

MEDIA RELEASE



Rare opportunity to see two of Yeats' finest plays which have been performed on just two previous occasions since 1927

17 October 2008: *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, which are among WB Yeats' finest dramatic works, have rarely been performed in Ireland. The previous occasions were in 1973, and before that in 1927-28, when they were performed at Dublin's Abbey Theatre for the very first time.

Between Monday 3 November and Thursday 6 November 2008, Dublin Lyric Player will present four performances of the two plays in the National Library of Ireland's Seminar Room in Kildare Street.

Regarded as two of Yeats' most challenging dramatic works, these versions of Sophocles' plays relate the great story from Ancient Greek Mythology of Oedipus, King of Thebes, who unknowingly kills his father, marries his mother and begets four children by her. The story is about how the Gods and his own actions bring about his downfall. In Yeats' version, the focus is on Oedipus's relentless and doomed search for the truth, on his catastrophic reaction to the knowledge of his incest and on his humanity.

While Yeats' versions of *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus* both incorporate splendid choral sequences (regarded as the finest created by any poet), they are mainly written in a superbly spare prose which makes them readily accessible to a wide audience.

Over the past three years, the Dublin Lyric Players have presented nine plays by WB Yeats, including *The Cuchulain Cycle*, *The Words Upon the Window Pane*, *The King's Threshold*, *The Hour Glass*, *Purgatory* and *The Dreaming of the Bones*.

The *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus* productions will be directed by Conor O'Malley who, over the past 30 years, has directed numerous plays by WB Yeats as well as poetic drama by Ibsen, Brecht, Joyce and O'Casey. The productions coincide with the Library's acclaimed exhibition *Yeats: the life and works of William Butler Yeats*. The performance of *Oedipus Rex* will start at 5.30pm each evening and will be followed by *Oedipus at Colonus* at 7pm on 3, 4, 5 and 6 November. Tickets cost €10 and may be purchased at the door or reserved by calling 01-603 0277.

The Dublin Lyric Players derives its name from the Lyric Players Theatre in Belfast, whose foundation stone was laid by the poet Austin Clarke. During the first thirty years of its existence, the Belfast-based Lyric Players championed the cause of Yeats's plays, putting on many of his works including the *Cuchulain Cycle*, which they performed at the official opening of the purpose-built Poets' Theatre in 1968.

For further information, please contact Joanna Finegan on 01-603 0207 or Conor O'Malley on 087-973 6991.