

# Irish Theatre Institute's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual International Theatre Exchange 2010

## In Conversation #1

**Jean-Denis Leduc**, Founding Director, *Théâtre La Licorne*, Montreal  
in conversation with playwright **Hilary Fannin**.

Facilitated by Maureen White, Literary Manager, Rough Magic Theatre Company

**Jane Daly (Co-director, Irish Theatre Institute):** Thanks for coming along this morning to the first of two In Conversation sessions.

This morning we have Maureen White, who is the Literary Manager with Rough Magic Theatre Company, who is going to facilitate the conversation between Hilary Fannin, who is a playwright, journalist and a former actor, and who is also the writer of the version of *Phaedra* which is playing here on this set; and Jean-Denis Leduc who is the Founding Director of La Licorne Theatre in Montreal. The reason we've put this combination together is because Jean-Denis has presented Hilary's work in French at his theatre. I actually saw the production of *Doldrum Bay* in Montreal in the theatre, which is now being refurbished and will reopen in August of next year, or autumn of next year.

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** The end of September. We hope.

**Jane Daly:** So we thought it was a nice combination, and that it fitted nicely in as well because Hilary has work in the Theatre Festival this year. We like these sessions to be quite informal, so they'll have a chat for a while and then we encourage questions or comments from you. We're recording the session so, while they don't need a microphone on stage because they're being picked up, if anybody does want to make a comment or ask a question, we'd appreciate if you could wait for the mic and you might just introduce yourselves.

Thanks very much. I'll hand it over to you Maureen.

**Maureen White:** Amazing to see so many people at this hour wanting to talk about theatre. It's great. I think the obvious question, Jean-Denis and Hilary, is what is the connection between Quebec theatre and Irish theatre. We can talk later about translations in general and how they work for the playwright. I know that you've done Mark O'Rowe plays, you've done Martin McDonagh, Hilary Fannin. There is certainly a dark humour in all those. What's the attraction with the Irish playwrights?

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** When we talk about Ireland we can mention Scotland also and all the English European theatre. At the first I think we are a Nordic country, you know what I mean? We live in the north and I think there is something that comes with that. A way to see things and to feel things. Also Quebec is a little community. We are about seven or eight million. We have big friends, you can put it like that. The United States. And we live with English Canadians. We are a minority, living with them. And we talk about autonomy. About living by ourselves in that community. I think when we talk about Scotland and Ireland it's similar.

Also the Catholic religion and the religious past is very important for us, and I think it is also very important here. When I read Irish plays I see themes coming back of guilt and redemption and things like that. For example Mark O'Rowe's *Howie the Rookie* is about redemption. We're connecting with that, we're connecting with this kind of subject. Also, it's a way to write – it's about concrete writing, it's concrete. It's a modern way, also, to write. Everything is not told. Words are important, but also what is behind the words is important. There is also a connection with that. All these things. It's true for Ireland, it's true for Scotland, but it's true also for England. For the way that they talk about things and how they talk about things. So we bring these plays to our audience and our audience say ok, we feel that.

**Maureen White:** And how did you feel that your play was accepted or understood when you were there?

**Hilary Fannin:** It was a fantastic experience, working in La Licorne. We can talk later about how it came about. It was a long process in the end, before the play actually went on. When it did go on it was a really uplifting and fantastic experience. What Jean-Denis has said about the themes connecting with the audience in Montreal was very true. One of

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the major themes running through *Doldrum Bay*, which was the play we worked on together, was two kind of shambolic advertising executives got a gig from the Christian Brothers to re-brand them. They really need it now. At the time, it was just before a lot of stuff hit the fan. But that theme really seemed to resonate with a Montreal audience, and it was fantastic to sense that recognition within a different community.

There were moments in that production that have stayed with me so vividly. The play was set on a beach, which is the only location I seem to manage. I remember sitting on the opening night in Montreal and the actor picked up a wine bottle to fill a glass and poured it and sand came out. I just thought, god, yes. This is symbolically exactly what the play was about and it was just vividly captured. So therefore what I'm trying to say is, you really felt the depth of an understanding that was happening between the director, the designer, the actors and the text. You felt that it was more than a surface interpretation of a piece of work. You felt that they really understood the kind of gut of it. It was a fantastic time. It was great.

