100 years
100 plays
100 words



Scottish Community Drama

100 years
100 plays
100 words

Celebrating 100 years of
Scottish Community Drama

1st floor, Argyll Court,
Castle Business Park,
Stirling, FK9 4TY

Scottish Charity SC021397

www.drama.scot

© 2026

Finding a good one-act play is never easy.

Every club looking for a good play script goes through a similar process. They ask their friends and search their memories for plays they've seen or heard about. They may even visit SCDA's Script Library in Stirling, only to be met with endless shelves containing thousands of scripts with no clear place to start.

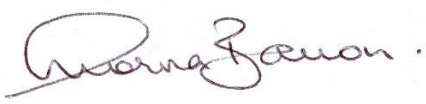
This booklet has been put together as part of SCDA's centenary celebrations. Its purpose is to provide a manageable list of great one-act plays for clubs to consider. It was produced by asking twenty experienced adjudicators and directors each to recommend five one-act plays they would like to see again. For each, they explain why it's a great play in not more than a hundred words.

Hence, **100 years, 100 plays in 100 words.**

Many of the recommended plays have won festivals in the past but others are unlikely to have been seen before.

Inevitably when twenty people are asked the same question, several will give the same answer. Of the hundred recommendations, twelve plays were recommended more than once, so the following pages list seventy-eight different plays.

Scripts for the listed plays are available from SCDA's library in Stirling. Reading copies can be borrowed, but we hope you take the opportunity to visit the library, have a coffee, and take some time to browse the shelves.



SCDA National Secretary

Thanks

Many thanks to the following people who provided their recommendations:

Ross Aitken	Stewart Aitken	Morna Barron
Dave Bennet	Gerry Burns	Colin Dolley
Paul Dougall	Lee Dunn	Walker Ewart
Graham Garson	Carolyn Harrison	Alasdair Hawthorn
Tish Howard	Chris Jaegar	Tristan Marshall
Gavin Paterson	David Price	Keith Robinson
Mike Tibbets	Carole Williams	

The top 12 plays with multiple recommendations

With 6 recommendations

1. *Lone Star* . . . by James McLure

With 4 recommendations

2. *Bouncers* . . . by John Godber
3. *The Dumb Waiter* . . . by Harold Pinter

With 3 recommendations

4. *Her Slightest Touch* . . . by Torben Betts
5. *The Dancing Fusilier* . . . by Mike Tibbetts

With 2 recommendations

6. *Bar and Ger* . . . by Geraldine Aron
7. *Gosforth's Fete* . . . by Alan Ayckbourn
8. *Two* . . . by Jim Cartwright
9. *The Bear* . . . by Anton Chekhov (tr. Bernard Lawrence)
10. *One Season's King* . . . by George MacEwan Green
11. *Victor's Dung* . . . by Seamus O'Rourke
12. *Confessional* . . . by David Weir

Sixty-six plays with one recommendation

13. *Benching* . . . by Matt Adie
14. *The Zoo Story* . . . by Edward Albee
15. *The Orchestra* . . . by Jean Anouilh (tr. Miriam John)
16. *A Galway Girl* . . . by Geraldine Aron
17. *The Donahue Sisters* . . . by Geraldine Aron
18. *Absurd Person Singular (Act 2)* by Alan Ayckbourn
19. *The 39 Steps (abridged)* by Patrick Barlow
20. *Say Something Happened* by Alan Bennett
21. *A Super Happy Story (about feeling super sad)* by Jon Brittain & Mathew Floyd Jones
22. *Jock & Blind Mary* . . . by George Mackay Brown
23. *The Slab Boys* . . . by John Byrne
24. *Can You Hear the Music?* by David Campton
25. *The Cagebirds* . . . by David Campton
26. *Getting & Spending* . . . by David Campton
27. *Us and Them* . . . by David Campton
28. *Count Albany* . . . by Donald Carswell
29. *But Yesterday* . . . by Jimmie Chinn
30. *In Room Five Hundred & Four* by Jimmie Chinn
31. *Top Girls (Act 1)* . . . by Caryl Churchill
32. *A Thousand Deaths* . . . by John Clancy
33. *Down Came the Rain* . . . by Burgess Clark
34. *Sunset Song* . . . adapted by Alastair Cording

35. *Hewers of Coal* . . . by Joe Corrie
36. *Fumed Oak* . . . by Noel Coward
37. *Goodbye Charles* . . . by Gabriel Benjamin Davis
38. *Storytelling* . . . by Oliver Emanuel
39. *Better Days, Better Knights* by Stanley Eveling
40. *The Hitch-Hiker* . . . by Lucille Fletcher
41. *Chinamen (from the Two of Us)* by Michael Frayn
42. *A Brief Period of Rejoicing* by Harry Glass
43. *Shakers* . . . by John Godber & Jane Thornton
44. *A Collier's Tuesday Tea* . . . by Michael Green
45. *The Passing Place* . . . by Issy Grieve
46. *Little Dolls* . . . by Nancy Harris
47. *Porch* . . . by Jack Heifner
48. *Untucked* . . . by Teresa Hennessy
49. *A Perfect Child* . . . by Lewis Hetherington
50. *A Handbag* . . . by Anthony Horowitz
51. *A Bench at the Edge* . . . by Luigi Jannuzzi
52. *The Laramie Project* . . . by Moises Kaufman
53. *Melody* . . . by Deirdre Kinahan
54. *The Aviary* . . . by Jamie Lakritz
55. *Matching Cummerbund* by Gerry McCartan
56. *The Cheviot, the Stag & the Black, Black Oil* by John McGrath
57. *It's Behind You!* . . . by Alan McHugh
58. *The Incredible Adventures of See Thru Sam* by Johnny McKnight
59. *Clara* . . . by Arthur Miller
60. *Elegy for a Lady* . . . by Arthur Miller
61. *Some Kind of Love Story* by Arthur Miller
62. *Marble Arch* . . . by John Mortimer
63. *Scarecrow* . . . by Don Nigro
64. *Bedtime Story* . . . by Sean O'Casey
65. *From Under the Bed* . . . by Seamus O'Rourke
66. *The Good & Faithful Servant* by Joe Orton
67. *Constellations* . . . by Nick Payne
68. *A Kind of Alaska* . . . by Harold Pinter
69. *Girls Like That* . . . by Evan Placey
70. *The Daurk Assize* . . . by James Scotland
71. *12hr. Life* . . . by Robert Scott
72. *Perfection City* . . . by David Shellan
73. *The Real Inspector Hound* by Tom Stoppard
74. *MOT* . . . by Mike Tibbetts
75. *A Dog's Life* . . . by Pam Valentine
76. *Ring Road* . . . by Anita Vettesse
77. *Education, Education, Education* by The Wardrobe Ensemble
78. *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* by Tennessee Williams

The plays

Plays with multiple recommendations are listed first, other are listed alphabetically by author.

Play	**1 Lone Star**
Playwright	James McLure
Cast	3M

What it's about

The backyard of a small-town Texas bar. Roy is back after a hitch in Vietnam. Joined by his younger brother, Ray, he drinks a case of beer while telling Ray about his military and amorous exploits. He cherishes three things above all; his country, his sexy young wife, and his 1959 pink Thunderbird. With the arrival of Cletis, Roy's world begin to collapse as it gradually comes out that Ray slept with Roy's wife during his absence and has demolished his cherished Thunderbird. Despite all, the high good humour never lapses, and all ends as happily as it began.

Why it's a great play

Wick's production of this play rightly won the 1998 British Final. It strikes a fine balance between very serious themes of sibling rivalry, PTSD and poverty, but overlays this with humour and a subtle realism.

Although there is much ribald comedy in the interplay between the three men, the play is always rooted in emotional truth with an undercurrent of sadness which has made this script the writers best known work. The play offers three great roles for the men to explore in depth while the setting – the back of an old weather-worn bar should add a timely mood and atmosphere.

It gives a great opportunity for setting and lighting as well as the scope for acting and directing. Lots of comedy as well as great characters to be portrayed. Very enjoyable play.

This play has got the lot: humour, pathos, brotherly love and rivalry, and Hank Williams! The dialogue is so witty, capturing both the bravado and inanity of drunk men's conversations, but also peeling back the veneer of the high-school-hero and Vietnam vet to find the pain within. The shifting relationships between the three as the truth is laid bare are so believable. Who could possibly forget Wick Players' wonderful set at the Scottish Finals in 1998 in Dundee, or the cast and crew singing "Your Cheatin' Heart" and rowing across the floor at the party afterwards?!

In SCDA circles, this play has fallen victim to the fact it was done so successfully "back in the day" that many people simply don't want to touch it. However, the script remains as strong as ever, with an opportunity to replicate the hot, sweaty, beer-soaked Texas atmosphere on stage without feeling cramped or fake. This ultimately requires strong scenic and lighting design.

There is also a challenge for directors to manage the tonal shifts from laugh-out-loud humour to the underlying drama (which is often the difficulty in staging good comedies).

It presents a great opportunity for 3 strong actors to showcase their acting skills, all the while maintaining a convincing Texas accent.

