

THE SCOTSMAN

1/9/1955

A Scotsman's Log

Summa cum Laude

.... We ourselves, after 10 days of strict neutrality and absenteeism, are able to announce the best Festival performance of 1955 as decided by persons of absolute impartiality who have communicated with us. The outstanding performance, this year, was that of Miss O'Hara, a young Irish lady who played the harp and sang with the T.C.D. Players, and who has now left Edinburgh for Dublin. Everyone who saw and heard her assures us that she undoubtedly stole the whole, giddy Festival show....

In August 1957, there were two black-and-white television channels and three radio stations to serve the entire United Kingdom

Reviews cont.

- **More Press Extracts**

**EVENING DISPATCH, (Edinburgh)
Tue Aug 23, 1955**

Dublin University Players made their first contribution to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe with four plays by W. B. Yeats - "Land of Heart's Desire," "Pot of Broth," "Dreaming of the Bones," and for what is said to be the first time in Scotland, "Purgatory."

The quality of acting and production is uneven.

Quite the most accomplished player - in a different sense - is Mary O'Hara whose songs to the harp speaks more eloquently for Irish folk art than anything else that takes place on the stage.

**THE GLASGOW HERALD
Tuesday August 23 1955**

A combined company from Trinity College, Dublin, and the National University of Ireland bring a welcome Festival offering to the Lauriston Hall for one week only. They give us the opportunity of seeing four of the one act plays of W.B.Yeats, well performed and staged.....

The success of the entertainment, to be repeated at 4.30 and 11 o'clock each day this week, owes a great deal to the beautiful singing to the harp of Mary O'Hara. Miss O'Hara gives a

lovely rendering of traditional Irish songs in Gaelic and English, and received a great ovation from an appreciative audience. - G.S.M.

**THE BULLETIN (Scotland)
Tuesday August 23 1955**

How very Irish is the Dublin University Players' presentation of four plays by W.B.Yeats. Their decision to come to the Festival was made only two months ago, and the group arrived in town with a minimum of time for rehearsals and a minimum of advance publicity.

But just like the Irish, the Dublin students showed a touch of genius when they invited a professional harpist and vocalist to present a programme of songs in the intervals between the plays.

Mary O'Hara enchanted the audience with her singing, playing of the clarsach, and charming manner. This was something of a quality we hadn't bargained for.

I dare to predict that Miss O'Hara singing will be the outstanding feature of this year's "Fringe" productions. - W.G.S.

**THE IRISH TIMES
Thursday November 17 1955**

...At Trinity College last night there began a run of no less than four of Yeat's famous short plays produced and acted by the Trinity Players...

The programme was given great interval charm by the exquisite singing to her own harp accompaniment by Mary O'Hara of such lovely ballads as "Eibhlin a Run," and "Bo Luaitheach Thu." She put the seal of quality on an evening that should not be missed by any discerning theatregoer. - G. O'R.

**THE BULLETIN
Tuesday August 21 1956**

This is Real Pleasure

Previous Edinburgh Festivals' lavishly produced plays have sometimes been lost in its (Assembly Hall on the mound) vast spaces. Yet, last night "Pleasure for Scotland" did give a packed audience the feeling that it was listening to an intimate show at the fireside.

There is one piece of completely conscious art - Mary O'Hara's harp song. But Miss O'Hara is such an accomplished artist her singing and playing are so graceful that she seems to have a natural place in this ceillidh.

Reviews around Edinburgh Festival time 1955 etc

"Pleasures of Scotland" is a model for future Festivals. There should be something like it every year. - J.M.R.

SCOTTISH DAILY MAIL
Tuesday, August 21 1956

A colleen makes this Scots evening a pleasure

So international is the Edinburgh Festival even the Scots may be allowed some say in its entertainment. And in "Pleasure of Scotland," produced last night at the Assembly Hall, they have a whole plaided evening of kilts, shawls and tam-o'-shanters to themselves.

Or at any rate almost to themselves. For with typical Scots generosity the biggest individual share of the programme and the warmest reception are reserved for Mary O'Hara, the sweet and gentle Irish singing harpist of TV fame, whose inclusion in the company is an adornment rather than an encroachment.

THE SCOTSMAN
Tue. August 21, 1956

Once again the Assembly Hall, with its imaginatively conceived apron stage, is the scene of the essentially native contribution to international festivity. This time, it is "Pleasure of Scotland."

....An Irish colleen, Mary O'Hara, with her harp and gentle voice, held the audience enthralled.

The Irish Times
August 30th 1955

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL
2: Wilder and Yeats
- by Ulick O'Connor

Irish Music

That rural Ireland possesses, besides a wealth of Irish speech, a treasure house of folk music was indicated at the

interval. In between the performances of the four plays a young lady, Miss Mary O'Hara, came out with her harp to play Irish airs. The combination of a pleasant accent with the blackbird notes of the harp, and a voice as delicate and exquisite as a filigree pattern, soon had massive bearded Scots in the audience blubbering softly and declaring their helplessness in the hands of this smiling child. Irish ballads have often quite beautiful lines in them, and Miss O'Hara's singing, a perfect marrying of word and song, brought out the delightful imagery of songs like "Carraig Donn" and the "Spanish Lady." Even the ranks of Bloomsbury could scarcely suppress a tear, and Indians and heathen Chinese combined to spread the news about this performance, which was quite the talk of the Festival.

PUNCH
August 29th 1956
- Ronald Searle

....This year's main native entry, Pleasures of Scotland, could have been described more accurately as an Anguish of Scotland, so heavy was its burden of lament. Almost it succeeded in giving an impression that nothing nice had ever happened in Scotland.... Pretty melancholy....

Happy exceptions were a pleasure of Ireland, Mary O'Hara, who accompanied her attractive voice on a kind of condensed harp, and two spirited old ladies whose tremendous set-to was a welcome reminder of the more robust qualities of our hosts: and at the end "The Bonny Earl of Moray" was sung rousingly, as one had hoped other famous songs of equal quality might be sung....

A droll storyteller, charming without ever fawning over her audience... it's on the musical level that she's so winning... shows a consistently fascinating and surprising phrasing... makes familiar

lyrics yield new levels of meaning.
- The Globe & Mail (Toronto)

Shows her mastery and understanding of traditional songs with their haunting melodies and almost magical power.
- Daily Telegraph (UK)

Mary O'Hara is simply without peer.
- Folk Review (UK)

Superb... masterful artistry with the harp.... a remarkable performer.
- The Gazette (Montreal)

A magical evening... radiates warmth and sincerity.
- Stage & Television Today (UK)

O'Hara's vocal magic keeps crowd entranced... a voice that can turn any song into a thing of beauty.
- The Spectator (Hamilton, Canada)

Delicate as dew on a shamrock... an extraordinary lady who does the small things of her showbiz style in an extraordinary way... Her performance is pure poetry... holds her listeners firmly clasped in her disciplined grip... a voice as fragile as a snow-flake and as light and agile as a butterfly.
- The Australian



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 signalled on a buzzer
 not only the actors but
 e, and more than once I felt
 to ring the Pest Officer with
 ation on a queen hornet.

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many of the songs w...
 pretty melancholy Gaelic...
 some of the ballads, having
 stated the basic case for blood and
 went on questioning and re-affirming
 interminably.

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PUNCH
 (August 29th 1956)



Gaelic singer from Skye—ANNIE ARNOT

[*Pleasure of Scotland*
 Harpist—MARY O'HARA