

Benrae Productions presents the London premiere of

SWANSONG

Written and Performed by Conor McDermottroe

"Thinking if it's going to stop, thinking if it's going to pass, but it's not, can't let it, that word and all laughter and sneering that goes with it, is going around and around me head, and it won't let me rest, and it won't let me sleep, and it won't let me do anything but think about strangling him"

Occi Byrne thinks differently to the other boys. He's sure it's from an accident he had as a child, but maybe it's for another reason...Frowned on by the church, isolated by relatives, Occi and his mum struggle to survive in a tough garrison town in 1960's rural Ireland, Occi grows to adulthood in a dog-eat-dog world on a journey that takes him through murder and mayhem, love and death, returning ultimately to the beginning: a lost soul looking for recognition and a place to belong.

Produced by Benrae Productions which Conor co-founded with international award-winning playwright **Frank McGuinness**, *Swansong* has been a sell-out success in Dublin and Edinburgh and now receives its London premiere at the multi-award-winning Finborough Theatre which has become particularly known for its recent presentation of Irish drama including the UK premiere of Frank McGuinness' *Gates of Gold* and Tom Murphy's *The Gigli Concert*.

Writer and Performer **Conor McDermottroe** began his career at Irish Theatre Company as an ASM, and has worked as an actor at The Abbey, The Gate, Dublin, and The Royal National Theatre. He spent 10 years in Australia, where he featured in numerous award winning TV and film productions. On his return to Ireland, he worked with Druid Theatre Company, and returned to the Abbey Theatre Dublin for three years. More recently, Conor has written a number of stage and screenplays including writing and directing three short films shortly to be screened in cinemas and on Channel 4.

PRESS ACCLAIM FOR *SWANSONG* FROM THE DUBLIN AND EDINBURGH PRODUCTIONS

"A sensitive and powerful performance. McDermottroe's monologue is perfectly paced, the language tight and original. It cannot fail to leave a mark" Belinda McKeown, *Irish Times*

"Charged with emotional intensity ... utterly compelling" Declan Burke, *Sunday Times* (Ireland)

"A haunting picture of life on the margins.....a fine piece of writing and performance...the prose has a guttural lyricism, the situation is examined with intellectual clarity, and delivered with a vivid compassion that marks real writing talent. The author's performance is full of caged energy, and the pictures painted of life on the mental and emotional margins are truly haunting." Emer O'Kelly, *Sunday Independent*

"Written and wonderfully played by Conor McDermottroe, *Swansong* catches flight through a combination of pump action acting and linguistic drive that makes Occi's bubbling rage and surrender to fate both a thing of horror and pity". Alan Chadwick, *Metro* ****

"The strongly talented Conor McDermottroe both writes and performs...He brings genuine menace to the gritty performance... *Swansong* is hilarious and a heartbreaking rollercoaster of a ride brimming with (Irish) idiom and 1960's period detail." James Mullighan, *The Scotsman* ****

"Sharp and brave. An evocative portrait of Ireland at a certain time and place". Elizabeth McGuane, *Sunday Business Post*

PRESS NIGHT: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH 2005 AT 7.30PM
PHOTOCALL: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6TH 2005 AT 1.00PM-1.30PM

Finborough Theatre, The Finborough, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED
Box Office 0870 4000 838 www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Tuesday, September 6th-Saturday, September 24th 2005

Tuesday to Saturday Evenings at 7.30pm. Sunday Matinees at 3.30pm.

Tickets £12, £9 concessions. Tuesday Evenings £8 all seats. Saturday evenings £12 all seats.

Previews (September 6th and 7th) £8 all seats.

Performance Length: Approximately 75 minutes.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact
Neil McPherson on **020 7244 7439** or e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk
or, for urgent enquiries only please, **mobile 07977 173135**
www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED Telephone +44 (0)20 7244 7439 Fax +44 (0)20 7835 1853
e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk Artistic Director Neil McPherson