**Maureen White:** And what about the process of working with the translator? You like to collaborate anyway, but did you work a lot with the translator?

**Hilary Fannin:** I like to collaborate because I can't think of anything to do on my own. Yes, it was fantastic. We had a very interesting thing happen which was CEAD [*Centre des auteurs dramatiques*] and the Abbey were in contact and a fantastic dramaturg called Nadine Desrochers, who is French Canadian. She worked with Jocelyn Clarke, who was Literary Manager of the Abbey Theatre at that time, and they sent over a bunch of plays to Montreal. They chose to bring *Doldrum Bay* over for translation. That was great. And at that point I went to Montréal for nearly three weeks to a residency on the river. I didn't do anything. I had a very young child at the time. Just getting three weeks to sleep was really amazing.

François Létourneau, who is a very well known writer in Montreal, and is also an actor, which is very interesting, set about translating *Doldrum Bay* with the assistance of Nadine and Jocelyn. I was there for all of those sessions, so word for word, beat for beat, we worked on the play together over that period of three weeks. There were other plays. I can't remember the others, but there were three plays being workshopped over that three weeks. Then I came home, having had a fantastic experience. Then I went back and we did a reading in La Licorne in the bar, which was lovely. And I went home again, and then Jean-Denis rang and said, we're going to do the play. It was great because we'd had that really thorough time to really work on the text, and to really work on what the play is about.

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** When you were doing that, I spoke with Nadine, the relation between Nadine and I was very close. What is great about this thing is that when I work with her, and when we choose a play it's – ok, it's interesting to translate it, it's interesting to have a reading of it, but it's much more interesting to put it on the stage. This is what we want to do with all these translations that we make together at this moment. I was interested – you don't know that – but at the beginning of that process, I was interested by the play. I read the play to see if we will do it or not. It's natural that we did. And I want to say something, a little parenthesis. To say thank you to Colin Hicks, who is here with us. He worked a lot on this connection between what was happening here and what was happening in Quebec. He was at the Quebec delegation during this time.

**Maureen White:** And do you still actively look for plays that you want to translate, or actively come to see festivals to see European shows that you would translate?

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** Yes, always. Because I like this kind of theatre. We do a lot of Quebec plays, we create a lot of Quebec plays, but also we also stage a lot of European English plays, so I'm very interested in those plays. Now we will translate the new play by Denis Kelly, *Orphan's*. We will do it next year. Each year or so we do a play about what's happening here.

**Maureen White:** Is there a different translator for each play or do you have a resident translator? When you saw *Orphan's* and you knew you wanted to do it, do you try to match a translator that will work with them?

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** There's a different translator, but it's always a playwright. Sometimes the translator is one who comes back often. François did one for us, but there is also others who worked with us a lot of times. So the connection stays. It's easier now than it was at the beginning. In the beginning one can read a play and can work on it, and now they can email with the playwright here and they can have their relationship that way.

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**Maureen White:** Now this is a little bit of a diversion, but I find it fascinating, the fact that you demolished the theatre to rebuild. Can you tell us about that? There's fantastic pictures on your website of cranes demolishing what looks like a gorgeous theatre.

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** Yes, it's hurting a lot. Yes, we had a space of about 140-150 seats and it was very intimate, so the kind of theatre that we were doing is also because the place is intimate. So we had this relationship between the actor and the audience, and we want to keep that, this relationship, the intimacy of it. But we needed more space. Also, in our new theatre we will have two spaces. One of 180 seats, and the little one will be about 90 or 100 seats. But we will keep this intimacy. Two black box theatres where we can put the stage where we want to put it. It's simple like that. To do the renovation we thought we could use what was there, but after a while we made the decision to knock everything down. We bought the building right beside us and we now have a bigger place, and we will have the theatre. But it's easier for us to knock it all down and rebuild. And now it's a big hole, for the moment.

