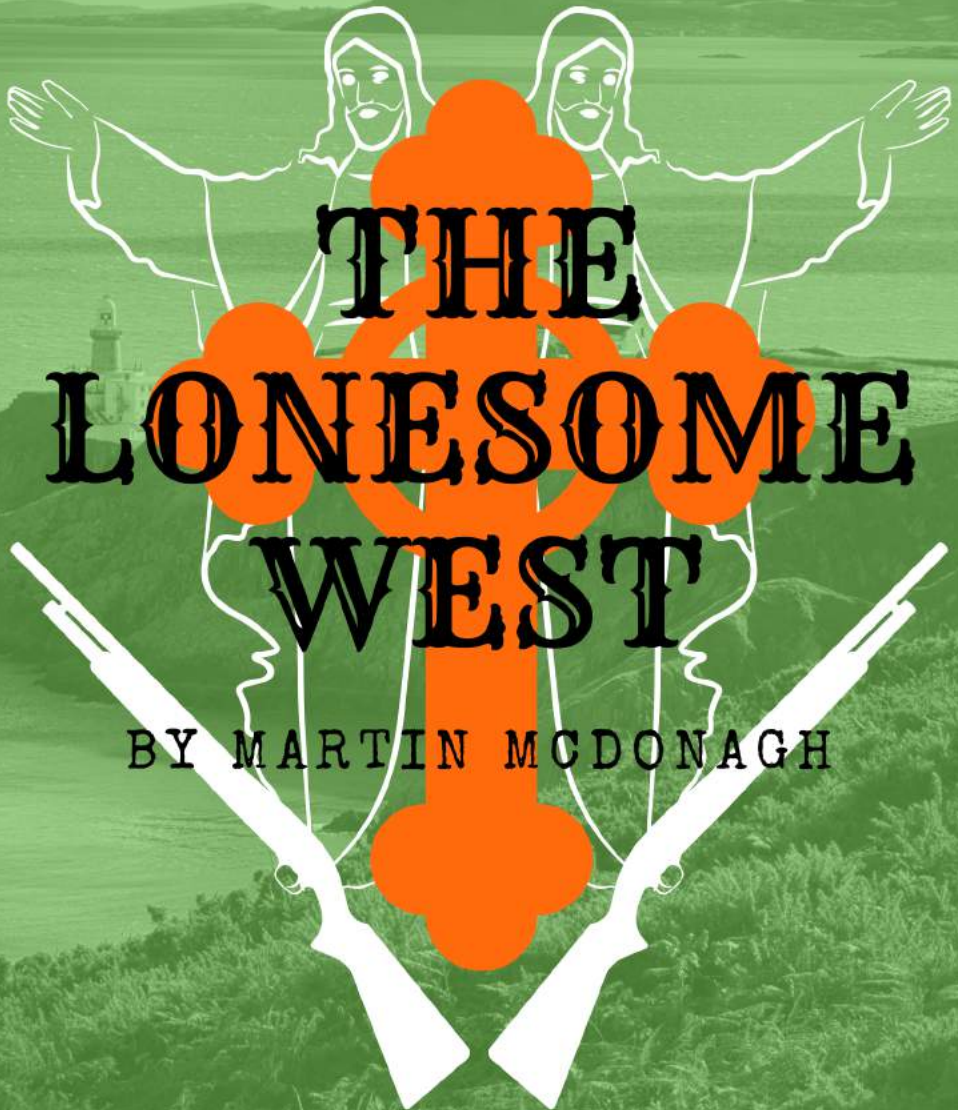


**PROGRESS**  
THE ▲ TRE

**3 - 11 March 2023**  
[www.progresstheatre.co.uk](http://www.progresstheatre.co.uk)



Directed by Matt Tully

This amateur production of "The Lonesome West" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. [www.concordtheatricals.co.uk](http://www.concordtheatricals.co.uk)

# Welcome to Progress!

Founded in 1946,  
we're the oldest producing  
theatre in Reading.