Play	**2 Bouncers**
Playwright	John Godber
Cast	4M (can be 2M 2F)

What it's about

This play is anchored by four doormen who each play multi roles and depict a, warts and all, night out at a North of England nightclub. The play tracks the evening from the pre-club grooming and anticipation, through the queues at the door, the drunken frenzy and flirting culminating in the inevitable messy aftermath. Minimum set required. This play requires good use of lighting and sound to engage the audience.

Why it's a great play

This play is gauged by the audience's reaction. I love the choreography and physicality of the roles and, although it's a comedy, you need to show the seedy underbelly and sadness of society to give it balance. After all 'all life is inevitably here, in a midnight circus'. The themes throughout the play are still pertinent today

It needs four versatile actors who work exceptionally well together**.** Much of its impact comes from instantly switching between intimidating doormen and the vulnerable or ridiculous customers. The direction needs strong invention and creativity and has all the challenges required for a festival.

The demands on the actors are huge – all four actors need to be masters of physical theatre with exemplary comic timing. The actor playing Lucky Eric also has to master the pathos of his increasingly sad monologues.

Since I saw Kirkton Players' production of this, which was radical in its casting of 2 men and 2 women in the roles, I've come across dozens of other Godber plays, however, none of them make me laugh or cry like Bouncers does.

The National Theatre include it as one of the plays of the century. It is an excellent challenge for teams with actors potentially playing more than 20 different roles between them. It has great potential for a simple but creative stage presentation.

Play	**3 The Dumb Waiter**
Playwright	Harold Pinter
Cast	2M

What it's about

Two men wait in a stark windowless basement room.

They are hitmen and are waiting for instructions to their next 'hit'. During this time, they encounter a mysterious "dumb waiter" with increasingly complex food orders which unsettles the two protagonists and escalates the tension throughout the latter part of the play.

Pinter creates an unusual dialogue between Gus, the dominant, 'by the book' hitman and Ben, a subordinate, anxious and questioning type. Both men spar with one another throughout the play towards a heightened and tense ending.

Why it's a great play

Pinter, one of Britain's most renowned writers, has hugely influenced the theatrical landscape. This iconic absurd thriller is a masterpiece that still has the power to captivate audiences more than 60 years after it was first premiered. Darkly threatening and claustrophobic, yet hilariously entertaining, we observe how the two men are increasingly at odds with each other. At its heart are the themes of power, communication and existential dread.

Underneath the plot, it explores obedience, power and the danger of questioning authority. It has a very high difficulty of dive in relation to acting, setting and direction.

What I like about this play is that it challenges the director, and cast, to create stillness, pause, menace and tension throughout. The cast have to be defined by their individual behaviour . Less is very much more in this play.

The production which sticks most in my mind is that by Kirkton Players in 1999 which won the Wheatley Tassie. Its blend of movement, menace and tension caught the mood and atmosphere of the piece perfectly and even though the plot of this play is very well known, the shattering ending arrived yet again with undiminished power.

Play	**4 Her Slightest Touch**
Playwright	Torben Betts
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

This is a comedy-drama about a lonely, middle-aged salesman who visits a young sex worker. He arrives nervous and awkward. While she tries to get on with the transaction, he keeps talking about himself, his disappointments and his sense of failure. Their uncomfortable exchanges provide much of the comedy.

As the conversation develops, glimpses of her difficult background emerge. His discovery that she is only sixteen complicates the encounter further. The emphasis gradually shifts towards loneliness, vulnerability and the need for human connection.

Why it's a great play

This play focusses on demanding acting skills from the two actors. The emotional journeys of each character present a challenge for both director and actors within a very simple setting.

There's a tremendous story arc in this piece. What appears to be happening at the beginning of the play turns into something completely different by the end. It also has great potential for very subtle character development. Nothing is what it seems at first but by the end, we are completely empathetic with two potentially lost souls.

Winner of the SCDA One Act Play Festival in 2015, this is a touching play that explores two characters who appear to be very different, but as we discover through the piece they both share a sense of loneliness. The storytelling is very gentle with moments of comedy and surprises that keep us interested in where things will go next.

The play provides some really nice challenges for the two actors in the hands of a director looking for a play that explores what it is to be human.

Play	**5 The Dancing Fusilier**
Playwright	Mike Tibbetts
Cast	7M, 3F

What it's about

The Dancing Fusilier is a one-act play based on real private anecdotes set against the recorded history of the Second World War.

It tells the story of a Scottish man who becomes a soldier for a brief period during the war, tracing how his pre-war personality and opinions were shaped and then profoundly altered by his experiences — and by the experiences of those close to him.

Why it's a great play

Although presented as the fictionalised account of one man's life, *The Dancing Fusilier* reflects the journey of an entire generation.

It is a superb example of Scottish life and character, offering fantastic roles that demand strong characterisation. It is an excellent ensemble piece which is episodal in structure, and allows for an inventive and flexible set, giving directors and designers real scope for creativity.

Although the play follows the central character through the war, there is also scope for cast members to play multi roles. It stands well as a community piece for a larger cast of particularly men. The poignant ending sees the young man as he is now, an old man. This production blew me away and has remained fondly in my memory for many years. I would love to see it done justice again.

This is without doubt the finest play I have ever been involved with. It gives great scope for acting, lighting and sound. It didn't win best original play in 1997 due to the difficulty in staging. However with right direction, the production was successful and went on to win the British Final. To this day whenever I attend the Scottish Finals someone always wants to talk about *'The Dancing Fusilier'*.

The play won the 1997 Geoffrey Whitworth Award for new UK playwriting and is recognised for its historical depth and truthful portrayal of the events it describes.

Play	**6 Bar and Ger**
Playwright	Geraldine Aron
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

This play is the simple but tender story of the lifelong relationship between Ger (the author) and her younger brother Bar. It travels from his birth through to his untimely death at 17 years old.

Presented as short episodic scenes through the years, with flashes of dialogue, they are ultimately linked by the sister's narrative as she navigates life.

Why it's a great play

The actors involved start off as children and as the play progresses move through towards adulthood so it offers a great opportunity for the two actors involved to show off their versatility. There is a lot of fun and humour throughout the journey which makes the unexpected ending all the more shocking for the audience. It's a great play to stage as it *requires* no scenery and no props but could equally well lead to interesting and imaginative settings.

However, this is a piece many have seen over the years and can fall into the "overdone" category. But, in the right hands, it can delight audiences all over again. Commonly performed by older actors playing down, it challenges them to convincingly play children – similarly, related plays like *'A Galway Girl'* usually has older actors playing younger and then aging on stage. But, why not flip it on its head and have it performed by younger actors? Whilst still required to convincingly play a baby or a child etc, it can be extremely powerful and moving, particularly to have a younger actor playing the 17-year-old brother and seeing the impact of his death explored on stage. Taking a well-known play and just thinking about it differently can be extremely rewarding for both a company and an audience.

Play	**7 Gosforth's Fete**
Playwright	Alan Aykbourn
Cast	2F, 3M

What it's about

A disastrous fete is depicted in this short play from *'Confusions'*, a set of five interlinked one act plays. Each play is very funny, but with sharply pointed undertones showing human eccentricities and the dilemma of loneliness ever present.

The play runs the gamut of comic technique from a fairly pathetic situation comedy to outright farce.

Why it's a great play

Another play which used to be seen very commonly in Festivals, but is now performed rarely. It is a play which offers more challenges than most teams realise. There is no doubt that done well, it is very funny. The secret is not to reach boiling point too early – it must grow and grow.

It gives the opportunity for an imaginative set and needs strong and knowledgeable direction. In particular, all the timings of the various mishaps have to land in the right order for the laughs to land properly.

It should NOT be directed by somebody who is also in the cast (in my opinion!).

Play	**8 Two**
Playwright	Jim Cartwright
Cast	1M, 1F or as an ensemble piece

What it's about

Set in a pub in North of England

A bickering husband and wife and the dozen regulars who pass through their pub in an evening are played by two actors. Each vignette skilfully combines pathos and humour. When a little boy is left behind by his father, a fragile reconciliation occurs as their own dark tragedy is revealed.

Why it's a great play

I love this play. It's full of sharp talking comedy, bleak urban poetry and heart-rending pathos. It blurs the boundary between stage and auditorium. The customers who inhabit the pub share monologues and duologues with the audience that reveal the humour, hardship, affection and cruelty of human relationships. These characters punctuate the seemingly loveless relationship between the husband and wife, but who are, instead, trapped in years of grief after the death of their child. Small seeds of reconciliation help the audience sense a hopeful ending.

This two-hander requires the actor to possess an extensive range of technique in order to segue between the different characters they play as the play progresses. As with a play like the *'Dumb Waiter'* by Harold Pinter or *'Her Slightest Touch'* by Toben Betts. it is essential that the performers have the vocal, physical and aesthetic experience to carry the text.

The reason I have chosen this particular play is that I have also seen a successful production which incorporated twelve performers who created interesting cameo scenes to carry the narrative. Although I don't think this was the intention of the playwright it is an interesting focus for a range of less experienced actors to cut their teeth

Play	**9 The Bear**
Playwright	Anton Chekhov (trans. by Bernard Lawrence)
Cast	2M ,1F

What it's about

Chekhov's *The Bear* is a one-act comedy/farce. Set entirely in the drawing room of a country estate

A grieving widow, has shut herself away to mourn her unfaithful husband. Her solitude is broken when, a boorish landowner, arrives demanding repayment of a debt. Their argument escalates from irritation to fury, then unexpectedly flips into mutual attraction. The play ends with the two preparing for a duel—only to fall in love.

