



# STAGEBEYOND

THEATRE COMPANY



## WELCOME BACK!

**W**elcome to our Newsletter featuring key highlights from Stage Beyond and looking ahead to our exciting autumn/winter 2024 schedule.

We hope you all enjoyed a well-deserved summer break. We are so proud of all our fabulous company members and creative team on the success of 'Available Light' dedicated to much loved founding member Catherine 'Kitty' Campbell.

We hope you enjoy our recap of the year so far. Keep reading to find out more about Stage Beyond performances coming to a location near you soon; our Hi-Vis Festival of Visibility supported by DCSDC's Community Festival Fund; Culture Night 2024; and a heartwarming new Christmas show which we will be performing in both Derry and Belfast - watch this space!







# JANUARY

Stage Beyond commissioned BAFTA award-winning NI poet and playwright Damian Gorman to write and direct an exciting new production for the company, 'Available Light' which received rave reviews when performed at the Millennium Forum on June 19th. We created 'A Poem for Catherine' and recorded a video of company members and our artistic director reading the lines. View it on our

YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/3LDZAN5>  
 'Available Light' was dedicated to Catherine's memory and we were assisted in the creative process at our workshops by drama students from Ulster University and volunteers. Stage Beyond was delighted to be featured in the Arts Council's annual review section entitled 'Empowering People' using a wonderful photo taken with Gilly Campbell, Director of Arts

Development, during rehearsals for 'The Great Dictator'. We attended an information event for transition students at Ardnashee College in Derry where a number of our company members were past pupils and flourishing at Stage Beyond. We also highlighted key milestones for our multi-talented company members including Carol Glenn, proudly celebrating 10 years with Stage Beyond.



# FEBRUARY

The company workshopped themes for 'Available Light' with Damian Gorman and our creative team including freelance choreographer Laurie Schneider and musical director Neil Burns. The moral of 'Available Light' is 'Don't judge a book by its cover', the title of the catchy final song in the show.

Stage Beyond worked with local filmmaker Séan Coyle to shoot vox pops on the City Walls which were projected onto a large screen as part of the performance. A green screen was used to fulfil a company member's dream to simulate his favourite fictional character and fly like Peter Pan. Company members learnt technical/film production skills in addition to acting, choreography, singing and scriptwriting.

Freelance choreographer Laurie Schneider commented: "The hard work, the focus, the care and the fun in how they approach, create and rehearse their shows is phenomenal."

The Irish News published a poignant obituary for Catherine Campbell in their 'Remembered Lives' series - 'Remembering Catherine Campbell: a shining star of stage and inspiration to all'. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3Sir8vi>

We celebrated Valentine's in true theatrical style by creating a 'Mr & Mrs - God edition' video series with our lead drama facilitator and interns. Check out these hilarious clips on our YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/3LDati7>

Stage Beyond also attended the annual information day at Knockavoe School, Strabane. We bid an emotional farewell to our lead drama facilitator Jean Dunn but look forward to her returning for workshops and performances later in the year.



## A 'shining star' and inspiration to all

“

**She was a remarkable young woman who brought real strength to her performances, confident on stage, gifted with great humour and comic timing, with the biggest heart**

Lilly Campbell, Arts Council

### CATHERINE CAMPBELL

CATHERINE Campbell has been remembered as a "shining star" both for her performances on stage and her infectious personality, which made her friends wherever she went.

The 44-year-old was a founding member of Stage Beyond, an award-winning Deaf company based in Derry's Millennium Forum which aims to empower adults with hearing disabilities through opportunities to train in the arts.

Catherine dazzled with leading roles in many of its productions and adored spending time with other members of the group, who became like family off stage too.

Stage Beyond's Facebook page was filled with tributes to Catherine following news of her death from cancer this month, recalling her as a great talent who was a delight to



teach, as well as a "beautiful soul" with a wonderful sense of humour.

In its post, the theatre company said it was "heartbroken at the loss of our shining star Kitty".

