

IRELAND

DANCE

MÁM

TEAC DAĀSA

EDUCATION RESOURCE



Image: Ross Kavanagh

**PERTH
FESTIVAL**

Founder



Principal Partner



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CREDITS

Created by Michael Keegan-Dolan in collaboration with the company

Music Cormac Begley & s t a r g a z e

Set Designer Sabine Dargent

Lighting Designer Adam Silverman

Costume Designer Hyemi Shin

Sound Designer Helen Atkinson

Company Imogen Alvares, Cormac Begley, Romain Bly, Lisa De Boos, Roisin Byrne Dunne, Tyler Carney, Kim Ceysens, Marlies van Gangelen, James O'Hara, Aki Iwamoto, Zen Jefferson, Mayah Kadish, Maaïke van der Linde, Amit Noy, Keir Patrick, Ellie Poirier-Dolan, Rachel Poirier, Connor Scott, David Six, James Southward, Carys Staton, Aart Strootman, Daisy Sanders (Artist-in-Residence)

Producer Johnny O'Reilly

Associate Producer & Company Administrator

Áine Ní Éalaí

Company Stage Manager Marina Dunford

Deputy Stage Manager Sinead Cormack

Assistant Stage Manager Iain Synott

Technical Stage Manager Danny Hones

Food Maker Katie Sanderson

Costume Supervisor Amanda Donovan

Costume Maker Marcella Morgan

Costume Assistants Arran Murphy, Susan McKenna

Production Manager Peter Jordan

Production Assistant Liam og O hUigin

Lighting Manager Michael Lonergan

Lighting Programmer Gary Maguire

Lighting Technician Ronan Gallagher

Mask Maker Kate Aungier

Sound Manager Sandra Ni Mhathuna

Sound Technicians Ber Quinn & Daragh Murphy

Associate Sound Designer Peter Crudge

Illustrator Dómhnaí Ó Bric

Photography Colm Hogan & Clare Langan

SYNOPSIS

Bringing together the virtuoso, Irish traditional concertina player Cormac Begley, the European classical, contemporary collective, stargaze and twelve international dancers from the Teac Daírsa company, *MÁM* is a meeting place between soloist and ensemble, classical and traditional, the local and universal.

Influenced by the traditions, language, geography and music of Ireland, choreographer Michael Keegan-Dolan combines dance theatre with rich imagery and pure emotion to acknowledge how life's polarities can on occasion come together and find resolution.

MÁM, an Irish-language word, can be defined as the pass that connects two sides of a mountain, a place of meeting that could refer to an escape route or an accessible entrance.

BIOGRAPHIES

TEAC DAÍRSA

Teac Daírsa was founded by Michael Keegan-Dolan (Michael MacAodhagáin-O'Dobhailen) in 2016 as a means to forge deeper connections with the traditions, language and the music of Ireland.

The name Teac Daírsa, 'House of Dance', reflects Keegan-Dolan's ongoing journey to create dance and theatre work that clearly reflects the place from which it originates. *Swan Lake / Loch na hEala* was the first production made by Teac Daírsa. It won the *Irish Times* Irish Theatre Award 2017 for Best New Production and the UK Critics' Circle National Dance Award for Best Production 2018. *MÁM* is the second production from the company.

MICHAEL KEEGAN-DOLAN

DIRECTOR & CHOREOGRAPHER

Michael Keegan-Dolan was the artistic director of Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre from 1997 to 2015. He founded Teac Daírsa in 2016 and now lives in the Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht with his partner Rachel Poirier and their two children. *MÁM* is the second production he has created and directed for Teac Daírsa. *Swan Lake / Loch na hEala* was the first and has toured extensively both nationally and internationally over the past three years.

CORMAC BEGLEY

MUSIC

Cormac Begley is a solo bass, baritone, treble and piccolo concertina player from a West Kerry musical family. He also plays in a range of collaborations with Liam O'Connor (fiddle), Rushad Eggleston (cello goblin) and Lisa O'Neill (singer-songwriter). He is the founder of the 'Airt' Residential School and the award-winning Tunes in the Church live concert series. In 2018, he was shortlisted for the inaugural RTE Radio 1 'Folk Instrumentalist of the Year' award. His debut solo album received eleven five-star reviews and was shortlisted for the *Irish Times* Album of the Year 2018, described by the newspaper as "an earthy delight".

