

Jessica Curtis – Director

Artistic director TYGER. For TYGER she has directed *It Just Came Out, It Won't be Great When I'm Not Here* and *Problem Solvers Anonymous* by Christian O'Reilly, *Rainstorm* by Noel Duffy and *The Dove and the Crow* by Philip Doherty among others. Other directing credits include; *The Avenue* (Per Cent for Art Scheme, Kerry), *Wake, Blinded by the Light* (Troubadour), *Mysterious Ways* (Muscait), pantomimes *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White and the Seven Delinquents* as well as musicals *Annie*, *Oklahoma*, *Guys and Dolls* and *Oliver* (PASG). Jessica has acted in numerous TYGER productions including *Frozen*, *Over the Rainbow* and *Problem Solvers Anonymous*. Jessica is an alumnus of MA Drama and Theatre, NUI, Galway, GYT and PASG.

Colm Byrne - Writer

Colm Byrne's plays have been performed Off-Broadway, Los Angeles, Edinburgh and Vienna. He was writer in residence for the LA Writers Centre and is a recipient of the Bay Area Critics Outer Circle award. He is currently writing his first novel, *Freefall*, which inspired this play, and a screenplay *Roundabout* about a middle aged couple whose car breaks down on a roundabout in the west of Ireland.

TYGER

Almost 10 years ago, a group of GYT students aspired to greatness with two self-penned plays (by Mike King and Sean O'Toole, and Sean T. O'Meallaigh). The debut was referred to in local press as "*brimming with inventiveness and comic brio*", "*an auspicious debut*".

Since then TYGER has gone on to nurture new Irish writing on a national stage achieving critical acclaim for its work. Its founding members have achieved Masters training and have continued to write, act and direct for other theatre companies, festivals and government schemes as well as presenting TYGER productions in the Dublin Fringe Festival, Flatlake Literary and Arts Festival and Project 06 to name but a few.

TYGER is focused on artistic collaboration in the pursuit of creating new and original work.

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A note from the writer . . .

This play began with trying to make sense of the day I watched the towers fall in Manhattan. I came across a newspaper article on young Melissa Doi who died in the World Trade Center:

Beneath Melissa C Doi's crisp Wall street veneer beat the ebullient heart of a ballerina. Had her physique cooperated she would have become a professional ballet dancer. She was an original thinker and questioned almost everything. Melissa studied engineering at Northwestern, switched to sociology, went into public relations, then moved to banking. "She danced through it all" said a friend. She would get happy and just dance, Salsa, Kick lines, everything. "Melissa could be a little pain in the neck" said her mother "but she was the best daughter anyone could have".

Her phone call to emergency services from the 83rd floor was one of the few made public and so we know a little more about her life and final moments. She was probably not one of the so called 'jumpers' but the character of Sophie is based on her because she engaged life fully and simply and yet was a very complex woman; someone with courage, someone I would have liked to know. A recent documentary showed some families unwilling to identify relatives as one of the jumpers. It was a subject full of horror and revulsion seen as either suicide or a last desperate act of escape. I felt there was something missing, so I looked closely at the photos of people falling through the air. I could see for example, a couple holding hands and another of a man with a cellphone to his ear. Clearly it was horrific for them and yes, the smoke and heat must have been unbearable, but none of those of people jumping were aflame. Even if it were just a few seconds before they had no choice, those people held hands, called or thought about those they loved and then took the physical step off the ledge while they were still fully alive and aware. Being objectified by their last act, however, robbed them of the beauty of their penultimate one. *Freefall:Heroes* explores those moments before and those moments in between.

Special thanks to Jessica for taking on a difficult subject and making it work.



Freefall:Heroes

Emma Collins
Catherine Denning
Conor Geoghegan
Claire Howley
Yvonne Lydon
Féilim Ó hAoláin
Conor Quinlan
Lochlan Scott
Deborah Wiseman

Written by Colm Byrne
Directed by Jessica Curtis
Original music by Gary Landers

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Emma Collins

A member of the Irish Youth Russian Ballet Company since 2007, Emma has featured in all performances to date. Featured in *Ballet Chancers*, which saw RTE follow the company through to performance of *The Nutcracker Suite* in the Axis. Appeared in TV programme *Uncle Max*, BBC. Alumnus of PASG, pointe choreography in *Sleeping Beauty* and performing in *Guys and Dolls* and

Oklahoma. Member of Dramsoc, NUIG. Part of the Regina Rogers school of ballet since 1997.