"You will be forever in our hearts and your memory will live on."

From Rosemount in the city, Catherine was the youngest of six

girls in a family of eight and was an avid reader and fan of all kinds of music as a child at St Anne's PS and St Mary's College.

Always very outgoing and sociable - she was first in 'get the lara' and chat about news and current affairs - her love of performance began with her involvement in Stage Beyond from its earliest days.

The Arts Council said she was one of its longest serving members and "to everyone who had the pleasure of meeting her and seeing her on stage, she was a shining star".

Gilly Campbell, director of arts development, described her as "a remarkable young woman who brought

real strength to her performances, confident on stage, gifted with great humour and comic timing, with the biggest heart".

"She was a genuine inspiration to all of us to realise their potential. Our thoughts are with Catherine's family and her many close friends at her 'swirled family' at Stage Beyond."

Catherine, who also worked in the Menopac office in Derry for many years, died peacefully at Foyle Hospice on February 5.

Predeceased by her parents Jim and Bridget and brother Joseph, she is survived and sadly missed by her sisters Siobhán, Bronagh, Deirdre, Teresa and Patricia and brother James.

### Contact Lives Remembered

Lives Remembered features a selection of obituaries every Saturday. Readers are invited to send in accounts of anyone they feel has made a contribution to their community or simply led an interesting or notable life. Call Aislin Bonner on 028 2070 8360 or email [a.bonner@irishnews.com](mailto:a.bonner@irishnews.com).



# MARCH

**F**reelance drama facilitator Iarla McGowan joined our creative team for weekly workshops. Iarla is an actor from Letterkenny and Board member of An Grianan Theatre since 2019. His credits include: 'Law and Order: UK' (Kudos/ITV), 'Observe the Sons of Ulster' (Abbey Theatre/Headlong), 'Joking Apart' (UK Tour), 'Scenes from an Execution' (Royal National Theatre), 'Richard III' (Riverside Studios/Love and Madness), 'Ajax' (Riverside Studios).

Stage Beyond performed at Derry City & Strabane District Council (DCSDC) Access and Inclusion Project's exciting new 2-day Festival at Foyle

Arena, supported by the Public Health Agency (PHA). FestivALL celebrates the disability arts sector in DCSDC and Stage Beyond was among the line-up of established artists/performers from the pan-disability sector who delivered a showcase event for attendees. Earlier in the day, Bernie, Frank, Bryan and Isobel also performed 'The A-Z of Stage Beyond' at a Transition Careers Day in North West Regional College.

Stage Beyond was announced as one of 150 arts organisations taking part in 'Culture Makes', a UK-wide campaign led by Achates, celebrating the eight types of impact of culture and heritage.

We rocked our socks for World



Down Syndrome Day 2024 themed 'End The Stereotypes'. Key highlights included company member Niamh Sheridan performing her favourite poem 'Digging' by Seamus Heaney: <https://bit.ly/4deuPds>

We marked International Women's Day 2024 themed 'Inspire Inclusion' and World Theatre Day. Stage Beyond also availed of a visit from Hive Cancer Support.



# APRIL



'Available Light' was unveiled in the Millennium Forum's events programme. The poster was designed from original artwork by company member Frank Nelis. We also had the all-important 'first read' of the script and it was all systems go!

RTÉ Drama on One re-broadcast Stage Beyond's award-winning 'Hamlet, Prince of Derry', specially dedicated "to a wonderfully talented performer and beloved member of the ensemble, Catherine Campbell, who died last February. We fondly

remember her great skill, generosity and fantastic sense of fun. She brought all of this to her superb performance in the role of Horatia." Listen again here: <https://www.rte.ie/radio/radio1/clips/2238194/>

Stage Beyond also celebrated World Autism Acceptance Week 2024 (Be kind to different minds - Different minds create inclusive impact!) and International Dance Day.