**Maureen White:** I think we all would envy that possibility and the support you got from the Quebec Government for it.

We can open it up now, because it really should be casual, if there are other things you want to talk about. Are there people here who are interested in translations and in how we can facilitate the exchanges between playwrights, or any ideas about that?

**Hilary Fannin:** To kind of shoot it off, I think something that Jean-Denis was just saying about playwrights translating playwrights to me makes a huge amount of sense. Because it isn't, obviously, just words. Rhythms are different in different languages, and that's a huge thing. So you're losing maybe the essential rhythm of a line when it's moving from English to French. But a playwright can recognise that and help to reinstate that, to find the rhythm of that scene or that movement of the play. As a kind of reciprocal thing, after *Doldrum Bay* was produced in La Licorne, Nadine Desrochers, who you mentioned earlier, did a literal translation of a play of François Letourneau's called *Cheech*, which is a really, really, seriously funny play, and really bleak. It was playable, but I then took that literal and then worked with François on making it sound exactly like he wanted it to sound in English. Making it more colloquial, pumping up the gags. Making it communicate more clearly his intention.

**Maureen White:** And did you feel that sympathy from the beginning as well?

**Hilary Fannin:** You were talking about this earlier, where you meet somebody and think, god, I could work with that person for years. They just have a lovely sense about them. François was just one of those people. But all facilitated by not being under terrible pressure to produce something very fast. Take your time, have a pint, talk about it. Honestly. This play *Phaedra* –

**Maureen White:** That was quite a process.

**Hilary Fannin:** - would have been a year and a half? Building that play over long periods of time. I'm of the mind that that's very important.

**Maureen White:** That breathing space so you can think even when you're not working on it.

**Hilary Fannin:** And the cross-fertilisation. For me, going to Montreal and seeing what was happening in that city. And seeing how theatre is. Because really, as you said, you're living in the shadow of these big neighbors. And you're holding on to your language and your interpretation of your world, very strongly. And your identity. We're similar here. It's the same thing going on. But to see that at work in another city gave confidence and a sense of purpose, so you came back with a sense of purpose. You thought, there are things happening out there, other communities around the world that you can access and you can be in dialogue with.

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** Yes, translation for us is very important because it opens the kind of theatre that we can look at. When we do a translation what we're searching for is rhythm, the rhythm and the breath of the play. That's what we are searching. Words are important; it's important that the sense is there. But we need to concentrate on where the play takes place where we're taking place. It's here. In Dublin it's in Dublin, for example. But this is interesting for our audience also, because they discover something else. But when we talk about the language, there is a research on that. It is a Quebec language. We are searching about the breath of the play. That's the most important thing I think. So all this year I spoke a lot with Nadine about that.

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I remember a moment that was very interesting. CEAD was at La Licorne for a week of presentation. Nadine brought a lot of translators to Montreal. They took about five minutes of a play, a Quebec play, and they translated it into English. I think there was someone from England, someone from Ireland, someone from Scotland, someone from English Canada and someone from USA. They translated this five-minute piece. It was the same play, but it was something else each time. So translation is not word for word. It's more than that.

It's very important for us to have opportunity to discover new plays. The only thing that makes us different, I think – the language can prevent us from being together sometimes. But if we go over that we can see that there are very similar things about our people and our community. It's more than theatre. So translation is about that also.

**Maureen White:** Can you tell us a little bit about CEAD and the set up and what it does for Quebec playwrights?

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** CEAD is a union of all the playwrights in Quebec. It's an association who promotes the writer. It exists now for about 40 years. All the processes that we've done, they make the connection between different parts of the world. There was a time when they were very present here with Nadine Desrochers and Linda Gaboriau before her. They made connections and they set up meetings. So it promotes. So they work for the playwright. And they work with young playwrights. They develop, they make workshops with playwrights and actors and directors to develop the play. That's what we do also with our company. We have a playwright in residence, about one or two a year. We work with them to develop new plays and to produce them.