STARGAZE

MUSIC

s t a r g a z e is an orchestral collective, an ever-evolving project marrying modern composition with alternative attitudes and sounds. Following two s t a r g a z e presents festivals at Volksbühne Berlin, it was praised for its "ausnahmestellung" ("exceptional position") in today's musical landscape, with far-reaching and genre-defying performances in prestigious concert halls and pop festivals. Devising programs with music by Berio and The Beach Boys for Paris' Philharmonie, s t a r g a z e strive to bring musicians and audiences together that would not otherwise have met. Driven by the contemporary pop scene, the collective has worked with Terry Riley, Lisa Hannigan and Deerhoof, and has performed material by Mica Levi, Qasim Naqvi and Boards Of Canada.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Mám 1: 1. Yoke. *Faoi mhám an pheaca, under the yoke of sin.*

2. Lit: *Obligation, duty, function.*

Mám 2: *Mountain pass.*

Mám 3: *Handful. – mhilseán, of sweets. Tá airgead ina mhámanna aige, he has heaps of money. Scaipeann sé ina mhámanna é, he throws it away in handfuls.*

Beneath the brooding slopes of the second largest mountain in Ireland, Cnoc Bhreanainn, in the far western reaches of the Dingle Peninsula, there stands a community hall just up from the seaweed-strewn shores of Traigh na Feothanai. This venue was the crucible for the formation of *MÁM* – a musical and choreographic exploration of the spiritual and cultural powers that are emerging once again.

The work is informed by the profound immersion in Corca Dhuibhne (the West Kerry Gaeltacht) that Teac Dársa has experienced over the past two years.

MÁM is Teac Dársa's first show to be completely devised, created and produced in the Gaeltacht. Twelve international contemporary dancers, seven musicians from the Berlin-based *st a r g a z e* collective and the concertina player Cormac Begley imagined, developed and birthed this composition under the stewardship of Micheal MacAodhagain-O Dobhailen (Michael Keegan-Dolan).

There are no words in *MÁM*, but much of its creation was incubated within the realm of An Ghaolainn, as the company embarks on a journey to work increasingly through the Irish language in coming years. The word *MÁM* itself can mean an obligation, a yoke and a handful of goodies, but it's more commonly used to refer to a mountain pass or the easiest way of surmounting a large geographical obstacle. It's both an escape route and an accessible entrance-way, but can also be a place of danger, with ferocious funnelled winds and risk of exposure to the elements.

As a Corca Dhuibhne word it captures some essence of this production, which arises directly out of its locality, where the oceanic rain washes off the mountainside, through reedy fields towards the sea cliffs beyond Halla na Feothanai.

Manchan Magan
Teac Dársa

MAJOR THEMES

A major theme explored in the work is polarity. Humans live in a duality experience and we see this through the polarity of human emotion, the ancient and modern, classical and contemporary music and solos versus ensemble work. The work is also rich in symbolism and imagery with a focus on Irish traditions.

KEY IDEAS TO EXPLORE

Key ideas to explore with students could include:

- How the influence of place can be represented in a dance work.
- How making choices with regards to the elements of dance can help convey intention.
- How choreographic devices can be used in convey intention. For example the use of contrast to demonstrate polarity as seen through the contrasting choices of elements of dance within *MÁM* or the use of abstraction to represent symbols and imagery in a creative way.

RESOURCES

<http://teacdamsa.com/productions/>

<https://www.rte.ie/culture/2019/0924/1077717-mam-notes-on-designing-michael-keegan-dolans-new-show/>

<http://trinitynews.ie/2019/10/mam-review-its-not-a-funeral-its-a-celebration-of-life/>

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/lifestyle/culture/choreographer-impresses-once-again-at-dublin-theatre-festival-following-success-of-loch-na-heala-953992.html>

<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/m%C3%A1m-review-stirring-sensuous-showcase-of-the-physical-form-1.4034967>

<http://musingsinintermissions.blogspot.com/2019/09/mam-review-dance-through-irelands.html>

BEFORE THE SHOW

HOW PLACE INFLUENCES DANCE

OBJECTIVES

Students will develop their awareness and understanding of:

- Contextual influence
- Ideas that represent Australia
- How choices with regards to the Elements of Dance can convey intention.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Discuss what makes us uniquely Australian. What are the things you love about Australia or what is iconic to our nation?
- Discuss how making clear choices of the elements of dance before choreographing can enhance the process. Keep asking students to explain their choices in the choreography so their movement authentically reflects their idea.