A self-governing, self-funding theatre group, run entirely by volunteers. We are members of the Little Theatre Guild and the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, and are a registered charity in England (no. 1182798). Our patron is Sir Kenneth Branagh.





## The artwork on display in the foyer was created by Michèle Gibbs

My name is Michèle,  
I paint dogs, cats and people as well.  
Colourful, happy and abstract too,  
Hope something will inspire you.  
Every painting is done from the heart,  
Loving every minute creating my art.  
Enjoy this display – my “lockdown” creation,

Glad to have had a long staycation!  
I used my time to try different styles,  
Beaches, waves, fun ideas to promote smiles  
Be sure to check out my insta and facebook,  
Social media is always worth a look!

 [mgagibbs.art](https://www.instagram.com/mgagibbs.art)

 [mgagibbs.art](https://www.facebook.com/mgagibbs.art)

 [mgagibbs@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mgagibbs@yahoo.co.uk)



# 11 Shows per year

We put together a varied and challenging programme of shows every season, including our traditional Open Air Shakespeare production at Reading Abbey Ruins each Summer.



## An Intimate Venue

Our intimate 96 seat venue has a fully licensed bar. There is wheelchair access and a hearing loop, and we are committed to making further improvements in the coming years to make our building more accessible.



## Youth Theatre

We have a vibrant and happy Youth Theatre, split into 4 groups by age. Regular workshops involve theatre games, improvisations and skills development. Youth Theatre shows are often challenging and always performed to a high standard. Many past members maintain an interest in theatre and numerous aspects of performance art as adults, some of them professionally!



## Award Winners

In June 2020, we were very honoured to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

This award is equivalent to an MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), and is the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK, to recognise outstanding work done in their own communities.

# Director's Notes

*The Lonesome West* is the last of Martin McDonagh's Leenane trilogy of plays, all of which take place in the same town in the west of Ireland in the late 1990s.

The other two plays are *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* and *A Skull in Connemara*, and although all three plays share the same settings, and some of the same characters are mentioned, each one stands alone as a piece of drama.

Back in the dark days of 2020, I was searching for a play to direct for when the theatre finally opened again, and had (fortunately as it turned out) been denied the performing rights to three other productions.

Knowing my love for all things McDonagh, a friend suggested I

take a look at *The Lonesome West*. I had already acted in *The Pillowman* by the same author, on the Progress stage some years earlier, and the thought of actually directing one of his plays seemed an alluring if somewhat nerve-racking prospect.

So I sat down to read it one horrendously dull and gloomy Covid afternoon, and proceeded to laugh like a drain at McDonagh's dark, comic drama about two middle aged Irish brothers who are constantly, and literally at each other's throats.



If any of you with siblings have ever excitedly torn open your presents on a Christmas morning to find your sister or brother had been given the tennis racket or cricket bat that you so desperately wanted, and had been tempted to gleefully wrap it around their necks, then you will find much to enjoy here, even if, unlike Coleman and Valene, you would never act upon those desires. Add into the mix a young alcoholic priest with a crisis of faith, and a feisty fireball of a teenage girl who runs rings around the older men, and you have the hilarious, dark and sometimes dangerous world of *The Lonesome West*, enjoy.

**Matt Tully - Director**



# The McDonagh Phenomenon

To say that Martin McDonagh's career to date has been extraordinary would be no overstatement. Almost 30 years ago, aged 24, he left his job in the civil service, sat down, and, over a period of 10 months, wrote seven plays, with only one of these remaining unpublished. Within three years, he had four of these plays simultaneously in production in London (an achievement only equalled previously by Shakespeare), with awards following on both sides of the Atlantic; Galway, London and New York all succumbed to his talent. Inevitably, the envious questioned his works and talent, and he, in turn, was openly dismissive of their carping, self-confidently asserting himself.

