

Arts & Books

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How the other half gives – it's philanthropy without the flash



BERNICE HARRISON

TV REVIEW

RETE'S VERSION of the hit Channel 4 series The Secret Millionaire could just as easily have been called The Lovely Millionaire or The Decent, Unassuming Millionaire...



Richly rewarding: the entrepreneur John Concannon took a caring, unassuming approach in The Secret Millionaire

DOCUMENTARIES ARE rarely as bang up to date as this week's Dispatches: Gypsy Eviction – The Fight for Dale Farm (Channel 4, Monday). Filmed throughout the summer...

Tony Ball, the leader of Basildon Council, explained in a quiet, rational way that "green-belt" law had to be upheld...

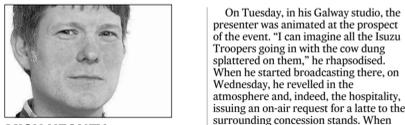
The arena ticked all the boxes for deprivation: high unemployment, a huge drug problem, social behaviour, rubbish everywhere, older people living in fear...

They used the law but won't abide by the law," said a local on Basildon high street. We checked out the local carers' group, the suicide-prevention organisation Pieta House...

Concannon gave money to all three, in a way that typified his caring, unassuming approach to the exercise. Breaking away from the Channel 4 format, he didn't declare, "I'm a millionaire..."

DESPITE ITS misleading title, My Forces Unwedded Wedding (RTÉ3 Monday) was a serious, superbly researched and vivid exploration of another practice defended in the name of culture: forced marriages between young British girls from Bangladeshi families...

Ploughing his own whimsical furrow



MICK HEANEY

RADIO REVIEW

AS SHE delivered her regular Word of the Day slot on Breakfast With the Host (2FM), we were reminded that Mick Heaney took no chances with her definition...

On Tuesday, in his Galway studio, the presenter was animated at the prospect of the event. "I can imagine all the Isuzu Troopers going in with the cow dung splattered on them," he rhapsodised.

hEochagáin's line about dung-splattered Jeeps was recycled. But his limitations are obvious too. His banter quickly loses its charm when the flashes of wit are few and far between...

Indeed, to characterise the programme as whimsical is at times to confer it with an unwarranted gravitas. The show is essentially a catalogue of the presenter's catchphrases and the weekly item thrown in. But while the content may be gossamer light, Ó hEochagáin's appeal rests not more than generic radio-jock patter...

On Miriam Meets (RTÉ Radio 1, Sundays), the actor Ciarán Hinds and his sister Bronagh painted a gently amusing family portrait, from their mad-for-the-craic version of the place. So it was no surprise that Ó hEochagáin's spiel went into overdrive last week, as he broad analysed the National Ploughing Championships in Athy, or, as he repeatedly called it, "the Electric Picnic for farmers".

Radio moment of the week

On Miriam Meets (RTÉ Radio 1, Sundays), the actor Ciarán Hinds and his sister Bronagh painted a gently amusing family portrait...

The page is your stage Can you write a winning tiny play?

Ever dreamed of having a play produced by a professional theatre company? The Irish Times is supporting an exciting initiative aimed at broadening the range of voices in Irish theatre.

FISHAMBLE IS LOOKING for tiny plays that explore contemporary life in Ireland. We want to create a discussion, through theatre, about our country, so we are inviting new, emerging and established writers of any age...

Concannon clearly wasn't looking for fame or acknowledgment. This documentary about forced marriage – or rape, as one policeman succinctly put it – is bound to find its way to BBC2 at some stage...

Write about what you know or feel passionate about. Don't be afraid to state the obvious, if you think the obvious needs to be stated, or to take us somewhere unexpected, if you think something needs to be made plain.

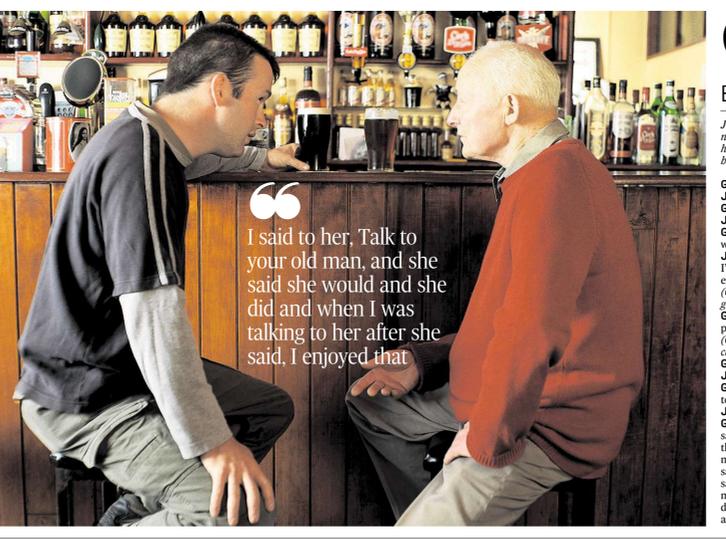
Write a fully formed play. Even though it's short, it should not seem like a sketch or an excerpt from a longer play. Mark Twain and George Bernard Shaw are both credited with saying "I'm sorry to have written such a long letter, but I didn't have time to write a short one."