**Maureen White:** When you went over and had your lovely stay by the river and the lovely visit to Montreal, how was that funded?

**Hilary Fannin:** How was that funded? CEAD.

**Maureen White:** Was that all CEAD?

**Hilary Fannin:** Yes it was. But you know it's funny – you were just talking about Nadine Desrochers, who is a dramaturg, as is Maureen. It's really interesting because obviously that's a whole other relationship, a totally vital, lifeline relationship for a playwright. But when we did the production of *Doldrum Bay* here in the Abbey, in the Peacock Theatre, prior to going to Montreal, I had – the moment of the actual advertising campaign that these guys put together, at the last minute I changed the advertising campaign that I'd written and I wrote a different advertising campaign. Much slicker. I wrote a slicker, more professional advertising campaign. I used to do a lot of voiceovers in the old days when I hadn't any money, so I had an idea how it worked in the studios. I went up to a studio with a friend of mine and we made a very slick advertising campaign and put it in the play. And it didn't work. I just didn't work, it just didn't work at all. Nadine read the original text, which was a very, kind of, messy advertising campaign that was awful, and she said put it back in. Just put back in the bad advertising campaign.

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** It was "God is good for the good boys".

**Hilary Fannin:** I can't remember. "God loves a good boy" or something. Anyway, we put back in the old advertising campaign and it just lifted the play right up. It worked. So it isn't just about word for word what's on the thing. Her input was just so helpful.

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** Also *Doldrum Bay* was just so interesting for us because it's about what the Catholic religion was for us, the same thing as here. We call it 'La Grand Noirceur'. Before the Quiet Revolution in Quebec in the 1960s. We call it the 'Grand Noirceur', the black moment for Quebec. Priests were everywhere in the province, in the country. Sometime we wanted to get out of that and have more liberty. *Doldrum Bay* is about that also. But the problem is that these men and women in their forties, early forties, they have nothing left for them. So it's about emptiness also. It's about nostalgia. It's about 'when we were young it was better'. It's about the feeling that everything is passed.

**Hilary Fannin:** It's the loss of a patriarch. The loss of a father when Magda's father dies and everything's falling apart. But there's another thing. Karen Fricker, the writer and critic and academic was part the process in different ways, wasn't she? She kind of came in and out of the translation. She later wrote about it and it was illuminating to me. What she said it was about.

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**Jean-Denis Leduc:** The idea was really connected with that also. When you talk about that, it's the same thing for us, because it's a problem. When they were there, the Catholic religion I mean, there was encadrement [*framing, a framework*]. When they broke that, what was going to happen with us, what happens now? Basically everything is far away, so you have to find something to do. So this is about that also. Society, a society concern. For me, theatre is about that. It's about intimacy, it's about humanity and there is a lot of humanity in *Doldrum Bay*, but it's also about what's happening to these people in the society where we live, now. We have to tell this, I think it's important. Then the audience after the play can talk about it.

For me theatre is that. It's not theatre for theatre. I'm not interested by theatre for theatre. I'm interested by a theatre that speaks to people, and that people talk about what's happened on the stage. Discussions about that.

**Maureen White:** When you go to festivals, is that where you see possibilities for translations? Is it in festivals like you're seeing now? Where did you see *Orphan's*?

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** I saw it at the Edinburgh Festival, but Denis had emailed me the play before. So during the year I make some relations with playwrights also. But when I come here I come to meet people, to speak with them, to see shows. To see where the playwrights are, and the companies also. I want also to meet companies and to talk with them, and to make connections with them for exchange and collaboration.

For example we are making a collaboration with the Traverse Theatre, and it will be a four-year collaboration. This year we choose plays, new plays. We send new plays to the Traverse, and they send us new plays, and we will choose. This year a Quebec playwright will translate a Scottish play and a Scottish playwright will translate a Quebec play. This is what we do this year. Next year a director of the Traverse will come to La Licorne and make a reading of the play, and a director of La Licorne will go to the Traverse and do the reading. The year after, the same director will come and with Quebec actors he will produce the play, and the same thing will happen with the Quebec play at the Traverse. And the next year we will make an exchange of productions with subtitles. That's for me the ultimate collaboration. I want connection with the theatres, with the companies. In this way we will, next year, we will begin probably one day a week to make subtitles for the play that we present in French for the English community in Montreal. We will begin like that. I think it's opening things for us. There's more richness.

