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McDonagh's *Skull* a hit in Baltimore

By Josh Fields

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Acclaimed Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's A Skull in Connemara has received rave reviews since staring its current run in Baltimore, Maryland. Showing at Maryland's state theater, Centerstage, A Skull in Connemara stars Si Osborne and Jordan J. Brown, and is directed by BJ Jones.

The play, which McDonagh wrote in 1997, is the second installment of his Leenane Trilogy, set in the eponymous village in Co. Galway. The story revolves around a gravedigger named Mick Dowd who is hired by the local church to dig up graves every year in order to make room for the newly-deceased.



A Skull in Connemara is playing at Maryland's Centerstage theater through March 4.

Critics at *BroadwayWorld.com* called the production, "Completely endearing, highly entertaining, fast paced and fierce," while the *City Paper* said the play "inspires laughter and rumination in equal parts."

What seems like a dreary theme actually makes for plenty of laughs. A Skull in Connemara is a dialogue-heavy performance which sees its cast of four cracking jokes and making witty observations at every corner.

Playwright McDonagh was born and raised in London by Irish parents, but spent his holidays in Galway, from where his father originally hails. From these visits he drew the inspiration to pen his first six plays, which are all set around the county, especially the rugged Connemara area.

Four of his creations have been nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play, including *The Lonesome West* in 1999, which is the third part in the Leenane Trilogy. In recent years, McDonagh has spent his time writing for the big screen, claiming an Academy Award for his short film *Six Shooter* and a nomination for his screenplay for *In Bruges*, the box office smash which starred Colin Farrell.

A Skull in Connemara runs through March 4 at Centerstage, 700 North Calvert Street, Baltimore. Tickets can be purchased at www.centerstage.org.

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