# MAY



The Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District, Councillor Patricia Logue visited Stage Beyond to present OCN Level 1 Certificates in Vocational Skills to company members and joined in promoting our upcoming show: <https://bit.ly/3yl3bXy>

Richard Moore, Founder and Chief Executive of Children in Crossfire made a memorable visit to promote 'Available Light' at the invitation of Damian Gorman, a close personal friend, and was presented with a framed portrait sketched by Frank Nelis for his office.

Company members recorded promotional videos for 'Available Light' which attracted widespread engagement from followers on our

social media channels. We were featured in 'What's on Derry Strabane' event listings and other publications.

Stage Beyond performed 'The A-Z of Stage Beyond' at the Arts and Business NI Creative Networking event in the Millennium Forum. The company also participated in the roll-out of the Achates 'Culture Makes' campaign highlighting the various impacts of arts and culture including creative impact, economic impact, social benefit, innovation, educational benefit, physical, community building, mental health and wellbeing.

Stage Beyond company member 'Makaton with Eve' led a rapturous end of term showcase at St Mary's College, Derry.





# JUNE

**D**amian Gorman joined arts broadcaster Marie-Louise Kerr on BBC Radio Ulster's The Culture Café, to talk about 'Available Light'. He was also profiled in a full page Q&A feature in the Irish News as part of our marketing and comms plan: <https://bit.ly/3W1sxSY>

The Mayor of DCSDC, Cllr. Lilian Seeno-Barr recorded a special video message to publicise 'Available Light' as part of Learning Disability Week 2024. This year the theme was 'Do you see me? challenging the barriers people with a learning disability face. Stage Beyond performed 'Don't judge a book by its cover' in Foyleside Shopping Centre prior to the show in an effort to reach as many audiences as possible.

Publicity for 'Available Light' included a live interview on BBC Radio Foyle's The Mark Patterson Show and articles published in print and online by the 'Derry Journal' and 'Derry News'.

Upwards of 200 audience members attended 'Available Light' at the Millennium Forum on June 19th 2024. The response and feedback surpassed all expectations.

## A selection of the many reviews.....

"It was truly amazing and so clever. Everybody was just spectacular. It was a very fitting tribute to Catherine and I'm sure her family were very appreciative of all your efforts. Well done to all involved. Already looking forward to the next show!"

- Maire Boyle, Western Health and Social Care Trust

"I would just like to thank everyone at Stage Beyond for the invite to meet all the excellent cast members and then the opportunity to watch the wonderful play 'Available Light'. You were all amazing in the play. My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Kitty would have been so proud of you all. Well done everyone."

- Alderman Darren Guy, Deputy Mayor DCSDC



"I have never met a troupe of actors like them, and I have fallen in love with them. I am grateful for all they have taught me - every one of them. I'm grateful, too, to the brilliant professionals around the production who have given the members wings - or, rather, who have helped to groom those wings which, undoubtedly, they possessed already. Thanks to everyone who helped in any way. And thanks to you [the audience], for going out of your way to be with us."

- Damian Gorman, writer and director 'Available Light'

"What a wonderful tribute to our Catherine, it's amazing to see this group working together and growing in strength. Just fabulous."

- Breege Patton

"Very moving and totally inspiring."

- Richard Moore, Chief Executive, Children in Crossfire

"Heartfelt congratulations to you all Stage Beyond Theatre Company on a night to remember."

- NI Mental Health Arts Festival

"Excellent show, I enjoyed every minute."

- Gill Scott

"Well done guys we are all famous superstars."

- Alison Smyth, Stage Beyond company member

"Glad the audience enjoyed it; it was a fun show to do and of course dedicating it to Catherine Campbell our Kitty made it all the more special."