**Maureen White:** It's very interesting when you talk about that collaboration with the Traverse taking time because that's what you were saying too. That you developed that relationship. Actually when resources are tight I think that we have to look at ways in which we can exchange and keep up the interaction.

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** Yes. Before you have to talk together to see if you are doing the same thing, to see what's happening. Sometimes with a company, we don't know why, it's happened, it's there. That's what you are searching for. So this is a very concrete thing that I'm searching for. And always searching for new plays.

**Maureen White:** Anybody have anything they want to ask?

**Audience 1:** Hello. I'm Franziska from Germany. I think that language is not only a mirror of society, but more than this, it is a mirror of the spirit of a culture, of a place, of a nation. For me language is always an attempt to express something which is inside you and most of the time this doesn't work. I think it doesn't work. We wish that it would work. So this attempt, the way from the inside to the outside, this is the most important thing for me in theatre. Because of that I would be really interested in translations in general, because if you reach a certain artificialness, artistic level in the language, if you reach a certain beauty, then I wonder how I can reach this beauty in another language, because people make other attempts. It's a little bit complicated. But I do think that if we try to translate something. As you said words or language, it's not about translating it word by word.

**Hilary Fannin:** No, it's about the entire text. The spirit of the piece.

**Audience 1:** Yes, and it's not about translating that something happens and then something different happens.

**Hilary Fannin:** In Germany there is a really good – they've all Sarah Kane's plays there, Mark Ravenhill's plays there. There has been a lot of cross-communication between English plays in Germany. They've done very well. My own work has been translated into German and I've seen it there and been really moved by what I've seen. What you also bring to the process, or what my experience of working in Germany has been, a huge kind of visual momentum to the work.

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**Audience 1:** Yes, and it was great that your work was translated, but I wonder all the time, since I've been here, if there would be an interest to translate a German play. I always see it translated from here to there, but not the opposite. That would be something that really interests me. I would like to ask the people here if there would be an interest.

**Maureen White:** I suppose it's about exposure, isn't it. The spirit of the play has to take someone. I think the more there are festivals where we get a chance to see the work. I think there is absolutely an interest in looking outside ourselves.

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** There is something also because when we translate a play, we take a play and we put it inside us and we develop it. We take an English play with the Quebec spirit and we develop it, with respect.

**Hilary Fannin:** You've got Bonner Biennale, still, is that right? There are big festivals in Germany, aren't there, big theatre festivals in Germany. But it would be – the process that CEAD seems to have set up, like Jean-Denis was talking about, the links between places like the Traverse and La Licorne. This is the best way of beginning this dialogue. From like-minded to like-minded theatre. This can be very important.

**Audience 2:** Siobhán Bourke, Irish Theatre Institute. When I listen to this I am really reminded of – I think it was 1990 or 1991 that Linda Gaboriau came over from CEAD and met us at Rough Magic and talked to us about plays. And I think for all those years they were reading plays from here and having a very lively discussion with Irish writers and Irish theatre companies. I suppose, just to follow up on your point about Germany, we have had for a number of years the Bonner Biennale people and the New Plays from Wiesbaden festival coming and seeing work and taking Irish work over. I would think really it's just about having a view to the long term and forming the relationships with people. Enda Walsh's work is translated and performed a lot in Germany and Enda Walsh's play *Disco Pigs* was on in the festival in 1995 and was on in Germany maybe a year later. It would have been seen here at the Dublin Theatre Festival. I suppose you're looking at taking a really long view and having advocates for the work, and people the likes of Linda and others who travel and see work and make these connections. We do a little bit of it in Irish Theatre Institute. Where you're trying to create these connections. All the companies have literary managers. It's about conversations really.