Catherine Denning

Catherine is a Galway based actor and student. She was a member of GYT from 2006 until 2008. Performed in *Autobahn* and *Crestfall* (Galway Arts Festival), as well as *Under Milk Wood* and *This Means War* (Cúirt Festival). In 2008 she performed in *Shakers* with Blue Pig Theatre Co. She has also acted in several short films which have featured in the Galway Film Fleadh. Catherine is currently undertaking the BA Connect with Theatre and Performance in NUI, Galway.



Conor Geoghegan

Conor started his acting career with GYT in 2005, where he acted in many shows such as *This Means War* (Cúirt), *Autobahn* (Galway Arts Festival), *Under Milk Wood*, *Bright Smoke Cold Fire* (Project 06), *Talking To Terrorists* (Cúirt). Also *The Tudors* (Channel Four). And in

2008 trained in Ecole Philippe Gaulier, in Paris after which has acted in *Comedy of Errors* (Exit Theatre Co.) and *The Dove and the Crow* and *It Won't Be Great When I'm Not Here* (TYGER), *One Flew Over The Cuckoos Nest* (Troppo Co.).



Claire Howley

Claire began her acting career GYT in 2008 with whom she has performed in *A Midsummers Night Dream* (Cúirt), *DNA* (Galway Arts Festival), *Citizenship* (Galway Arts Festival) Also *Trollied* (Muscaill Festival) and most recently in the critically acclaimed *Tarry Flynn* and Dramsoc's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Yvonne Lydon

Yvonne holds an IDTA performance Cert. She has played lead roles in PASG musicals in the Town Hall Theatre including *Ado Annie* in *Oklahoma* as well as roles in *Annie* and *Guys and Dolls*. She has also performed PASG pantomimes *Snow White and the Seven Delinquents* and *Sleeping Beauty* in the Black Box Theatre. This summer she featured in TYGERs *It Won't be Great When Im Not Here*. She is a member of Dramsoc.



Féilim Ó hAoláin

Féilim is currently studying theatre and performance at Galway Community College. Past performances include *Citizenship* (Galway Arts Festival), *Yellowmoon* (Cúirt Festival) and *Tarry Flynn*. Other work includes *Teabag* written and performed for the Tuam Arts Festival and *Jarrey* written and directed for the GYT One Act.



Conor Quinlan

Conor is an alumnus of Performing Arts School Galway. He has performed in lead roles in PASG's *Guys and Dolls*, *Oliver*, *Annie* and *Oklahoma* among others. Other theatre includes; *An Original Night with Francis Fahy*, *This Lime Tree Bower*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Breakfast Club* and *An Ideal Husband*. He holds an IDTA

Performance Cert (PASG) as well as a FETAC cert in Theatre and Performance. Conor played a role in TYGER's *The Dove and the Crow* in March this year

Lochlann Scott

Long term member of Galway Youth Theatre. Master of the House (*Les Miserables*) in Colaiste Iognaid. Featured extra roles in *Ros na Rún*, Studied Greek/Roman and Early English theatre/literature in NUIG. Lochlann is a psychology lecturer and youth worker.



Deborah Wiseman

Deborah trained at the Gaiety School of Acting and at Margie Haber Studios, Los Angeles. Her theatre credits include; Focus Theatre reading of Jimmy Murphy's *Home on the Wasteland*. *Changing The Ending* (Upstate Theatre), *Basin* (Anu), *Rock Paper Scissors* (Performance Lab), *Falling out of Love* (Yew Tree Theatre), *Laundry*

& *Bourbon* (Focus Theatre), *The Glory of Living* (AboutFace Theatre), and *Snow White and the Seven Delinquents* (PASG). Previous work with TYGER: *Rainstorm*, *Problem Solvers Anonymous* and *It Won't be Great When I'm Not Here*. Film work includes *Mo* (Channel 4), *The Take* (ITV/SKY), *Situations Vacant* (Grand Pictures), *8.5 hours* (Instigator Films), *Fair City* and *How Low Can You Go* (RTE)