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**A DIGITAL JOURNEY THROUGH IRISH THEATRE  
*Abbey Theatre and NUI Galway Digital Archive Partnership***

**FACT SHEET**

**About the Abbey Theatre**

* Ireland’s National Theatre was founded by W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory in 1904.
* Since its inception, the Abbey has played a key role in establishing who we are as a nation – by challenging, questioning and celebrating Irish-ness and Ireland.
* The Abbey was founded to ‘bring upon the stage the deeper emotions of Ireland’. Today our mission is to create world-class theatre that reflects Irish life.
* The Abbey has produced work by all four of Ireland’s Nobel laureates, premiering new plays by Yeats, Shaw and Heaney, while also producing several of Beckett’s works.
* Over the past century :
* 616 playwrights have worked with the Abbey Theatre
* Over 3,914 actors have tread the boards
* 70,000 characters have been brought to life
* 1,455 plays have been staged
* 600 costume and set designers have worked at the Abbey Theatre

**About NUI Galway**

* Established in 1845, the National University of Ireland Galway is one of Ireland’s foremost centres of academic excellence.
* NUI Galway has internationally-recognised research expertise in digital humanities and in Irish Theatre.
* NUI Galway is home to an impressive collection of internationally significant archives in the fields of history, politics, theatre and literature.
* The Archive Collection at the University’s James Hardiman Library comprises over 350 collections, dating from 1485 to the present.

**About the abbey Archive**

* The Abbey Archive contains over 1.8 million items including:
* Master programmes for over 4,300 productions
* Over 28,000 Press Cuttings
* Video recordings of 430 productions
* More than 6,000 scripts
* 600 Production posters
* 1,000 Production handbills
* Over 16,000 photograph prints
* 600 Music Scores
* Over 2,600 hours of audio files from the productions
* 6,000 pages of Minute Books
* An extensive collection of costume and set designs

All forming part of the largest digitised theatre archive in the world.

**About the Digitisation Project**

* The largest theatre digitisation project ever undertaken
* 133 years of Irish theatre, history, culture and society preserved for future generations (1904-2037)
* Researchers, archivists and librarians at NUI Galway are applying the most advanced digital technology to Ireland’s most historic theatre archive to create a rich online collection.
* It will take three years to digitise, with an estimated completion date of September 2015.
* Digitisation of this historic Abbey Archive commenced on 4th of September, 2012, in the James Hardiman Library on the NUI Galway campus.
* The first phase of digital material will be available to researchers from September 2013, including collections of Master Programmes for 4,300 productions, video recordings of 430 productions, Audio Cues, Minute Books, Stage and Lighting Designs, Administrative Records and Logbooks of plays received by the Abbey.
* New PhD students will be recruited and funded annually to undertake research on the digitized archive at NUI Galway.
* Many more researchers and students will visit NUI Galway to view the digital Archive, while original documents will continue to be available to view at the Abbey Theatre.
* It is envisaged that by 2020, the archive will have generated a substantial number of scholarly books and articles, public exhibitions, public lectures, documentaries, and new digital teaching and research resources.
* The Archive Collection at the University’s James Hardiman Library comprises over 350 collections, dating from 1485 to the present. Theatre collections include the papers of Thomas Kilroy and the Shields Family Collection and there is a particular focus on the archives of companies such as the Druid Theatre, Taibhdhearc na Gaillimhe and the Lyric Players Theatre in Belfast

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**   
  
[www.abbeytheatre.ie](http://www.abbeytheatre.ie)

[www.nuigalway.ie](http://www.nuigalway.ie)