

# **20th Century Drama**

## the rise of Irish drama

- Oscar Wilde: *An Ideal Husband* (1895); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)
- G. B. Shaw: *Mrs Warren's Profession* (1893); *Pygmalion* (1913); *Saint Joan* (1923)
- J. M. Synge: *Playboy of the Western World* (1907)

1904: Irish National Theatre (Abbey Theatre) founded in Dublin

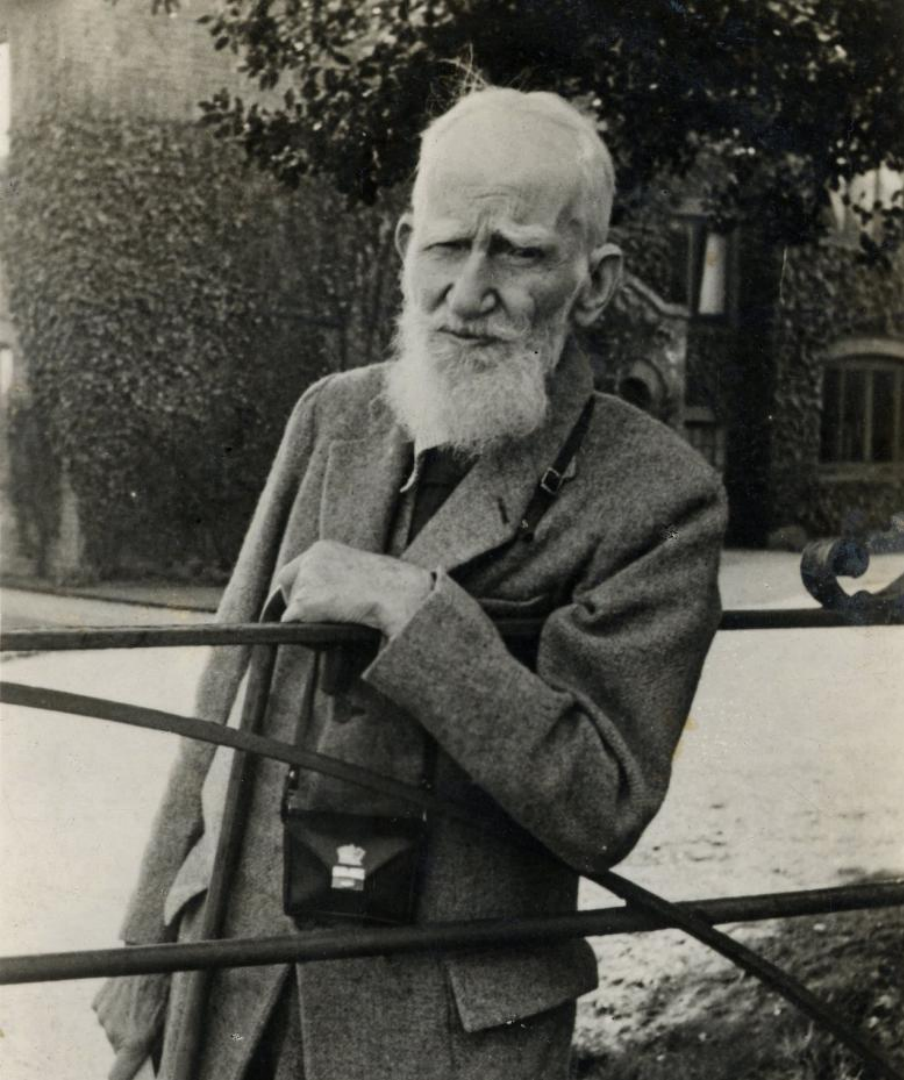


## Oscar Wilde

*The Importance of Being Earnest*  
(1895)

