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Emma Donoghue: Selected Plays

By Emma Donoghue

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Kissing the Witch

Adapted from her book of thirteen revisionist fairy tales of the same name, this play interweaves four classic plots – Beauty and the Beast, Donkeyskin, the Goose Girl, the Little Mermaid – with an invented one about a desperate girl going to a witch for help. *Kissing the Witch* finds the gritty in the fantastical, and excavates magic to find what's really going on.

Trespases

Set over three days in 1661, *Trespases* is inspired by the judge's own account of one of the tiny handful of witch trials that ever took place in Ireland. It asks why a servant girl who fell into fits would have put the blame on an old beggarwoman – but also, more timeless questions about the clashing cultures that have to share a small island country. *Trespases* is about faith and superstition, politics and class, sadism and love.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This play with songs, set mostly in the dressing rooms of busy vaudeville theatres all over North America, was inspired by a real same-sex wedding that took place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1886. It resurrects a ragtag troupe of emigrants – most notably, male impersonator Annie Hindle, 'a man's widow and a woman's widower', as the tabloids called her. With a light touch, *Ladies and Gentlemen* explores the ways we perform our roles, both on and off stage.

I Know My Own Heart

Inspired by the secret coded diaries of Yorkshire gentlewoman Anne Lister, this play subverts all the conventions of Regency romance. Teasing out the entangled lives of mannish, arrogant Lister (nicknamed 'Gentleman Jack') and three of her many lovers, *I Know My Own Heart* explores the different choices women made in a time of limits and prohibitions.

Don't Die Wondering

When a restaurant cook loses her job because of a homophobic customer, she mounts a one-woman picket in protest. The police officer assigned to protect her is her nemesis from schooldays. This one-act comedy, set in a fictional small town, stages a battle between old and new elements of Irish culture.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Emma Donoghue is an Irish-born playwright, literary historian and novelist now living in Canada. Her 2010 novel *Room* was a finalist for the Man Booker Prize and an international bestseller. Donoghue's 1995 novel *Hood* won the Stonewall Book Award and *Slammerkin* (2000) won the Ferro-Grumley Award for Lesbian Fiction. Her latest novel, *Frog Music*, was published in 2014. Emma is currently adapting *Room* for the stage.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Barbara Gunter:

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