The situation is universal and a successful version was set in Glasgow in 1890. This saw Andrew Baird call upon Flora McNeill to settle a debt owed by her late husband. It is a bank holiday, however no money! Baird is determined and refuses to leave, Flora has to resort to violence. Pistol are brought out for a duel but first Baird must teach her to shoot.

Why it's a great play

This is a fast-paced comedic farce about a mourning widow and angry creditor. This is a challenge for the two main characters . The unpredictable and fickle natures of human emotions particularly how they can change from anger and stubbornness to passion and love. Great chance for the director to use their skill and draw on all the humour without it turning into a pantomime

The Bear offers two excellent acting roles with real emotional range. The rapid shifts in mood give both main parts plenty scope to work.
The Russian setting adds further richness:

- It allows the actors to explore character through period behaviour.
- It provides a great opportunity for costume .
- It offers strong potential for an attractive set, typically a well-appointed drawing room that reflects Elena's status.

The Bear is a comic gem with depth, craft, and two wonderful roles

Play	**10 One Season's King**
Playwright	George MacEwan Green
Cast	3M, 1F

What it's about

Set in graveyard

The play is unusual and evocative with simple stage setting, stylised presentation and a formalised dance sequence. Eveline meets up with three men, Charles, Edward and Sam, all of whom have courted her. It is a play of characterisation. Tension springs from not only the men's rivalry but also from their sense of class.

Why it's a great play

There are moments of humour, sadness and rivalry as the three men in the life of charismatic Eveline retell their stories. They remember the sequence of their lives as their paths had crossed and re-crossed, finally leading them to an autumnal funeral and an unexpected death scene in the country graveyard. The tension between Charles, Edward and Sam springs from their rivalry for Eveline's favours and also from their sense of class and expectations from life.

It's fairly obvious from the start that one of the four characters is dead but the audience will be kept guessing right to the end as to which one. There is a lot of humour mixed with sadness and the stylised dance sequence is very funny.

Play	**11 Victor's Dung**
Playwright	Séamus O'Rourke
Cast	3M

What it's about

It is a black comedy about Victor Maguire, a foul-mouthed, cantankerous farmer in County Cavan who learns one Friday morning that he has little time left to live.

Faced with his mortality, Victor questions his life and whether God exists. His thoughts move between memories, fantasy, anger and despair, gradually revealing his love for his deceased wife, Josie, his animals, his neighbours and the rural world he inhabits. Beneath his abrasive exterior is a man deeply attached to life.

Why it's a great play

This play is full of humour and allows for an inventive setting. Its appeal is the mixture of earthy humour and unexpected tenderness—a substantial central role requiring both comic timing and emotional depth.

It's all about entertaining the audience ! I've always been a firm believer that any play chosen by groups should ultimately have the audience in mind. They are the third dimension in any performance and the conduit to its success.

Victor's Dung is proof positive of this.

Play	**12 Confessional**
Playwright	David Weir
Cast	2M, 1F

What it's about

Poor Kevin. Not only does he have all of the growing pains that a teenage boy has to put up with, he also has to put up with interference from every member of his family: his mum and dad, granny and granddad and even Uncle Father Ignatius, his mother's brother who is also his priest-confessor.

Kevin has to learn how to cope with falling for the fire-cracker Catherine Quinnan in full view of his entire family, his teacher Mr Marcantonio and even the full congregation of Ignatius chapel, due to an unfortunate incident with a poorly fitting cassock as altar boy.

Eventually, he finds himself and goes off to university, rather than the seminary. Confessions of his adventures with 'flame-haired triplets' give Father Ignatius quite a shock as the curtain falls.

Why it's a great play

A play from the Oran Mor PPP stable, the script calls for two highly versatile actors, able to portray eight characters between them with rapid costume changes in full view of the audience. The third actor, Kevin, is onstage for the duration and involved in almost every interaction, so it is a challenge for all three actors.

The script is beautifully self-aware, down to the wonderful scene where Granny asks Granddad to speak to their son, Ignatius. The realisation from the actor who is expected to play both parts simultaneously was and is a delight.

I think everyone – whether they have been a teenaged boy or not – can relate to Kevin and his problems. The script is simply a joy.

It moves quickly with great spoken and visual humour. Lots of opportunities for the cast to play many different roles and inventiveness in different scenes and settings. I saw it performed by Stromness Drama Club and it was a fabulous production with the three actors brilliantly suited to the different roles. I would really love to see this play again.

Play	**13 Benching**
Playwright	Matt Adie
Cast	1M, 2F

What it's about

With a title referencing the modern dating behaviour of keeping someone as a backup option, messaging them just enough so they think there's interest, without actually committing to them, we meet Pam and Norman, a middle-aged couple sitting on a bench on the way home from shopping. A row ensues, Pam leaves. Then in comes the 14-year old girl supposedly meeting her date, only she's pretending to be sixteen. She reveals that her date is 26 and a mortified Norman encourages her to go home. The set-up and staging are so simple but the ending is a chef's kiss. A superb piece of writing.

Why it's a great play

The staging is so simple – a park bench – but it's the ideas in the play and the superb rug-pull ending that audiences love. The script is witty and the three characters are all juicy roles. A fabulous piece for any group (especially if they don't want to transport a cumbersome set round the festival circuit...)

Play	**14 The Zoo Story**
Playwright	Edward Albee
Cast	2M

What it's about

To escape his wife, two daughters and two parakeets Peter sits on a bench in Central Park, reading and thinking. Jerry joins him, having just been to the zoo. He draws the unwilling Peter into conversation and extracts information from him. In return Jerry supplies Peter with a curious medley of information about his wanderings in New York. The outcome of the meeting is a willing death for one of them.

Why it's a great play

This play presents a challenge for both director and cast:

For the cast – Jerry requires a tour de force performance, driving most of the action through his extravagant descriptions of his life. In contrast, Peter requires a masterclass in stillness and reaction. Working together, the pair need to create tension for the final outcome to shock but also make you feel sympathy for both characters.

For directors – pacing is crucial, especially in festival environments; this play has the potential to overrun if it is not disciplined, focused and expertly paced.

From experience, many will say they don't like this play; however, do it right and you have the ability to change people's perceptions of a truly wonderful play.

Play	**15 The Orchestra**
Playwright	Jean Anouilh (trans. Miriam John)
Cast	6F, 1M

What it's about

Set in a small tacky café or Brasserie in post war France. While paying cheerful background music for indifferent café patrons, the musicians' gossip, argue. Boast and reveal deep personal jealousies.

Bitter amorous entanglements, and petty grievances bubble just beneath their polite placid exterior performance.

The play satirises human vulnerability, the corruption of relationships, petty rivalries and the tragicomic disconnect between art performance and real life despair

Why it's a great play

It needs great direction as the Orchestra obviously sits most of the time, so you need imaginative direction, so it does not get boring and static. The tension builds to an explosive and absurd moment when a member retreats to the toilet and shoots herself – yet the musicians continue to play their upbeat tunes regardless.

It needs careful miming to music unless you can get actual actors that play instruments.

Play	**16 A Galway Girl**
Playwright	Geraldine Aron
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

The play takes us through the marriage of a couple from a shaky beginning through a troubled middle to an accepting end. The couple rarely speak to one another as they recount their version of different incidents through their life together. As the play progresses the actors age before the audience's eyes.

Why it's a great play

The authenticity of the dialogue and the narrating of the different events provide us with not only the story of the couple but of their family and other people around them. There are many poignant moments as well as excitement and humour which brings tensions to the piece. A challenging piece for both actors who are tasked with portraying a whole range of emotions.

Play	**17 The Donahue Sisters**
Playwright	Geraldine Aron
Cast	3F

What it's about

The Donahue Sisters is a dark one-act play, first produced in 1990.

Three sisters—Annie, Rosie and Dunya—gather in the attic of their childhood home in Ireland. Their conversation about their disappointing adult lives gradually gives way to a disturbing ritual: they re-enact a violent incident from their childhood. The familiar family dialogue shifts into something sinister, with the three women speaking and moving together to portray a young boy.

Why it's a great play

It has dark humour, psychological drama and stylised ensemble playing.

It offers three substantial female roles and a striking change from naturalistic acting to tightly coordinated physical performance.

Play	**18 Absurd Person Singular** (Act 2)
Playwright	Alan Ayckbourn
Cast	3M, 3F

What it's about

Each act takes place at Christmas at one of the couples homes. Each act stands alone and as a one act play I feel act 2 is the best suited for a festival. Set in the kitchen of Geoffrey & Eva the latter who repeatedly tries to kill herself as the other characters prevent her doing so.