**Audience 1:** I wasn't finished yet. Maybe I didn't understand your answer, but my question was not if there is an exchange that Irish plays are translated in Germany but the opposite. I just wonder if there would be an interest of translating German plays into the Irish language. If there is an interest then how could it work?

**Maureen White:** Well. I think the answer is, clearly interest is going to be there if people click, or if the companies do. I think that's what you were saying as well. It's opportunities like this, at festivals, when we meet each other, we talk to companies and that that sparks off an interest in 'let me see your play'. I don't know, do other people have a response to that?

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** It will work also if a person like Linda Gaboriau came here or went to Germany. People exchange with people and with the government that will help us. For us the Quebec delegation is very important. They help us to come here to make connections. It has to begin somewhere. It begins like that. It's not always, ok I saw you. It has to be a concrete thing.

**Audience 3:** Just on that. I'm Michelle Read. I'm a playwright and I'm very interested in the idea, I think it's very exciting to work with another playwright to work as a translator this way round. I don't think we get enough work from foreign language countries. We don't get to see that work because it doesn't get translated here. The idea of creating that kind of partnership and as a playwright having another outlet in your own working life. There's another kind of job form in which you can work with another playwright and bring their work in. I understand about the matching of it. But that to me is very exciting, that it happens the other way around as well.

**Audience 4:** I'm Annabelle Comyn, Hatch Theatre Company. I agree, I think sometimes when you rely on translations to come from the Royal Court or the Gate or other theatres as well, for us to then produce those works. I know Rachel West from RAW who works in Berlin has, I think, translated and adapted some translations from German into English. But I agree it is interesting. I myself would be very interested in that, but I think it is for me – I can only speak personally – finding writers who are capable of translating from German into English in this country.

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**Hilary Fannin:** But you can also work from the literal. There's no need to do the actual translation. My French wouldn't – I couldn't have done it. But once you have the literal there, like Michelle was saying, it is another way of working and it's a very interesting way of working.

**Maureen White:** Absolutely. Last year when Rough Magic did *Solemn Mass* that's exactly what we did because it had been a Scottish translation in English. Bryan Delaney did the translation, and he is bilingual but he was also working from a version where he could adapt the translation.

**Hilary Fannin:** It's like an Irish play in America, or something. It's the same thing. You feel you need to do a translation for that. Sometimes, just culturally. There are cultural translations. I sat at a reading of a play of mine in Manhattan Theatre Club, and I know after the first five minutes, these people were not going to do the play. I just knew immediately that this play was not going to happen. I just knew. I'd had a few weeks before this event and had been able to say, actually it's not about that, that's the top line. It's not about that at all, it's about this. Obviously the play should have communicated that and didn't, so I'm at fault, or the work is not complete. But I just knew.

**Jean-Denis Leduc:** It's the same thing with France, you know. Everybody can do the theatre that they want to do, everybody is free to do that, it's ok. But we make choices when we are making theatre about what kind of theatre we want to do. For example we went to France with *Cheech* by François Detourné and after the play the French programmer came and said to me, what did you say? We did not understand what you said. It's very frustrating to hear that. But that's why I was thinking about the language, it's not only the language. It's about the kind of theatre that you are doing. It's important. I think it's a little like that, what you were saying. There are a lot of playwrights in Quebec who are produced in France. It's ok, this is the kind of theatre. But the kind of theatre that we are making, it's not the same thing for me. I don't know if I'm clear.

**Maureen White:** Annabelle, I take your point, I think you're right. It is that we need the right match of people, and writers as well that prevents us or that we need to find.

**Audience 5:** Hello, my name's David Tushingham and I have quite a lot of experience presenting English language work in German in Germany. I've also translated a number of German works into English which have been done in a wide range of territories. I've got a couple of things that I'd like to say. First of all, I think translating into English as the kind of international lingua franca can be actually a very hard job, given that there are such wide regional variations. You've already commented on this. I remember being presented with an American edition of Irvine Welsh's novel *Trainspotting* which contained a seven-page glossary of all the different terms that were used. I have myself been asked to translate German plays into English for performance in places like Ghana, where I have no idea what kind of English they speak. Which brings a number of problems with it.