His success was not confined to the stage: he won his first Oscar in 2006 for *Six Shooter*, as Best Live Action Short Film, and followed this up with nominations for numerous

awards for *In Bruges*, *Seven Psychopaths*, *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, and more recently, *The Banshees of Inisherin*, winning many of these in categories ranging through screenplay, direction and best film. His works have gained cult status (*In Bruges* especially so), with his earlier works being staged frequently throughout the UK, Ireland, the US, and the world. These earlier works comprised of two trilogies, all plays that stand on their own, but interlinked by common characters and places, and also a play set outside Ireland, *The Pillowman*.



Common themes permeate these and his more recent works; in Beckettian fashion, characters are often trapped together, some with an awareness of their plight, some with no self-awareness whatsoever. This is a common theme in many comedies, such as BBC TV's *Steptoe and Son* or *Hancock*, both of which have dark undertones, and which may have influenced McDonagh. Animal cruelty also frequently features, though he is a vegetarian and an animal lover.

The first and better-known of the trilogies is commonly known as *The Leenane Trilogy*, all set in the fictional village of Leenane. *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, tells the story of a mother and her daughter whose familial bonds have chained them together for too long. The daughter sees a last chance of love, and cannot let her mother stand in her way. In *A Skull in Connemara*, a man is employed to remove and crush bones from a plot in an overcrowded graveyard, knowing that it holds the remains of his

murdered wife. This is not staged as often, probably for practical reasons, as "bones" need to be smashed on stage at every performance.

The final part of the trilogy, which is being staged tonight, is *The Lonesome West*, in which two feuding brothers are trapped together, engaged in futile acts of mutual self-destruction, with a despairing priest looking on, fearing for his own fate.

Both trilogies are located around County Galway, where McDonagh spent his childhood holidays, McDonagh having been born and brought up in London, but having Irish parents, his father being from County Galway, and mother from County Sligo. Perhaps on one of these holidays, he met a Father Walsh (or was it Welsh)? In the first two plays in the trilogy, he features offstage. In *The Lonesome West*, we meet him, almost as an old friend.

**Tony Wernham - Producer**

# Cast

Father Welsh

Adam Wells

Coleman

Damien Passmore

Valene

Paul Gittus

Girleen

Imogen Lilley



## WE THANK YOU TO:

- not smoke
- keep the aisles of the auditorium clear at all times
- not take photos or recordings of the performance
- turn off your mobile devices during the performance



# Production Team

Director	Matt Tully
Producer	Tony Wernham
Stage Manager	Alex McCubbin
Assistant Stage Manager	Natasha Hall
Lighting Design & Operation	Trevor Dale, Steph Dewar
Sound Design & Operation	Stuart McCubbin
Set Design	Peter Cook
Set Build	Peter Cook, Graham Evans, Alex McCubbin, Stuart McCubbin
Rehearsal Prompt	Nancy Gittus
Costumes	Helen Wernham
Photography	Richard Brown
Marketing	Lauren Boys
Fight Director	David Parsonson
Props	Peter Cook, Helen Wernham, Tony Wernham, Matt Tully



# Biographies - Cast

## Paul Gittus

*Valene Connor*

Paul has recently joined Progress Theatre and played Joe Gargery and the Judge in last summer's open air production of *Great Expectations*, and John London and a dead body in last year's WriteFest. Previously Paul had been at Questors Theatre, Ealing where he played Kotchkariov in *Marriage* and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Paul is very excited to be part of the cast and crew bringing this extraordinary play to life.

## Adam Wells

*Father Welsh*

Twelve years ago, *The Lonesome West* was the first Martin McDonagh Adam ever watched and he has been a huge fan ever since. It has been a treat to play a character as complex, tragic, flawed and human as Father Welsh? Walsh? Welsh, and Adam has loved every part this production. This is his fifth outing for Progress, following *The Pride*, *Radiant Vermin*, *Romeo & Juliet* and *Hangmen*. As always, his performance tonight is for GLY.

## Damien Passmore

*Coleman Connor*

Damien is best known as a singer-songwriter, performing his music in Reading for over 20 years. He also regularly comperes events at The Rising Sun Arts Centre and hosts the *What's On Reading* podcast. Having studied drama and performing arts, he's no stranger to treading the boards, appearing in productions of *Guys & Dolls*, Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, and *Fool For Love* by Sam Shepard, amongst others. In 2004 he briefly trained as a pro-wrestler, and in 2013 he played Ulysses Everitt McGill in the *Oh Brother Special* at Woodley Theatre. This is his Progress Theatre debut.