ACTIVITY

Introduction

Introduce *MÁM* by Teac Daṁsa to the students explaining Teac Daṁsa is an Irish company (Teac Daṁsa meaning 'House of Dance' in Irish language, reflecting how dance is influenced by the place it comes from). Explain how choreographer Michael Keegan-Dolan is interested in creating work that reflects Irish language, geography, traditions and music.

Video excerpt from *MÁM* to show students: <http://teacdamsa.com/productions/>

Brainstorm

Ask students if we were to create a dance work that represented Australia what sorts of ideas could it include?

Suggested ideas could include:

- Beach culture
- Wide open harsh landscapes
- Football
- Mining
- Vegemite

Group Activity

In small groups ask students to choose one idea from the brainstorm to explore for a short dance routine. For example, wide open harsh landscapes.

In the small groups students explore ideas relevant to each Element of Dance for their specific idea and explain their choices.

Idea: Wide open harsh landscapes

BODY	ENERGY	SPACE	TIME
Long extended linear movements especially on a horizontal plane.	Languid, heavy movement to represent the harshness and heat of the environment.	Distance between dancers to represent vastness of the outback.	Slow movement to represent the heat of the desert landscape.
Long eye gaze following body movements to show breadth of landscape.	Sustained movement to represent the vast distances of the outback.	Lots of travelling to show expansiveness.	
Some waving of arm movements to represent undulation of landform.			

Students should use the above table to create a 32-count phrase to present to the rest of the class.

Other students can then guess which aspect of Australia the performing group had chosen and how they arrived at that decision.

PERFORMANCE PROTOCOLS

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF THE PERFORMANCE

These activities are intended to maximise the theatre experience for all audience members. These activities guide students through a series of engagements intended to get them thinking about how and why they should behave in particular ways and what their behaviour means in this context.

OBJECTIVES

Students will develop their awareness and understanding of:

- Theatre etiquette
- Appropriate behaviour for an audience
- Relationship between performers and the audience

DISCUSSION POINTS

Live performance involves performers acting and interact in real time, before your eyes. The audience is active in the way they view the performance. The performers on stage can hear and see you; your reactions and your behaviour can contribute to, disrupt or disturb their performance. The audience can have a big influence on the energy, pace and vibe of the actors and the performance as a whole.

ACTIVITY

Talk to your students about whether they have been to the theatre before. Use the following questions to guide their discussion:

- What show did you see?
- Who did you go with?
- Where did you see it?
- What was the show about?
- Were the performers professional or amateur?
- What did it make you think about?

Split the class into small groups and ask them to create a list of behaviour they consider appropriate and inappropriate for different settings. Assign the groups the following settings:

- Footy match
- School assembly
- Cinema
- Rock concert
- Theatre

Come back together as a whole group and ask groups to feed their thoughts back to the group. Create a matrix that compares different kinds of behaviour across each setting. For example:

	Footy Match	Assembly	Cinema	Rock Concert	Theatre
Talking	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Eating					
Walking in and out					
Laughing / crying					
Booing / shouting					
Using your mobile phone					

Based on the above, discuss the conclusions students have come to about attending a live performance and compile a series of protocols to guide their behaviour. Ensure elements in the appendix at the end of this document are included.

AFTER THE SHOW

POLARITY AND CONTRAST

OBJECTIVE

Students will develop their awareness and understanding of:

- Choreographic devices specifically contrast
- How to manipulate movement to convey intention
- How abstract movement can lead to different interpretations in Art and how valuable variations in interpretation are

DISCUSSION POINTS

Dance is a language all on its own and though aided by, doesn't need verbal communication.

Discuss the effectiveness of contrast in *MÁM* to show polarity and the effect this had on the students as audience members.

Discuss how abstract movement can convey a variety of ideas in audience members by the students creating their own stories from the other students work in the performance showing. Encourage and value this freedom of thought and differing perspectives.

ACTIVITY

Warm-Up Game

Students walk around the space without talking.

Using eye contact, physical movement and no talking, students in partners create a mountain shape by joining hands overhead and walking their feet back into a counterbalance.

Other students then have the opportunity to pass through the mountain going between the students, moving around the outside of the mountain or not passing through, ignoring the mountain and staying walking in own space. Students break apart and recreate 'mountains' with other partners at will.