Why it's a great play

The is a great fun play, but don't be mistaken thinking it is just for laughs. Full kitchen is required with strong acting and pace required, very worthwhile giving this a look and in the right hands could be very enjoyable and successful

Play	**19 The 39 Steps** (Abridged)
Playwright	Patrick Barlow
Cast	1M, 1F, plus 2 (M or F)

What it's about

An hilarious spoof of the 1935 Alfred Hitchcock film. Richard Hannay, a bored London gentleman is wrongly accused of murder. He flees to Scotland in an endeavour to clear his name and break an international spy ring. The small cast of just four actors play over a hundred different characters!

Why it's a great play

If your cast are up for the challenge of having the physical stamina, comedic timing and quick change skills, then this is the play for you. The setting can be minimal with inventive use of props to create everything from a London flat, the Scottish Highlands, and even a speeding Steam train!

Play	**20 Say Something Happened**
Playwright	Alan Bennett
Cast	1M, 2F (older couple plus young woman)

What it's about

An eager young social worker is sent by the Council to ensure that an older couple are safe. She needs the security of her notes. The older couple complain about the many things about modern life that they do not like. As they reveal more about their lives – in particular a very poignant incident – the social worker finds it difficult to control the situation. The play ends on an amazing twist!

Why it's a great play

One of my favourite plays because, like all of Bennett's writing, he reflects the loneliness of the individual against the patronising 'do good' institutions. There are moments of humour, familiar complaints an audience to which an audience would relate and a great deal of sadness behind the seeming simple conversation. Each character is fully drawn and different.

Play	**21 A Super Happy Story (about feeling super sad)**
Playwright	Jon Brittain & Mathew Floyd Jones
Cast	1F, 1M plus 3 or more ensemble parts

What it's about

A surprisingly upbeat play about a serious and timely subject.

Why it's a great play

Plenty of opportunity for group improvisation and creativity which also features moments of reflection and music.

Play	**22 Jock and Blind Mary**
Playwright	George Mackay Brown
Cast	1M, 1F plus chorus to play other parts as desired.

What it's about

Set in George Mackay Brown's typical Golden Age of Orkney history, Jock and Blind Mary sees a pair of tinkers setting out from Stromness to make the pilgrimage to Birsay, where the body of Earl Magnus has been buried. Word of miracles has made it to Jock's ears. He wants Mary's blindness to be cured by the martyred Earl.

The play doesn't really exist in a definitive version but can be extrapolated from two versions from GMB's prose writing: *An Orkney Tapestry* and his second novel, *Magnus*.

The play portrays the power of love and faith; Jock's devotion for Mary and his faith in the powers of Magnus, the not-yet-saint, are repaid with Mary's sight being restored and her taking herself off in search of her breakfast.

Why it's a great play

George Mackay Brown's language is the language of the poet, even when it is put into the mouths of tinkers, crofters and fishermen. The poetry, particularly of Jock's prayer to Magnus asking for Mary's sight to be restored, is beautiful.

The play specifies no staging, so allows for a design team with a great imagination to have endless fun in suggesting the many locations and changing terrain and light as this harvest day passes from dawn to nighttime.

GMB's plays are often criticised for lacking interaction between the characters, but this one has more naturalistic dialogue in spite of the strongly poetic nature of the language.

Play	**23 The Slab Boys**
Playwright	John Byrne
Cast	6M, 2F

What it's about

Set in the slab room of A F Stobo Carpet Manufacturers in Paisley the slab boys job is to grind up paint for carpet designers. Instead of working hard the boys spend their time clowning around harassing office mates, Phil has his heart set on going to Art School, Spanky dreams of going to USA to be the next Elvis and Hector dreams of a romance with Lucille from the Mill room

Why it's a great play

Although this is a full length play a one act version is available and was performed in the late 80's so permission to cut must be available. This is an extremely funny play but is also very poignant. Needs a very messy paint splattered set great parts for all the cast worth a read.

Play	**24 Can You Hear the Music?**
Playwright	David Campton
Cast	6 people, either sex, but works better when all are the same sex

What it's about

Everyone has their dream, and this is no exception for the six mice living in the loft. Their dreams are conjured up by music as each hears a different tune played by an invisible piper. Each has to answer his call until only Tattymouse, who is completely deaf, is left. A highly original and thought-provoking play.

Why it's a great play

We used to see this play regularly on the circuit, but it has virtually disappeared.

It is an ideal youth play as well as adult. There are huge opportunities for interesting costume and set. It has a slightly mystical feel to it, but there are plenty of chances for some gentle comedy. There is also a chance to highlight the ensemble and team work.

A real audience pleaser when done well.

Play	**25 The Cagebirds**
Playwright	David Campton
Cast	8 people, normally women but can by done with 8 men.

What it's about

The Cagebirds is an allegorical one act play which explores the themes of oppression and human behaviour. The characters in the play, are as the title suggests, caged birds. However, these birds reflect aspects of human behaviour and it is never clear whether they are actually birds or humans. They are controlled by their oppressor, The Mistress. Watch as their bizarre characters unfold, and then how their deluded inner worlds are threatened with the entrance of 'The Wild One', their newest cage companion.

Why it's a great play

Campton's play presents a poignant exploration of freedom and oppression considering what happens when one individual attempts to initiate change.

It is an ideal youth play as well as adult. It offers a choice of various costume opportunities and gives the challenge to each cagebird to establish its character. The ending should be powerful and shocking.

Play	**26 Getting and Spending**
Playwright	David Campton
Cast	2M, 2F

What it's about

An ambitious young couple with hopes of raising a large family and getting on in the world move into a new house. However as everyday chores connected with the house are dealt with the necessary steps that would bring promotion and fill the nursery have to be postponed. The couple gets older, repairing windows, stopping leaks etc and finally are defeated by the house.

Why it's a great play

This play challenges both actors and directors to develop physically both the age of the actors and the improvement of the stage set.

Have seen it done only a couple of times over the years and I feel it needs resurrected. It is a typical Campton play which is thought provoking and yet has glimpses of humour. A great challenge for two actors to show their ability to age on stage.

Play	**27 Us and Them**
Playwright	David Campton
Cast	Anything from 7 to 100

What it's about

Two parties enter from opposing sides (East and West) they grow suspicious of each other. They eventually build a wall between each other but the suspicions continue to grow and the wall is eventually broken down. All the while a recorder is writing everything down hoping that people will learn from history.

Why it's a great play

This is a brilliant play for youth or adult groups. The staging is as simple as it gets. The script encourages the director and the cast to develop characters from a blank canvas, which is just part of the challenge. It is a deceptively simple script which rewards an in-depth analysis.

Play	**28 Count Albany**
Playwright	Donald Carswell
Cast	5M, 1F

What it's about

This play contains a magnificent character part for the young pretender, "Bonnie Prince Charlie", in his later life, disheartened, poverty-stricken and drink-sodden. He and his mistress, the famous Clementina, arrive in Rome to find the Old Pretender on the point of death. He is received by his brother, the Cardinal York, and his Scots chaplain. When the death of James is announced Charles says he has forgotten how to be a king. Most romantic and very well written.

Why it's a great play

Pantheon's production of this play in the late 1980s has stuck in the memory ever since. It was a very stylish production with extremely high production values. It lost, somewhat controversially, to a production of "Can You Hear the Music" at a Scottish Final in Stirling and, although an adjudicator explained how the scoring rules produced the correct result, it was this play that lingered in our minds.

Play	**29 But Yesterday**
Playwright	Jimmie Chinn
Cast	2M, 3F plus 2 non-speaking male parts

What it's about

Prior to leaving on a journey from which he will not return, Robert comes back to the vicarage garden of his childhood and relives moments from the past, which become mingled with the present. We see his gradual desertion from his childhood beliefs and hopes and his journey to find honesty and truth. Two silent men escort away to a new life leaving behind a hurt and bewildered family.

The period is the fifties -and before.

Why it's a great play

Jimmie Chinn has written several popular short plays with a gentle comic style. This play is totally different. There is something strangely haunting and enigmatic about the situation. Robert is caught between his yearning for the past, typified by this quintessential sunlit English garden, and a darker future hinted at by the presence of the two silent watchful men.

Evocative sound and light can add much to the mysterious atmosphere of this intriguing short play.

Play	**30 In Room Five Hundred and Four**
Playwright	Jimmie Chin
Cast	1M, 1F, plus can be a non-speaking second woman

What it's about

Sitting in a seedy seaside boarding house room, older Edie reminisces over the past. Out of her memory step a younger Edie and Harry on their wedding day in February 1942. Together, the young couple discover life's big truths in the span of one night. The day after, Harry will leave for the front, never to return.

Why it's a great play

This play has a great deal of nostalgia and an undercurrent of sadness. The uncertainties of their relationship mirror the wider unpredictability and turmoil of the 40s - producing a finely-balanced portrait of that period. Needs period costume and hair styles. Audiences enjoy the look into the past and the picture of uncertainty of life in times of war, as well as the innocence of youth.

Play	**31 Top Girls** (Act One)
Playwright	Caryl Churchill
Cast	6F

What it's about

Act One of this landmark play features a surreal dinner party hosted by Marlene, who has recently been promoted to managing director of the 'Top Girls' employment agency. Her guests are all somehow time-warped, as they are a collection of historical, literary, and mythical women. During the dinner party the women talk over each other, as they share stories of subjugation, personal trauma and sacrifice.