## Imogen Lilley

*Girleen Kelleher*

Imogen is a recent Musical Theatre graduate from the University of Portsmouth. During her course of studying, she co-created the feminist theatre company 'Read It and Weep Theatre' and directed and performed in its debut show *Scrap That! The Lonesome West* is Imogen's second show at Progress Theatre following her first show *Jerusalem* by Jez Butterworth. Imogen has loved the rehearsal process for this production and hopes you enjoy the show.

# Biographies - Crew

## Matt Tully

Director

Matt has directed a number of shows on the Progress stage, including *Trainspotting*, *Killer Joe*, *The Long and the Short and the Tall* and most recently, *The Haunting of Hill House*, which won the NODA District award for best play in 2020, and was the last play performed on the Progress stage before the pandemic temporarily shut us down. He has also appeared on stage numerous times at the theatre, most recently taking the lead role of Johnny Rooster Byron in Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem*.

## Tony Wernham

Producer

Tony has had on- and off-stage roles with Progress Theatre for many years, and has been involved in Reading Abbey Open Air events from 1999. He has been the theatre's marketing manager, also marketing six Reading Open-Air Shakespeare productions, and was, until recently, its treasurer. He directed in-house productions of *Blue/Orange* and *Blackbird*, and open-air productions of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Romeo & Juliet*. As an actor, publicist, treasurer, director, occasional writer, and barman at Progress Theatre, he has been greatly involved in Reading's cultural life.

## Trevor Dale

Lighting Design and Operation

Trevor has been involved in numerous productions both on and backstage over the years with Progress. Recently he designed the lighting for the award winning *The Haunting of Hill House*. He is looking forward to the next challenge from a lighting perspective and knows that you will enjoy the show.





## Stuart McCubbin

### *Sound Design and Operation*

Stuart has been a member of Progress for over twelve years. He doesn't tread the boards but is more usually found in the tech box. He has designed and/or operated sound for many shows over the years, both in the theatre and on-line (he can provide a list!) and has assisted with set builds and Front of House for many others. His most recent ventures were *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*, *The Pride*, *Life Is A Dream* and *The Welkin*.

## Peter Cook

### *Set Design and Build*

Peter has appeared in several plays at Progress since his debut in *The Long and the Short and The Tall* in 2016. He works as a film and TV extra, and runs a brewery, also finding time to write plays and make the occasional appearance as a mobile DJ (strictly vinyl, of course). He also designed the set for tonight's play.

## David Parsonson

### *Fight Director*

Recipient of the 2015 Reading Culture Award, David has worked professionally as producer, director, writer and presenter on regional television, notably working on documentaries concerning difficulties disabled people face. Winner of 'Best Staging' award for *Godspell* and nominated for 'Outstanding Choreography & Direction' for *Chess* by the MTA. He wrote, choreographed and directed the Reading College Edinburgh Festival co-production of *Wilde at Heart*. His professional choreographic credits include *Oh! What A Lovely War*, *Joseph*, *A Chorus Line*, *Wizard of Oz*, *The Merry Widow*, *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *Godspell* and *Grease*. In addition, he has worked as Production and Stage Managers in Britain and abroad.





## Alex McCubbin

### Stage Manager

Alex has been a long-standing member of Progress Theatre and has previously stage managed many productions including *Jeeves and Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*, *Radiant Vermin*, *Killer Joe*, *The Pillowman* and *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. He has also been seen in productions of *Moonlight and Magnolias*, *No Naughty Bits*, *Birdsong* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to name a few.

## Natasha Hall

### Assistant Stage Manager

Natasha joined Progress over twenty years ago and has been involved in several productions since, often acting or stage managing. Most recently she acted in two of the short plays in the 16th Annual WriteFest. Natasha first assistant stage managed for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Abbey Ruins at 14 and has done lots of stage management since. She is looking forward to resuming the role for *The Lonesome West*.

