatre and I wanted to work in theatres so I think it was pretty much myself and then I suppose in senior school and there were school trips to the theatre, that was also influential

(How does the atmosphere of the theatre make you feel?)

Well... I think it's the escapism, obviously. Also it can make you reflect on your own life, depending on what's happening in the story. I enjoy theatre most when I'm totally immersed. There's nothing like the feeling of that magic that happens, that alchemy that happens that you can't really describe. When everything comes together and when there's a real connection between your own life or your own experiences and what's happening on stage, where it gives you a greater understanding of something that you didn't really get before. But I think it has to be about story at the end of the day, for me it's about story, if you get hooked and in the story, that's what carries me along, that's where you get lost I think.

(Have you ever been unsure about working in theatres)

Well, I've worked in theatre for many years and I suppose what would've made me feel that is it's not a very secure lifestyle, you go from job to job generally unless you're on contract and that doesn't happen too often. I started to teach theatre rather than work in theatre because it paid more money and it was secure so I would say that's the downside of working in theatre as with the arts in general I suppose.

(What would you say the most spectacular set or costume that is most memorable to you that you reckon you've ever seen?)

There's a show that I saw in Dublin, it was called 'The Boys of Foley Street' and it was based on people who lived in a particular area, I mean it was actors but it started off in a taxi and then you got driven to an estate and quite a rough estate, most of the play took place in one of the houses and you were kind of involved, the space was going on around you and they treated you as if you were visiting the house and that was spectacular because it was so real. When you got in the taxi, you were sitting in the middle of a street where there were drug dealers and so on around and somebody tapped on the window and jumped into the car and you didn't know whether it was an actor or whether you were actually in danger! And so the whole piece was like that so that was spectacular 'cause you were actually in the world of the play completely, immersed so that comes to mind.

(In terms of design features, things that just look incredible, amazing pieces of architecture have you seen theatre interiors and exteriors change and how do they make you feel?)

The curtains, having the curtains because a lot of theatre in the more modern spaces have done away with having a curtain at all, I quite like when the iron drops, and you know, that moment before it rises, when you're watching a show. It's just a beautiful building, it's very luxurious, and I suppose that sense of history here and seeing the old posters up on the wall from years back.

(How would you say theatre in Brighton in the present has differed from your experiences in Dublin?)

I would say that last year it would be quite similar because in the Dublin theatres there's a big theatre going audience. Brighton I think goes over the edge a bit more there's a lot of alternative theatre in Brighton I suppose, it's risqué. I mean there is in Dublin too but it tends to be just around the theatre festival when it visits in that sense I would say it's much broader in Brighton. At the same time I think that, it's a very exciting place, Brighton to see theatre, I mean if saw a lot of dance for example last year as well and I guess you get the best from everywhere really coming to the festival which is very exciting.

(In what way is it exciting and how does it differ from Brighton?)

I think it's exciting because it feels like there's no boundaries in a way to subjects and how theatre is interpreted, it seems to be very supportive of new writing and I think there's a lot of opportunities for young theatre makers to have their voices heard and seen in the Brighton festival that's it's so huge. And probably pushes more boundaries, it's more risqué, than Dublin, being a smaller less cosmopolitan place I suppose than Brighton.

(Coming back to your involvement of theatre, have you met anyone who was particularly interesting or a long-term friend?)

Yes, my long term friends are people I met in theatre, in shows, people I met when I was acting years ago, are my life long friends. I've also met a lot of playwrights as well 'cause I worked in the Abbey theatre in Dublin and would've met a lot of well known playwrights, Brian Field and Tom Murphy and people like that who were writing new plays at that time .