Why it's a great play

While the play explores themes of female ambition and what it truly means for a woman to 'succeed' in patriarchal world, it gives the actresses wonderful scope to create strong characterisations. The overlapping dialogue is both innovative and challenging.

Play	**32 A Thousand Deaths**
Playwright	John Clancy
Cast	2M,1F (4 minor female parts – can be played by same actress)

What it's about

At the funeral of a mother the prodigal daughter returns and faces the criticism of the family. In the midst of the resentment of a brother left with responsibilities, family secrets are revealed.

Why it's a great play

Written in 2022 the play is an entrant in the All-Ireland Playwriting competition. It is not place specific – the story of any family.

The writing and the dialogue are tight; the relationships and the confrontations within the family are well drawn. The characters and the issues raised are familiar to a current day audience. And there are many opportunities for humour.

(This play – and many others – are available and can be requested on-line from the library at dli.ie For almost 10 years dli has been the agent for the annual top plays from the Playwriting Competition)

Play	**33 Down Came the Rain**
Playwright	Burgess Clark
Cast	2M

What it's about

A touching sad and ultimately hopeful exploration of two vastly different brothers and how they navigate the delicacy of family and truth.

Why it's a great play

A deeply moving and challenging piece for two young actors. The action of the piece will push them emotionally but prove to be ultimately very rewarding if they nail the shifting sentiments.

Play	**34 Sunset Song** Act 2
Playwright	Adapted by Alastair Cording
Cast	Numerous – Community piece

What it's about

Based on Lewis Grassic Gibbon's beautiful novel Sunset Song it tells the story of Scottish heroine Chris Guthrie and her life in the farming community in the Mearns in the Northeast during the period of the World War I. Although it is a full-length play either Act 1 or Act 2 can stand alone.

Why it's a great play

This is a fabulous community drama piece which can be performed by multiple actors or an element of multi roles. There are many strong male and female characters with opportunity for other cast members to carry the narrative if desired. It tells a beautiful story moving through timelines and builds to a very poignant conclusion. I was so lucky to be part of a large community team who performed this play at the Scottish Final in Eden Court Theatre in the Millenium year. I would dearly love to see another large community group take on this excellent piece of theatre.

Play	**35 Hewers of Coal**
Playwright	Joe Corrie
Cast	5M, but can be played by mixed or 5F

What it's about

Set deep underground inside the Glendale colliery after a rockfall and mine collapse.

The cast of four men and a boy are entombed at the coal face. As they are trapped for five days the play serves as a psychological study of how human being cope with life threatening pressure.

Why it's a great play

I hope it is time for a Corrie revival as in both theme and structure I feel his plays have real resonance for Scottish performers and audiences.

Only a couple of years ago I adjudicated an excellent production by an all female youth group. The language is muscular lowland Scots and characterisation is well delineated. The emotional interplay between characters is something that will bring rewards to actors across a range of experience.

Play	**36 Fumed Oak**
Playwright	Noel Coward
Cast	1M, 3F

What it's about

The play set in a lower middle-class household the play set during the 1930 s centres on the henpecked husband Henry Gow who is surrounded by three generations of nagging women. Scene one highlights his human bondage to the three women.

In scene two Henry throws off the shackles and tells the women exactly what he thinks of them and heads off to a liberated freedom.

Why it's a great play

Coward's range as a writer focuses on this working-class comic technique.

The characters are stereotypical but I feel lots of fun can be had if the tempo of the piece is established and sustained. The role reversal of scene 2 shows the worm turning to real comic effect. A nice example of Male Liberation!

In addition, the play is framed within a traditional theatre set which is a nice contrast to the present tendency of a bare stage with two chairs!

The setting and stage dressing create lots of opportunity for stage business.

Play	**37 Goodbye Charles**
Playwright	Gabriel Benjamin Davis
Cast	2M, 3F

What it's about

We're on a wild goose chase here in a script that's somehow inexplicably merged with a shaggy dog story, as a woman's husband goes missing after she refuses to grant him a divorce, prompting her to embark on a journey to try and find out what happened to him. Jill is finally able to say goodbye to Charles in the end, after a series of encounters with a range of truly weird and wonderful characters. Davis has a reputation as a monologue writer and there are indeed a number of juicy monologues in this piece.

Why it's a great play

This is theatre as freeform jazz, devoid of stage directions and open to all kinds of staging shenanigans. Imaginative directors will have a field day with this piece. As will actors, with opportunities for doubling and great comedy.

Play	**38 Storytelling**
Playwright	Oliver Emanuel
Cast	Cast of 2 (male or female)

What it's about

This play is about the power of stories and how they can help to overcome the darkest moments in life.

Two people are trying to tell the story of Robert, who is not sure if he is in charge of his own narrative, or whether he even wants to be in the story of his life anymore.

The play is ultimately about being able to overcome our lowest moments in life by telling stories, and how they might possibly save us all.

Why it's a great play

Having directed this play, I know the challenges that it poses a group. However, it offers you complete freedom to take the script and make it your own, from how you cast it to how it is staged. With no stage directions and the playwright instructing you to do it in a way that works for you, many might see this as daunting or a step too far but the pay-off of building this piece from the ground up can be remarkable.

With moments switching from humour to heartfelt drama, it allows a cast to really flex their theatrical muscles.

Play	**39 Better Days, Better Knights**
Playwright	Stanley Eveling
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

A knight, fully dressed in armour is having a conversation with a water sprite about whether he will marry her and enable her to become human, as Water Sprites can't feel emotions like grief and laughter. While they discuss the pros and cons of the idea he has to go and fight, what is probably, the last dragon on earth. The knight brings the Water Sprite the head of the Dragon, which is the knightly thing to do. Through the aftermath of this "heroic" action she begins to feel grief and becomes human.

Why it's a great play

This play is so beautifully quirky and funny but also packs a big emotional punch. This is a short play that takes on the complicated discussions and ideas of what it means to be human, to understand people, to protect the world around us, and identify what the real dangers are and protect the beauty of what we have around us. The set up, the writing and the interplay all enhance the humour and pathos of the characters, their relationship status, and how we have built a society with rules of social engagement and knowing one's place.

Play	**40 The Hitch-Hiker**
Playwright	Lucille Fletcher
Cast	4M, 8F, (opportunity for doubling up)

What it's about

When Ronald Adams begins a cross-country drive, he spots a strange hitchhiker on the Brooklyn Bridge. As Adams travels west, the exact same man inexplicably appears ahead of him on every desolate stretch of highway, silently beckoning. Terrorised by this impossible pursuit, Adams is driven to the brink of insanity. He stops to call his mother for comfort, only to learn that his mother is hospitalised following a nervous breakdown brought on by her son's death—revealing that Adams died in a car crash on the Brooklyn Bridge before his journey even started.

Why it's a great play

This is written as a radio play so therefore requires imaginative staging to take something meant to be heard and transform it into something exciting to watch. Radio plays are seldom done on the festival circuit, likely because of the challenge they pose in successfully bringing it to the stage, but this allows a director and their cast to be truly creative. The play requires a strong, grounded performance from the actor playing Ronald Adams to make his descent towards insanity believable. But it also offers great ensemble playing opportunities for the rest of the cast, with the possibility of doubling up to showcase groups abilities to successfully portray multiple roles.

Play	**41 Chinamen (from The Two of Us)**
Playwright	Michael Frayn
Cast	1M, 1F, playing five characters

What it's about

Jo has invited Bee and her new hippy boyfriend (Alex)to dinner. Stephen has invited Bee's deserted husband (Barney). The dinner is manoeuvred so that Bee and Barney never actually meet.

Why it's a great play

It's a grand vehicle to show off the versatility of the two actors, and it's very, very funny.

Play	**42 A Brief Period of Rejoicing**
Playwright	Harry Glass
Cast	2M, 2F

What it's about

The action takes place on 6th August 1945, the day Hiroshima was atom-bombed. Alex's experiences as a prisoner of war in Germany have left him troubled and emotionally unprepared to deal with the domestic problems he has had to confront on his return to civilian life. While the war continues in the Far east, Maisie is concerned for the safety of her American serviceman fiancé and she soon loses sympathy for Alex. Neil eventually realises that Alex's depression has deeper roots than was originally suspected while Maggie remains anxious for the unity of her family.

Why it's a great play

Harry Glass and I were on the same wavelength in 1997. I felt a need to tell my father's story before and after the Second World War in "The Dancing Fusilier" and Harry produced this lovely vignette of how the war had affected the residents of a Glasgow tenement. The story of people's experiences and how they caused lasting damage long after the ceasefires, were both engaging on a domestic level and at the same time offering a more universal commentary.

Play	**43 Shakers**
Playwright	John Godber & Jane Thornton
Cast	4F

What it's about

Shakers is a fast, funny, sharply observed play by John Godber and Jane Thornton, set in a not-so-chic bar during the mid-1980s. It follows four waitresses —as they battle their way through a typical night shift, dealing with demanding customers, sexist bosses, and the pressures of unemployment.

The play is episodal and is performed by four women who play every character, switching rapidly between waitresses, customers, shopgirls, and men. This creates a high-energy, physical, comic style that requires versatility, and strong ensemble work.