But I think, though, the idea of the partnership between CEAD and the Traverse which lasts four years is fantastic that you've managed to find each other and been able to establish this relationship of trust which will last over a long period of time. Though that may seem like a model, I think it's probably very unusual because it's based on a notion of equivalence, and very often there are not direct equivalences within different theatre cultures of the same kind of institutions, or even the same kind of debates and arguments and focuses of interest. I think the reason why it's interesting to translate plays from other cultures is because they contribute something to our theatre landscape which is not there already. Which is different. Even if you're trying to set up an exchange, you're not necessarily going to be taking the same things across and bringing the same kind of things back.

What I have personally found extremely rewarding is teaming up writers and directors from different cultures. Hilary, you were talking about the moment where you saw what a Québécois director had made of your work, having read it in a different way and come to it through a different route from the directors who you have worked with here, and that I think is a very exciting process.

But to come back to what Franziska was asking, I think the English speaking and the German speaking theatres, just to use the example that you set up, have different strengths, and have different things that they can look to each other for. In the German speaking theatre there are a vast number of production opportunities. It's a very competitive environment. It's one where there is a real urgent need for new material for those people to work on. This is why Irish and other playwrights from other theatre cultures around the world have been very successful at exporting their work there. Have found translators, have found agents who are going to buy their plays, and then to finance the translation. In the English speaking theatre world we have a fantastic number of talented writers. We don't necessarily have the same urgent

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requirement for texts. As someone who is often asked to translate plays, I find it very difficult sometimes to talk to directors or dramaturgs about work which they cannot form a judgment on until it has been translated by me, or by somebody else like me.

Ok, I think I'd better stop talking and give somebody else a chance.

**Hilary Fannin:** When I went to Germany the first time I was really amazed by the set up. It's not just the plays, but the whole culture around theatre in Germany is fascinating. Theatres that employ actors on a yearly basis, and maybe could be employed as an actor for two or three years, in a repertory situation. Where plays are developed, where there are facilities to develop plays, and a company that stays together, so as a writer you could be working potentially with a bunch of actors and a director over a long period to develop a play.

For us, we really worked hard on our process with *Phaedra* to be able to achieve that, and we did it on a shoestring, and we did it with a lot of goodwill. But it's unusual, not usual. Usually you get a bunch of actors for four weeks and you just glue it together with hope, really. What I experienced in Germany I thought was liberating. Imagine going to work every day for two years. I've never done that in my life. And I'd love to. I would love to go to work every morning and say, this is where I work and these are the people I work with and this is what we're creating. It doesn't happen here. It doesn't happen because there isn't the money for it. So you learn other ways of how people get to communicate and make work and that's fascinating.

**Maureen White:** We have to glue things together with hope. That's a great phrase. I think we have to wrap it up. One more comment.

**Audience 6:** I'm Suzanna from Portugal. I just want to say something because I think it's a really different perspective. We don't have a long tradition in theatre or in dance. I think only in the '90s we had this construction of theatres through the country. Until then we only had Lisbon and a few things in Porto. So what happens in Portugal is that we have a lot of translations of British and Irish and German and work from everywhere. We're really open to what comes from abroad. Also because we don't have inner production, we don't have that many dramaturgs. So what's happening now is that we are investing a little bit more into culture is that we bring companies from abroad and what we do is subtitle the plays. What I think, as a spectator, is that it's also important to have this contact with artists on stage that are from the original production. It's very important, and I think it's very enriching.

We are from a small theatre in a small town, Portimão in the Algarve. We have a lot of Irish and British people living there. It's also important to have different kinds of presentations, and also to come to these the people who are living there. In Lisbon we have a big festival and we do quite the opposite: we bring the companies from abroad and we subtitle them. It's a different way of seeing the translation. Thanks.

**Maureen White:** Thank you very much.