Encourage students not to talk and to communicate through physical movement and eye contact.

Choreographic Exercise

Discuss how contrast was used in *MÁM* to show polarity.

Discuss the effect of this device in the work.

Students use 32-count Australian phrase from the pre-show activity for basis of the post-show activity.

In the same groups students are to create another BEST table and this time write the contrast or opposite of all the choices of the elements of dance. See table example below.

BODY	ENERGY	SPACE	TIME
Short, angular movement	Suspension	Close proximity	No fast movement

Students then insert moments of contrast within their original Australian phrase.

Some of the ways this can be done include:

- Split the group in half and have half the dancers represent the original choreography and the other half the contrasted choreography.
- Choosing students at different moments to break out of the group choreography to perform individual contrasted moments.
- Create a dance with a Binary structure. Part A representing the original choreography and Part B the contrasted choreography.

Perform and Reflect

After each group's performance audience members can discuss which choices were effective in conveying the contrast.

They can also discuss the audience's perspective on what the group were portraying. As this is a movement-based activity did any 'stories' start to appear in the groups performances? Are there differences in students' interpretations? Encourage and foster personal opinions and the sharing of different viewpoints and ideas.

REVIEWING LIVE PERFORMANCE

There are many different ways to write a review, as reviews express an individual's thoughts and feelings about a show.

Traditional reviews will often:

Give the reader brief background information about a production

- Title of show (mention playwright or choreographer if relevant)
- Is it an adaptation of another text? An original work?
- Identify the company presenting or performing the show
- Where is this show being performed?

Briefly outline plot and themes

- Make sure not to include any spoilers
- Were the themes/issues effectively conveyed to the audience?
- How do the characters and relationships communicate these?
- Does the design (e.g. set, costumes, lighting, sound and filmic elements) contribute to the conveyance of themes/issues? Consider symbols and metaphors.
- How do style and form play a part in communicating these?

Provide an idea of what the design elements are

- Think about set, lighting, costume, filmic elements and sound
- How did the design choices convey place, time and situation (dramatic meaning or context)?
- What atmosphere and mood were the creative team aiming for?
- How successful were they in achieving their goals?

Evaluate the writing, production and performances

- You might consider things like: Were there any stand out performances or design elements? Why? What were the technical aspects of the production that stood out?

Reviews should reflect how you felt about a show, not what you think you should have felt.

In the digital age, the act of reviewing has changed immensely. It has enabled platforms for a broad range of voices to participate in the reviewing process that previously would not have been heard.

Have a go at writing a 140-character Twitter review of the work.

SPECIFIC LINKS TO CURRICULUM

Connections to Year 10 Dance: Students refine their discussion of the use of the elements of dance, choreographic processes and design concepts in their own dance and the dance of others. They investigate dance and influences of the social, cultural and historical contexts in which it exists.

- Dance genres / styles are influenced by the social, cultural and historical contexts in which they exist (ACADAR026)
- Analytical writing, using dance terminology, about how the elements of dance, choreographic processes and design concepts (lighting, music /s ound, multimedia, costume, props, sets, staging) contribute to the choreographic intention of a dance work (ACADAR025)
- (ACADAM021)
- Choreographic devices (unison, canon, repetition, abstraction, contrast, motif) and choreographic structures (narrative, binary, ternary) selected and combined to communicate choreographic intent in group and duo dance (ACADAM023)



APPENDIX

Latecomers

The show will start promptly and latecomers will not be admitted until an appropriate break in the show. Be aware that for many shows, you will not be admitted if you arrive late.

Lock out

If you leave your seat during the performance, you may not be allowed back in. Make sure you go to the toilet and have a drink of water before the performance and/or during the intervals.

Noise

Food wrappers and plastic packets make a lot of noise. It is generally accepted that the audience does not eat during a performance. If you absolutely have to have lollies (such as a cough lolly), ensure it is out of the wrapper prior to the performance.

Mobile phones

Please ensure mobile phones are turned off. If your phone rings during a performance, it can be very embarrassing for you and very distracting for the performers. It is inappropriate to receive a text during a performance.

Talking

Allow everyone – performers and the audience – to focus on the performance by not talking. Talking is annoying for other audience members and can be very distracting for performers.

Photographs

Taking photos, videos or audio recordings is not allowed.



This Education Resource was prepared in collaboration with Narelle Codalonga.