Why it's a great play

Although Shakers is very similar in style to Bouncers, it is not as well known — and this works in its favour. It is a character-switching comedy that Godber is famous for.

The play makes sharp social commentary on the lives of four young women living and working in a typical British city, but it weaves that commentary through the play's humour. This balance of sound observation and lively comedy makes Shakers both entertaining and meaningful, with excellent opportunities for ensemble performance.

Play	**44 A Collier's Tuesday Tea**
Playwright	Michael Green
Cast	3F, 9M

What it's about

This is a comedy from a compilation of plays called *'The Art of Course Acting'* and is an irreverent glance at the work of D.H. Lawrence It is of the genre where everything that can go wrong does deliberately go wrong, making it very funny indeed It combines the kitchen with the coal mine as the action is essentially a family tea in a mining village around 1910.

Why it's a great play

A Collier's Tuesday Tea is one of the best examples of "everything goes wrong style. It offers great opportunities for comedy actors to shine as the chaos unfolds.

The set needs real inventiveness — especially when the legs come off the table which is an immensely funny moment and leads to many more humorous situations. The variety of roles makes the piece lively and entertaining. A member of my own club once described it as one of the funniest plays she had ever seen.

It's a little gem, full of humour, good characters and delightful mishaps.

Play	**45 The Passing Place**
Playwright	Issy Grieve
Cast	4F

What it's about

It tells the story of the last part of a sponsored walk, being undertaken by four women in memory of one of their friends which has upset the whole dynamics of the group and things that have been left unsaid for a long time finally get an airing.

Why it's a great play

This is a heartwarming depiction of the relationships forged by women over a long period of time who are struggling to come to terms with the loss of one of their gang.

The characters are all very different providing lots of opportunities for the actors and has a good mix of comedy and tragedy with everything in between. It is very relatable.

Written by a long-term member of SCDA, it would be good for this play to get a wider audience.

Play	**46 Little Dolls**
Playwright	Nancy Harris
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

A psychiatrist sits with a patient, the stage in complete darkness and we listen and squirm as the horror unfolds. Harris builds tension via the brief moments where a small amount of light occurs, as we realise all the psychiatrist's talk of dolls is not helping but infantilising. What begins as a reasonable medical exercise to help someone overcome their fear of darkness becomes incipient dread, as we come to realise the sadistic pleasure John is taking from keeping Vicky, literally, in the dark. A short piece but Harris knows how to build tension to its terrible conclusion.

Why it's a great play

The piece reminds us that two people just talking and, crucially, not talking, can be the basis for superb drama. The challenge here for a director is to ensure the piece is indeed in pitch darkness. The atmosphere it evokes becomes terrifying very quickly, especially in the silences where the sense of dread builds. Also, this will probably be the simplest lighting tech a group will ever have.

Play	**47 Porch**
Playwright	Jack Heifner
Cast	2F

What it's about

Set on a dilapidated porch in Texas, the mother and daughter discuss the mundane day to day emptiness of their lives and the frustrations of their relationship.

Why it's a great play

Two great character roles for women and a great challenge for the Director as regards the set itself and subsequent restricted area of movement. One actor is wheelchair bound and the other sits and reads for an extended period of time! I was lucky to be one of the two women to perform this play at the first Scottish Final in Orkney and I would love to see another company tackle this challenging piece.

Play	**48 Untucked**
Playwright	Teresa Hennessy
Cast	2M

What it's about

Two drag artistes, Irma Geddon and Dee Light, share a dressing room for the first time. One, an old hand; the other, a newcomer to the profession. Will the old-timer give the benefit of his experience, or jeopardise the fledgling's first flight into the unknown? A bitter-sweet comedy of trust and jealousy; frocks and frills. It needs two strong characters, one of who must have a decent singing voice.

Why it's a great play

I have seen this beautifully-written show three times with different casts. It is full of humour, and indeed some pathos, and each time was greatly appreciated by the audience. It takes us into a world which is new to many of us, with a huge amount of sympathy and understanding. Really moving in parts.

Play	**49 A Perfect Child**
Playwright	Lewis Hetherington
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

Set in the near future, it focuses on childless couple Vincent and Elizabeth who grasp the opportunity offered by advances in medical science by agreeing to become guinea pigs for a pioneering new treatment that will allow them to draw up a checklist for their perfect child. The play takes us through from the couple making the choices about their child to various ages and stages in their development and life and how this impacts on the couple.

Why it's a great play

Originally written as part of the Play, Pie and A pint season in 2009, the play tackles a very current and thorny issue around how we use the advances in medical and gene technology responsible. The production requirements are quite simple, but you can create as complicated and technically involved production as you wish, as the play is about choices and the impacts of these choices. The play is written in short scenes, is always thoughtful, humorous and never too heavy with the dialogue used quite sparingly in parts but always volumes of emotion in the medical setting. The scale of ambition around the theme is well handled and feels even more urgent now considering where we with our relationships with technology – medical, robotics and artificial intelligence. Great acting, design, technical and directing challenge for a simple concept – what would you do if you could choose every part of your child before it is born.

Play	**50 A Handbag**
Playwright	Anthony Horowitz
Cast	2F, 2M young cast

What it's about

A group of people are rehearsing *The Importance of Being Earnest* but, as they attempt to perform a play which is alien to them, it becomes apparent that their surroundings are not normal and as tensions mount, each young person's story starts to emerge.

Why it's a great play

An excellent piece which takes the audience on an emotional journey. Many opportunities for discussion amongst the cast during the rehearsal process which should help them to try to understand the characters and the situation and make them more accessible and sympathetic to the audience.

Play	**51 A Bench at the Edge**
Playwright	Luigi Jannuzzi
Cast	2M

What it's about

This is in the style of theatre of the absurd. A person sits on a bench at the edge of an abyss. Along comes a second person contemplating 'a heroic dive'

What is the abyss and what are these people doing there. Comic and terrifying concepts mix with these two lives that are drawn to the edge and the conclusion live is precious.

Why it's a great play

The dialogue is thrilled with humour and empathy for the human condition The author manages to combine humour absurd comedy with serious themes of love truth and the need to rise above it. The difficulty here is getting the perception of the EDGE correct and the two actors have to make you believe there is a long way down over it.

Play	**52 The Laramie Project**
Playwright	Moises Kaufman and members of Tectonic Theater Company
Cast	Flexible, playing many roles

What it's about

In October 1998, student Matthew Shepard, went out for a drink in a bar in Laramie where he was studying. He was abducted from the bar by two young men, taken to the outskirts of the town, where he was tied to a fence, pistol-whipped and left to die. This is a verbatim play, built from transcripts of interviews by actors from the Tectonic Theater Co., who interviewed people who were involved – or simply interested in – the case.

It paints a very moving picture of a community reeling from an act of mindless violence carried out in its midst and coming to terms with what it means for them.

Why it's a great play

This play managed to rid a generation of young Stromness people of mindless homophobia. I had a group in Aberdeen to attend the Divs, and heard countless times "That's so gay" being used as slur amongst them. To counter this, ten of our young people, five boys and five girls, took on an abridgement of the play for the one-act festival in 2005. They were awed by the story and soon learned that "That's so gay" can very quickly desensitise people to the horrors of homophobia.

One of the boys is now a colleague, who introduced me to his fiancée as 'the man who largely made me who I am today'. I'd like to think this play was part of his development.

Play	**53 Melody**
Playwright	Deirdre Kinahan
Cast	1M, 1F (aged 40s/50s)

What it's about

Two lonely people – a bachelor and a widow – meet on a park bench. They both have an interest in classical music, and preparing interesting lunches. They look forward to having lunch together and recounting what they have done at the weekend. But there is a surprising twist which will test their growing interest in each other.

(While there are references to specific places in Ireland/Dublin they can be easily replaced with Scottish references, with permission from the author)

Why it's a great play

A great vehicle for both actors to portray the shyness of the first meet and the growing confidence. There are good opportunities for gentle comedy, for musical background. The play gives directors the chance to be creative with a simple set.

Play	**54 The Aviary**
Playwright	Jamie Lakritz
Cast	2M, 3F

What it's about

With an almighty nod to Dylan Thomas, Lakritz creates a pastiche of modern-day groupthink, a post-Orwellian birdcage whose picaresque punkish characters throw out literary allusions with abandon as they struggle to be. Or not to be. They don't just cite Shakespeare though, they live it: 'There's marmalade. That's for beauty' says Aurora, in a world where nobody and nothing can be wrong. The narration is non-stop as the story flies along, even as the birds themselves are trapped.

Why it's a great play

This is a verbally and visually stunning script. The demands it puts on an imaginative director are through the roof but in the hands of a top table theatre group the sky's the limit to how this can be presented. Lakritz's star as a writer is on the ascendant.

Play	**55 Matching Cummerbund**
Playwright	Gerry McCartan
Cast	1M, 3F

What it's about

This not so well-known comedic play by Scottish playwright and author, Gerry McCartan revolves around the frantic search for a misplaced, perfectly coordinated cummerbund. The farcical events that follow turns an ultimately minor incident into a major disaster with endless visual and verbal gems delivered throughout.

