



Culture Ireland
Cultúr Éireann

PRESS RELEASE

**CULTURE IRELAND'S I AM IRELAND US PROGRAMME as
part of IRELAND 2016**

**LAUNCHES WITH NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE OF THE
LAST HOTEL**

Culture Ireland of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has commenced delivery of the *I Am Ireland* programme, a key part of the Global and Diaspora strand of Ireland 2016, the official state programme to commemorate the centenary of the Easter Rising. An international worldwide programme of Irish arts, *I Am Ireland* is designed to celebrate this significant moment in Ireland's history and the pivotal role played by Irish artists in 1916 and over the past century in shaping Irish society.

Minister of State Aodhán Ó Ríordáin said that "The Government's commitment to funding of €2.5m is recognition of the critical role our artists play globally. Culture is the most powerful, positive connection for the 70 million global Irish, and for the hundreds of millions more who have come to know and love Ireland for our music, our literature, our dance, our theatre, our art, our film. 2016 allows us a special opportunity to celebrate this connection."

The North American premiere of *The Last Hotel*, Donnacha Dennehy and Enda Walsh's new chamber opera, at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn, New York today (Friday 8 January 2016) marks the first major event of Culture Ireland's *I Am Ireland Programme*. Uniting two of Ireland's great creative talents, this new opera by Landmark Productions and Wide Open Opera as part of the Prototype Festival and presented in association with the Irish Arts Center, has already attracted significant international acclaim.

The opening of the programme in New York is significant given the importance of the special cultural relationship with the US. In 2016, by bringing a new wave of

Irish creative talent to audiences across America, Culture Ireland, together with Ireland's Embassy and Consulates in the US, will mark the next chapter in our shared cultural story with the US. Highlights of *I Am Ireland* include a US tour by the Abbey Theatre of *The Plough and the Stars* by Seán O'Casey in the Autumn, Corn Exchange's production of *A Girl is a Half-formed Thing* presented by the Irish Arts Center at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in April, special appearances throughout the year by Irish writers and poets at many of the most prestigious US literature festivals, managed by Poetry Ireland and the promotion of a range of Irish work from traditional music to visual arts by Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Over 115 separate projects covering hundreds of concerts, performances, exhibitions and readings will feature as part of the international programme throughout the next twelve months, with particular focus on the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Full details of all the grant decisions are available on the Culture Ireland website here: www.cultureireland.ie/downloads/Ireland_2016_Decisions_to_date.pdf

Programme details and updates on the I Am Ireland programme are available at <http://www.cultureireland.ie/iamireland>

Full details of the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme are available at:

www.Ireland.ie

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#iamireland