## Helen Wernham

### Costumes

Helen has been a member of Progress Theatre since 2000 and has been known to tread the boards, particularly in the Open-Air Shakespeare in the Ruins. She directed *Colder Than Here* in 2013, *Happy Jack* in 2018 and has been assistant director and producer for other shows: *Blue Orange*, *Blackbird* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 2015. She has been costuming shows for the last 15 years and enjoys sourcing for period plays. Sourcing clothes for the recent past is not always straightforward, especially for such unusual characters as portrayed in *The Lonesome West*. Branching into props, she has enjoyed picking out the saints she remembers from her Catholic childhood.



Celebrating  
70+ years of

**PROGRESS**  
YOUTH

1950 - 2022

We teach \_\_\_\_\_  
**LAMDA**  
— Exams & Qualifications

**PROGRESS**  
YOUTH

**Theatre workshops  
for ages 7 - 18**

From £80 per term



We teach \_\_\_\_\_  
**LAMDA**  
— Exams & Qualifications



Book a **FREE** trial by emailing: [youthliaison@progresstheatre.co.uk](mailto:youthliaison@progresstheatre.co.uk)

# 2022/23

## Management Committee

---

### Trustees

#### Chair

Ali Carroll

#### Secretary

Megan Turnell Willett

#### Treasurer

Carole Brown

#### Non-Exec Trustees

Peter O'Sullivan

Marc Reid

Kate Whiting

#### Vice-Chair

John Goodman

#### Premises Manager

Vacant

#### Youth Theatre Manager

Laura Mills

#### PPC Chair

Tom Ripper

#### Production Manager

Poppy Price

#### Marketing Manager

Lauren Boys

#### Resources Manager

Vacant

#### Fundraising Coordinator

Vacant

#### Inclusion Officer

Vacant

#### Members' Rep

Paul Haigh

#### Communications Officer

John Goodman

## Supporting Roles

---

#### Theatre Manager

Emily Goode

#### Box Office Manager

Chris Moran

#### Bar Manager

Richard Brown

#### Wardrobe Manager

Helen Wernham

#### Props Master

Tony Powell

#### Safeguarding Lead

Fiona McNeil

#### FoH Manager

Stuart McCubbin

#### FoH Supplies Manager

Avril Bird

#### Programme Designer

Kate Shaw

#### Key Co-ordinator

Dan Clarke

#### Diary Manager

Dorothy Grugeon

#### Art Co-ordinator

Chris Moran

#### Curtain Up Editor

Laura Mills

#### Assistant Treasurer

Tony Wernham

#### LTG Rep

Helen Wernham

#### PPC

Sahar Hemami

Mikhail Franklin

Peter Knightley

Thomas Ripper

#### Digital Theatre

Aidan Moran

Tony Travis

#### Archivist

Dan Clarke

# Our 76th Season

2022

## 2 - 10 SEPTEMBER

*Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense* by P.G. Wodehouse, adapted by the Goodale Brothers

## 10 - 15 OCTOBER

*The Pride* by Alexi Kaye Campbell

## 2 - 5 NOVEMBER

The 16th Annual Writefest

## 16 - 19 NOVEMBER

Progress Premieres presents *Liar's Teeth* by Emily Goode

## 7 - 10 DECEMBER

*Life is a Dream* by Pedro Calderon, translated by Rhys Lawton

**PROGRESS**  
Y♥TH

2023

## 20 - 28 JANUARY

*The Welkin* by Lucy Kirkwood

## 3 - 11 MARCH

*The Lonesome West* by Martin McDonagh

## 14 - 22 APRIL

*Dinner* by Moira Buffini

## 19 - 27 MAY

*Silver Lining* by Sandi Toksvig

## 19 - 24 JUNE

*The Silence of the Sea* by Paul Vercors, adapted by Peter Cheeseman

## 12 - 22 JULY

*Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare  
Open Air at the Abbey Ruins

**PT**▲