Why it's a great play

I remember seeing this at a District festival around 2009 and laughing until it hurt all the way through. I was served up a mixture of farce, eccentricity and sharp banter, mixed with the comedy of the absurd, which created a truly magical and memorable evening. One of my top 5 comedy plays, to date. It's a play that should be aired more often by a group who, not only want to have fun rehearsing, but also giving an audience a unique experience.

Play	**56 The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil**
Playwright	John McGrath
Cast	Flexible with potential for up to 30 different characters

What it's about

It is all about the history of land use and economic change in the Scottish Highlands from the clearances to the oil boom of the 70s. It is a series of sketches, songs and narration. It is both hilarious and extremely thought provoking.

Why it's a great play

Although a full length play it has been done abridged many times before (including occasionally for festivals). Don't let that challenge put you off, taking a full length play and adapting it for our festivals is a challenge more teams should consider. It can be extremely rewarding with so much potential and Cheviot is one of the best plays it is possible to do this with. It is full of theatricality and scope for invention.

Play	**57 It's Behind You!**
Playwright	Alan McHugh
Cast	2M

What it's about

Two pantomime actors in the dressing room. The play starts with competitive joking exchanges and develops into a more serious exposure of their relationship as father and son.

Why it's a great play

A great opportunity for two actors to have fun but also a huge challenge in comic timing. The 'patter' between the two has to be timed to perfection and they need to fully understand each other's speech and physical rhythms inside out.

Play	**58 The Incredible Adventures of See Thru Sam**
Playwright	Johnny McKnight
Cast	1F, 1M plus 1 Male Teenager playing age

What it's about

Sam McTannan is just a typical 15-year-old, with one exception. Sam is a Superhero! He can literally turn See-Thru when it suits him, only today something is wrong. In Superhero comics they would call it a blip. Sam's powers are failing him and the people he doesn't want to see him start paying a little bit too much attention. The story of an ordinary boy with an extraordinary life. A heartbreaking, life affirming comedy about life, love and being a total loser.

Why it's a great play

Johnny McKnight describes this play as part naturalistic, part comic book and part melodramatic. It is a celebration of the teenage fantasy of being a superhero with touching moments as Sam realises that his way of processing events that happen to him are different from others. He faces huge problems with the wit and pathos that we are used to seeing in Johnny McKnight's writing.

As well as providing the actors with some great characters to get their teeth into, this show benefits from a whole team approach with the potential integration of video and clever multi-use props.

Play	**59 Clara**
Playwright	Arthur Miller
Cast	3M, 1F

What it's about

Part of a double bill of short plays by Artur Miller called "Danger Memory" Clara explore the danger that holding onto or holding back memories can have. Clara Kroll has been found dead, and Detective Fine has to piece together the clues and the information contained in her father's head to identify the killer. Most of the play is the conversation between Fine and Mr. Kroll as the detective prods and pushes the other man to dig into his memories and see if there are clues hidden there. However, he meets residence from Mr Kroll to do delve too far as Kroll's mind starts to play games.

Why it's a great play

The play has all the hallmarks of an Arthur Miller play, exploring big subjects with very real people. The play slowly peels away layer upon layer of conversation and information, as the two main characters spar and talk. With not a lot of set required and places of shadow suggested to mirror the mind and memories it makes for a very atmospheric play that challenges performers and audiences, and takes them on a slightly uncomfortable, but dramatic journey. There is also a flexibility in the staging to include the two other characters more in the action, if not the dialogue.

Play	**60 Elegy for a Lady**
Playwright	Arthur Miller
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

An older man walks into a woman's boutique looking for a gift for his dying lover. As he and the female shop owner seek the perfect gift and reject ones that could mean more than they are meant to, an understanding and connection is made. Their conversation becomes more intense as the search for the right token of love becomes more urgent.

Why it's a great play

The simplicity of the set-up, which is stuffed full of emotion & desire gives the play, right from the start, a gentle intensity which never lets up throughout. The simple language used holds so much meaning and subtext, (from a master playwright) that you are drawn into this seemingly innocent conversation, played out with silences, subtle looks and gentle touches until you are allowed to breathe again as the man leaves. A great love story, but who are the main protagonists?

Play	**61 Some kind of Love Story**
Playwright	Arthur Miller
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

Part of a double bill of short plays by Artur Miller called Two-Way Mirror. A detective, Tom O'Toole (think 40s/50s US type) pays a visit to a woman (Angela), who he loved once, because he believes she holds the key to a 5-year-old murder. Whether she has the information, the evidence he requires, we never find out, but in their fast-paced back and forth we find out more about them and their need for each other.

Why it's a great play

From the start there is a sense of desperation hanging in the air and the destructive and unhealthy need one has for the other. Past and present are mixed up beautifully with well-drawn characters in a high pressure and toxic situation creating a dialogue that never slows. The setting is simple enough, dominated by Angela's bed and cluttered life and she holds this information as a tool to keep Tom calling. As you'd expect, deep, emotional and challenging roles are created, in this powerful piece about memory, real and unreal, love and desire, secrets and honesty.

Play	**62 Marble Arch**
Playwright	John Mortimer
Cast	2M, 2F

What it's about

This is a short, gentle farce from John Mortimer's *Come As You Are* collection

It centres on an ageing star who thinks that her wealthy, married, upper class lover, who visits her once a week, has died in her bathroom — and she must somehow dispose of the body without destroying her reputation. The play unfolds mixing panic and absurdity as she attempts to manage the situation while maintaining her glamour and dignity.

Why it's a great play

Marble Arch is a gentle farce, and is centred on an ageing film star, and as such offers superb opportunity for an older comedy actress to shine. The four parts all very distinct, giving the actors good characters to work on.

The set allows for real inventiveness.

Marble Arch is great fun both to play in and to watch and is thoroughly entertaining.

Play	**63 Scarecrow**
Playwright	Don Nigro
Cast	2F, 1M

What it's about

A lonely girl lives with her eccentric mother in an old farmhouse on the edge of a cornfield. She meets a strange man under a tree by a creek and is led into a web of lust and betrayal. Scarecrows are supposed to frighten crows but this scarecrow Is something very different

Why it's a great play

Beneath what might be taken as a simple folk tale lies a strange and disturbing undercurrent of erotic emotion. There are three great parts with opportunities for the edgy relationships to be explored

The script suggested the setting should use just three chairs – but an imaginative director and set designer could open the piece out to give a more realistic scene which in turn would add much to the atmospheric and pastoral underlying poetry of this strangely haunting short play

Play	**64 Bedtime Story**
Playwright	Sean O'Casey
Cast	4M, 3F

What it's about

Set in a bachelor flat in Dublin the central character is John Jo Mulligan a clerk and a pillar of the church. The focus of the play is the remorse felt by John Jo after an unwanted night of passion with a woman named Angela Nightingale. His remorse is both religious and social as he tries to get rid of Angela before his roommate returns

When he is discovered by his landlady, things escalate. Angela then steals his wallet and umbrella leaving him in fear of reputational ruin and comic despair. The segue from comedy to farce is well modulated.

Why it's a great play

I think O'Casey offers a number of very well crafted one act plays that are presently ignored by drama groups.

All the resonances of his full-length dramas is given a comic , almost, farcical, twist in this play of innocence corrupted. The rhythm of the piece is well established at the outset and progresses in a hilarious way which will enchant an audience and offer excellent vocal and physical opportunities to the actors. I also like the focus of gender role reversal in this piece.

Play	**65 From Under the Bed**
Playwright	Seamus O'Rourke
Cast	2M (aged 60s/70s)

What it's about

Two elderly bachelor brothers have lived their lives together letting the modern world go by and spending as little money as possible. A row about wasting electricity sets of arguments, memories, fears and resentments. Their histories and their uncertain futures gnaw at both of them.

Written by Seamus O'Rourke, a product of the amateur circuit himself (put his name into the search machine for poignancy and laughter) the play explores the loneliness of growing older.

Why it's a great play

There is a wonderful balance between the poignant and the humorous – one minute the audience will feel for their plight; the next they will be laughing out loud.

The strength of the play is that it deals effectively with a type of older person we have all come across in the country.

(While the play is set in county Leitrim the few references can be transposed to local geographies)

Play	**66 The Good & Faithful Servant**
Playwright	Joe Orton
Cast	3F, 3M plus small unspeaking group

What it's about

Factory worker George is about to retire after 50 years loyal service. The company send a smiling impersonal personnel officer to give him a broken toaster and a malfunctioning clock as a parting gift. On his final day he recognises Edith as a lover from many years past.

Why it's a great play

Most of Orton's plays were suffused with outrageous comedy and sexuality – but the tone here is very different. The humour is still here but the bite is more gentle. The central figure – which is said to be based on Orton's own father - is painted in well-observed brushstrokes so we get a compassionate touching portrait of little man unappreciated by a soulless institution. There are great parts for the other actors and many memorable lines, but all the performances must display that unique Orton style to make the script come alive. The play was written for television but creative directors and set designers can bring the several scenes alive on stage. As such it should appeal to a bold ambitious group. A very funny but quietly savage disturbing look at institutional agism.

Play	**67 Constellations**
Playwright	Nick Payne
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

Marianne is a bright quantum physicist, Roland, a grounded everyday beekeeper. The play cycles through limitless versions of their lives. We observe awkward first dates, romantic rejections, pure love, infidelity and sadly terminal illness and grief.