*The Ideal Husband* (1895)

image: wikipedia



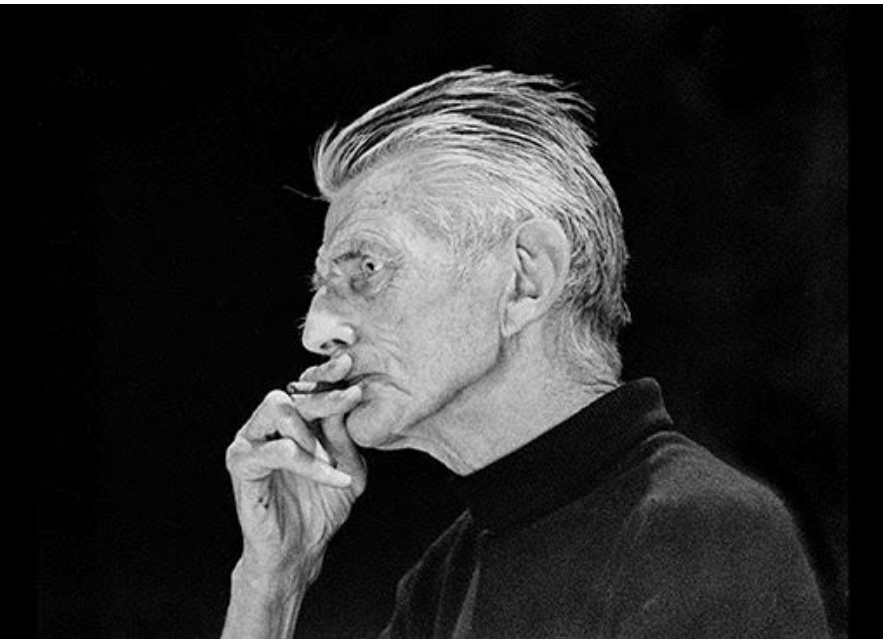
## **G. B. Shaw**

*Mrs Warren's Profession* (1893)

*Candida* (1898)

*Pygmalion* (1913)

*St. Joan* (1923)



## **Samuel Beckett**

*Waiting for Godot* (1953 in French)

*Endgame* (1957)

image: [samuelbeckettsociety.org](http://samuelbeckettsociety.org)



## **Brian Friel**

*Philadelphia, Here I Come!*  
(1964)

*Faith Healer* (1979)

*Translations* (1980)

*Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990)

*Molly Sweeney* (1994)

image: [irishcentral.com](http://irishcentral.com)



## **Caryl Churchill**

*Cloud Nine* (1979)

*Top Girls* (1982)

*A Number* (2002)

image: [britishcouncil.org](https://www.britishcouncil.org)

**from *A Number***

*the father talks to one of his unknown cloned sons*

SALTER        I didn't feel I lost him when I sent him away because I had the second chance. And when the second one my son the second son was murdered it wasn't so bad as you'd think because it seemed fair. I was back with the first one.

MICHAEL        But now

SALTER        now he's killed himself

MICHAEL        now you feel

SALTER        now I've lost him, I've lost

MICHAEL        yes

SALTER        now I can't put it right any more. Because the second time round you see I slept very lightly with the door open.



MICHAEL Is that the worst you did, not go in the night?

SALTER No of course not.

MICHAEL Like what?

SALTER Things that are what I did that are not trivial like banana icecream nor unifuckingversal like turning over in bed.

MICHAEL We've got ninety-nine per cent the same genes as any other person. We've got ninety per cent the same as a chimpanzee. We've got thirty percent the same as a lettuce. Does that cheer you up at all? I love about the lettuce. It makes me feel I belong.

SALTER I miss him so much. I miss them both.

MICHAEL There's nineteen more of us.

SALTER That's not the same.