- Bernadette Foley, Stage Beyond company member





# TESTIMONIALS & MESSAGES

“A wonderfully talented community of actors who make our lives better whenever they perform. I had the pleasure of working with Stage Beyond when they recorded ‘Hamlet, Prince of Derry’ by Colin Murphy for RTÉ Radio 1 at the height of the pandemic. This entailed recording every speech remotely using a variety of smartphone apps, with director Conall Morrison at the other end of the line. With artistry, patience, mischief and great humour, the Stage Beyond ensemble made a totally new version of Hamlet which went on to win a major award at the New York Festivals Radio Awards. We all fondly remember their beloved friend, Catherine Campbell, who gave an exquisite performance as Horatia in the piece.” - *Kevin Brew, Radio Producer at RTÉ*



“Stage Theatre Company are a joy to work with but more importantly they are fine artists, full of creativity and vision.” - *Ruairi Conaghan, award-winning actor who has worked in the West End, Off Broadway, The National Theatre, The Royal Court, and most major theatres throughout the UK, Ireland and the US*

A message from Conall Morrison..

“I had the great pleasure of directing Catherine in Gulliver’s Travels and Hamlet, Prince of Derry. She was a hugely talented performer: funny, clever, skilfully playing the character while also always letting her own distinctive self shine through. And what a self she was!

Like all the best actors, she was full of fun, and a sense of playful mischief, and full too of strong opinions. And that strong will she had made her quick sometimes to let me know she wasn’t happy about something! But she was just as quick to forgive and forget and chuck herself back into the craic and creativity again.

It was all part of what made it such a rewarding delight to work with Catherine, and the productions were vastly better for having her energies in

them. It is still an astonishing thought, and is so deeply sad, that everyone has been robbed of her unique spirit, but that same spirit has left the best of memories and she will never be forgotten. Thankyou Catherine.” - *Conall Morrison, Dublin-based director and writer has worked with companies such as the Abbey Theatre (Dublin), the Lyric Theatre (Belfast) and the Royal National Theatre (London)*

We also received a message of support from Eoin O’Callaghan, the man behind the music of the BBC TV police drama ‘Blue Lights’. The Derry filmmaker and composer worked with Stage Beyond on our film ‘Mind the Time’ and masterclasses for our React Review Film Club.

Stage Beyond Artistic Director Dee Conaghan was among the three finalists selected for the Derry Journal People of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award for her services to the arts with Stage Beyond since it was established in 2002.

A framed photograph of Catherine Campbell was installed in the Millennium Forum dedicated to her memory.



# JULY

Tributes were paid to Stage Beyond Theatre Company and the “absolutely amazing” performance of ‘Available Light’ at a meeting of DCSDC’s Business and Culture Committee held in Derry’s Guildhall on July 9th.

James Campbell, brother of Catherine Campbell presented the company with a cheque for the magnificent sum of £615.00 raised by a charity football match in her memory.

Our superstars created a summer carnival atmosphere in the Studio during fun workshops with circus skills and ‘dress up creating characters’. We also had a brilliant casino day before taking our two-week summer recess.

We are delighted to announce that Nora Kavanagh will be our new lead drama facilitator with the company in addition to Stage Beyond in Letterkenny.



# AUGUST



We really enjoyed performing some pop-up theatre with our ‘Shakespeare on the Streets’ outside the Guildhall and for our friends at Lilliput in The Playhouse.



# UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Stage Beyond will be coming to locations near you to perform 'Don't judge a book by its cover' from 'Available Light' as part of our Hi-Vis Festival of Visibility supported by DCSDC's Community Festival Fund:

Tuesday, August 27th 11.30am on steps outside Caffè Nero (entrance to Richmond Centre adjacent to Millennium Forum)

Tuesday, August 27th 12.30pm at Ebrington Square

Friday, September 20th, Culture Night, venue and time TBC

December, 'Room at the Inn' written and directed by Damian Gorman for Stage Beyond, venues and dates TBC

Note: Stage Beyond's React Review Film Club facilitated by local filmmaker Séan Coyle meets on Wednesday evenings in The Playhouse - suitable for young people aged 15+ upwards.



If you require any further information about Stage Beyond or wish to support us through charity fundraising or business sponsorship please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

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@stagebeyond2023



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Stage Beyond is thankful to be supported by National Lottery funding through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Western Health and Social Care Trust (Day Opportunities).

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