Why it's a great play

The play is an extraordinary piece of writing. Taking complex concepts such as quantum mechanics, and somehow deliver it through raw, intimate human emotion. The writer challenges the norm by using non-linear repeating vignettes. Each scene replays with subtle or drastic variations, exploring the infinite 'what if' possibilities of quantum multiverse theory. It can be staged very simply yet can be more powerful if creative light and sound are explored. It is a piece that remains long in the memory.

Play	**68 A Kind of Alaska**
Playwright	Harold Pinter
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

Deborah was a lively sixteen-year-old when she fell victim to sleeping sickness. Twenty nine years later, having been watched over throughout by the same doctor, she come to life and gradually tries to adjust to the world around her.

Why it's a great play

It's a very moving piece describing the return of Deborah from that strange no man's land between life and death which makes it a brilliant part for the actress concerned. Her plight is matched by that of her sister and brother in-law (the doctor) giving scope for some emotional performances in these supporting roles. Also, it should be easy to stage, as you could get by with just a bed and a couple of chairs.

Play	**69 Girls Like That**
Playwright	Evan Placey
Cast	Up to 24 females, but works with a much smaller cast

What it's about

It is about the pressures young people face today from technology and social media. Originally developed and written in 2013 (with young people) it is even more relevant today than it was then.

Why it's a great play

It is a brilliant play for youth groups looking to challenge themselves. It encourages groups to be theatrical and creative with their approach to every aspect of the play. It can be both funny and thought provoking. It deals with important issues and is sure to be a rewarding challenge which will leave a lasting impression on everyone involved.

Play	**70 The Daurk Assize**
Playwright	James Scotland
Cast	5M, 3F

What it's about

Mid 15th Century. A band of strolling players arrives in the town and sets up a temporary stage. They set up their own version of a court trial.

Because it is a morality play the trial they stage is a dark allegorical performance which seeks to test, judge and expose the sins and ethics of the townspeople watching them. The use of allegory in drama is something which permeates the genre.

Why it's a great play

When I started adjudicating over 50 years ago, James Scotland was one of the triumvirate of major Scottish playwrights, together with Agnes Adams and Joe Corrie. This play is very well structured and offers a range of acting opportunities to actors at different levels of experience. It also focus on the place of Scots language in theatre which is increasing in popularity.

Plot and character are clearly modulated in a way that flags how the text might be interpreted.

Play	**71 12hr. Life**
Playwright	Robert Scott
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

With nods to Coward's *Still Life* and the film based on it, *Brief Encounter*, the married Dylan and single Samantha, both in their own way unhappy, break free of their planned days. He by not going to a conference, she not visiting her sister. They embark on a railway adventure that no sooner reminds us that love is about connection before they separate, only for us to discover that Dylan's wife has been having an affair and he wonders what if…? Then the ending coda, two years later, which reveals he and Samantha get a second chance.

Why it's a great play

This is a smart two-hander that allows a lovely build in the relationship and chemistry between the two characters. The playwright ensures it's not just the words that matter in this unravelling courtship but the ebb and flow in their looks and glances via some perfectly positioned pauses. With the right team we won't just see them fall in love. We'll want them to.

Play	**72 Perfection City**
Playwright	David Shellan
Cast	4M (2 who are quite small)

What it's about

Homber and Deadbeat appear at first to be a music hall double act, but as the play develops we find they have much in common with the tramps in Becketts 'Waiting for Godo'. Homber is an idealist deadbeat the common man. Their world isn't perfect and though deadbeat is content with his lot he is prepared to be led by Hombre's greater vision.

Why it's a great play

I saw this at the Mitchell theatre and was captivated as soon as the curtain opened. Although its about 35 years since I saw it the memory of it is still firmly in my mind,. Set in American prairies it gives great scope for setting has spectacular lighting to convey desert landscapes. It calls for superb acting as there is little movement in the piece. Well worth a read.

Play	**73 The Real Inspector Hound**
Playwright	Tom Stoppard
Cast	3F, 5M

What it's about

A classic comedy, two theatre critics are watching a classic "whodunit" mystery commenting throughout on what they are watching with the typical pomposity of a critic. As the play goes on the critics find themselves drawn into the action and that begins to parallel the play that they have been watching.

Why it's a great play

It is a classic comedy filled with touches of farces and absurdism. Like any good comedy, it is also so much more than this. It is a perfect parody of the classic Agatha Christie plays which, thanks to Tom Stoppard's brilliant writing, is also thought provoking. It is brilliant fun for the cast and audiences alike.

Play	**74 MOT**
Playwright	Mike Tibbitts
Cast	1M, 1F

What it's about

A stranger visits a woman living alone in a remote cottage and turns out to be more than he appears.

Why it's a great play

Winner of SCDA Play on Words 2015 this play keeps you guessing right up until the end about what the whole story is.

The play takes place in one small cottage room but you soon realise that both of the people are a lot more than they at first seem. You are not quite sure if it is going to be a ghost story as there is something very chilling and, in the end, deadly.

A great play for 2 accomplished actors who, along with the director, can create the suspense and tension that keeps the audience gripped. Dramatic storytelling.

Play	**75 A Dog's Life**
Playwright	Pam Valentine
Cast	M4, F2 or M3, F3

What it's about

Four dogs lie in cages in an animal shelter. The play depicts the moment when a woman comes to the shelter and has to choose between the dogs – a choice that literally means life or death to the oldest, Ben

Why it's a great play

It's a grand vehicle to show off the talents of the four actors playing the dogs. It has plenty humorous moments which makes it's rather sad ending come as a surprise. It's also easy to stage – dog costumes are not required as the characteristics of the animals are recognisably human!

Play	**76 Ring Road**
Playwright	Anita Vettesse
Cast	1F, 1M

What it's about

Lisa is a busy 40-year-old teacher with a stale marriage and a husband who cannot have children. However, she still dreams of becoming a mother and having her own family.

Her solution, born of desperation, is to make an early-evening assignation, at a hotel on a ring-road, with her husband Paul's brother Mark, who she reckons is genetically close enough for any child he fathers to pass as Paul's – provided, of course, that Mark is willing to be her anonymous sperm donor.

Why it's a great play

Winner of the SCDA One Act Play Festival 2017.

There are so many aspects of this play that make it challenging. There is the physicality of the 'almost' sex scenes coupled with the hug emotional rollercoaster that both characters go through. This is not an easy play which is why we don't often see something like this on amateur stages. It calls into question what is right or wrong and asks us all what we would do if we were trapped in a situation that we have no control over and we see time slipping away.

In terms of the setting, there is a great opportunity to use the sterile setting of the motorway hotel to be a part of the storytelling.

Play	**77 Education, Education, Education**
Playwright	The Wardrobe Ensemble
Cast	4M, 3F

What it's about

It's 1997. Tony Blair has just won a landslide general election. Meanwhile at Wordworth Comprehensive School, Tobias (a German language assistant) has just arrived in the UK. He is greeted by a group of eccentric teachers trying to educate unruly pupils and simply make it through the day.

Why it's a great play

Set against a thumping nostalgic 90's soundtrack, this piece offers up so much in terms of creativity. It is fast paced (needing agreement from the publishers to edit out 10 mins to meet festival rules) and needs to be delivered with a heady mix of physical theatre, sharp wit, even full-on farce. The actors are truly stretched as they need to slip seamlessly between portraying the feral pupils or exhausted teachers.

Play	**78 27 Wagons Full of Cotton**
Playwright	Tennessee Williams
Cast	2M, 1F

What it's about

Jake. a middle-aged shady cotton gin owner had burned down the Mississippi mill of Vicarro a rival in the cotton business. Although he has no proof of the crime, Vicarro (a man of Latin decent and thus an outsider) seeks revenge by raping (unseen!) Jake's young and voluptuous but childlike naïve wife Flora.

Why it's a great play

The play is described as a Mississippi Delta comedy and there much humour mainly coming from the character of Flora as the sexual attentions from the dark dangerous but beguiling Vicarro send her physical desires fluttering. Beneath the comedy there is a burgeoning sense of sexual menacing eroticism.

This highly-charged play offers three great roles for the actors to explore while the set and lighting designers have wonderful opportunities to create a remote atmospheric world-weary front-porched cottage.

The play was memorably developed into the controversial film version *Baby Doll*.

SCDA National Script Library

Argyll Court - 1st Floor

Castle Business Park

Stirling FK9 4TY

One of largest collections of its kind.

- 100,000 items, including many full cast sets
- 12,000 unique titles – plays, pantos, musicals and more

Free to SCDA Individual and Club members.

Open Tuesdays & Wednesdays 10.30-14.00, Saturdays 10.00-12.00

Catalogue and mail-order details at https://drama.scot/library/

How to get there

By road – Two minutes from Junction 10 on the M9

By coach – From Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness, Flixbus and Ember coaches stop at Castleview Park & Ride, 5 minutes walk from the library.

By train – From Stirling Station, cross the pedestrian bridge to Murray Place and take the P2 Castleview bus.

Contact us at - library@drama.scot





Scottish Community Drama