MICHAEL

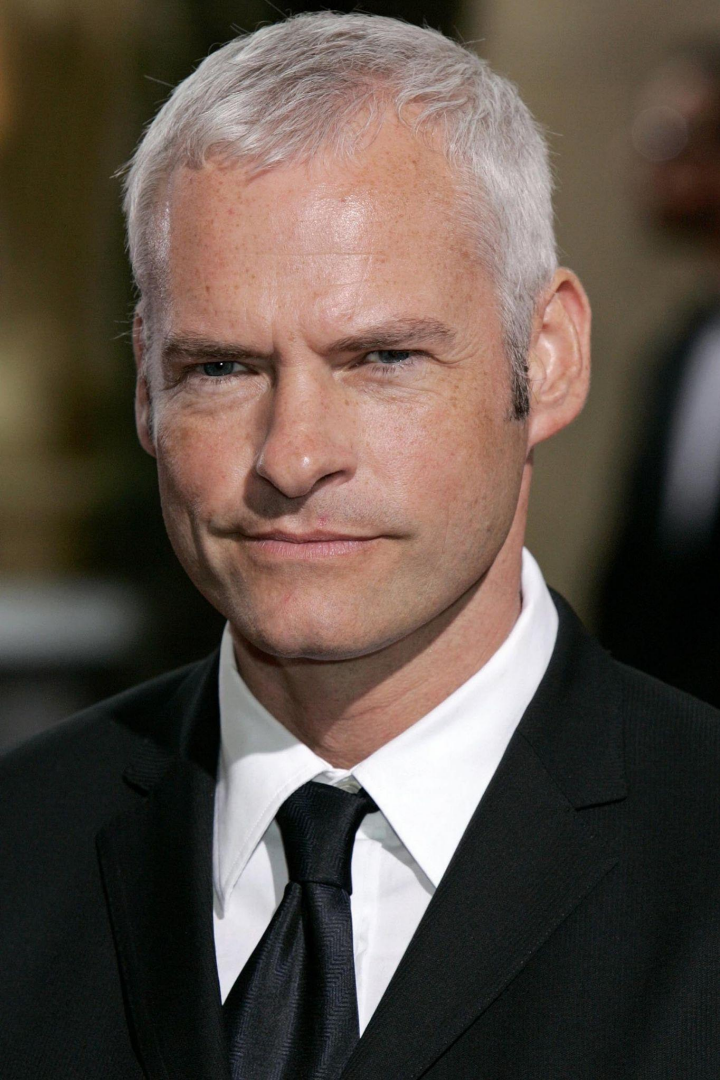
No of course not. I was making a joke.

SALTER

And you're happy you say are you? you like your life?

MICHAEL

I do yes, sorry.



## **Martin McDonagh**

*The Beauty Queen of Leenane*  
(1996)

*A Skull in Connemara* (1998)

*The Lonesome West* (1997)

*The Cripple of Inishmaan* (1996)

*The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (1997)

film:

*The Banshees of Inisherin* (2022)

**from *Lonesome West***

*closing scene*

COLEMAN Do you remember a couple of weeks ago there when you asked me did I go stealing your insurance money and I said no, I paid it in for you?

VALENE I do remember.

COLEMAN (*pause*) I didn't pay it in at all. I pocketed the lot of it, pissed it up a wall.

*VALENE, seething, darts for the knife drawer. COLEMAN dashes out through the front door, slamming it behind him. (...)*

*[VALENE] brings the letter [of Father Welsh] back to the table and takes out a box of matches.*

And you, you whiny fecking priest. Do I need your soul hovering o'er me the rest of me fecking life? How coul anybody be getting on with that feck?

*He strikes a match and lights the letter, which he glances over as he holds up. After a couple of seconds, the letter barely singed, VALENE blows the flames out and looks at it on the table, sighing.*

*(Quietly.) I'm too fecking kind-hearted is my fecking trouble.*

*He returns to the cross and pins the (...) letter back onto it, smoothing the letter out. He puts on his jacket, checks it for loose change and goes to the front door.*

Well I won't be buying the fecker a pint anyways. I'll tell you that for nothing, Father Welsh Walsh Welsh.

*VALENE glances back at the letter a second, sadly, looks down at the floor, then exits. Lights fade, with one light lingering on the crucifix and letter half a second longer than the others.*