Tiny plays The rules. Plays must be original to the writer and run for no more than four minutes – as a guide, no more than 600 words, including stage directions.

Now the bubble has burst, we're left with our real treasures. Higgins's point of view has always been bottom-up. This doesn't mean her new collection, Ireland Is Changing Mother, makes it timely to mark her steadfastness and courage...

FINTAN O'TOOLE CULTURE SHOCK. IN A BRILLIANT poem, Aerialist, in his recent collection Of All Places, John McAuliffe captures the sense of having been absent from the Celtic Tiger. McAuliffe, from Listowel, works in Manchester and so missed the daily lived experience of the boom years.

part of the establishment. But Higgins's voice, forged over 25 years since the publication of Goddess on the Mercue Bus, in 1986, has a unique fusion of wit, deadpan humour on the one side and absolute sincerity on the other.



Calling Time

Jack Lee, an older man, sits at a bar, nursing a pint. His son, Gary, enters holding a mobile phone. He stands beside Jack.

GARY Where's my pint? JACK You finished it. GARY No, it was full. JACK There was a dribble. GARY (Indicates a good half.) There was that much.

into the deluded. But the overall point is clear: Higgins's achievement doesn't depend on that rarity value, but it is certainly amplified by it.

A Deal Made in Drimmagh

By Sean McLoughlin

Tony and Paula's front room, Friday night. Tony (early 20s) sits on his leather armchair, drinking a bottle of beer and watching television. (A flat-screen TV is in the corner of the room.) Paula (mid-20s) stands next to a coffee table in the middle of the room, smoking.

hypnotised

by Drive, a previously unreleased Drift Punk track from 1994 that was unearthed by the Scottish label Soma. The seven-minute recording was apparently discovered on an old tape belonging to the parents of one of the band members.

buying

tickets to the Manhattan Short Film Festival at the Sugar Club on October 2nd. The audience in Dublin will unite with filmmakers in more than 200 cities to view and judge 10 15-minute-long films. Starts 7.30pm; tickets €5; thesugarclub.com.

determined

to make it to the IF's September Archive at Luncheon series. There are two films to choose from: 35 Aside, Damien O'Donnell's surrealist 25-minute drama about a schoolboy who has difficulty fitting in, and The Silent Art, Louis Marcus's 15-minute tribute to the Cork sculptor Séamus 'Stonemaw' Murphy.

hagglng

over everything from vintage clothes and retro furniture to second-hand bikes and vinyl at this month's Dublin Flea Market at the Dublin Food Coop on Newmarket Square, off Cork Street in Dublin 8; open tomorrow, 11am to 5pm.

hopeful

that Finding Reasons, the first track from New Build, could be the start of something beautiful between Hot Chip buddies Al Doyle (also of LCD Soundsystem fame) and Felix Martin.

listening

to a letter from TS Eliot to Virginia Woolf in the Paris Review, ahead of the publication this month of The Letters of TS Eliot. In it she describes being "boiled in a hell-broth" leaving his mother off in Liverpool to take a transatlantic trip, and narrowly avoiding being carried off to Cobh himself, although not managing to escape a black eye.

charmed

to the quick by the Irish illustrator Steve McCarthy's view preview of his first children's book, complete with soundtrack by Beirte. We look forward to seeing the finished product in the flesh; mrstevecarthy.com.

up

past our bedtime for an impromptu Ruby Sessions on Wednesday night, from their chart-topper Ed Sheeran, in town for Arthur's Day, played for an hour and a half to a packed crowd at Doyle's on College Green, in Dublin.



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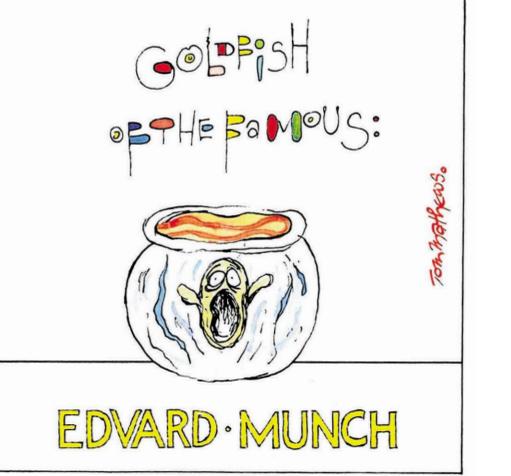
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ARTOON



EDWARD MUNCH