Dancing at Lughnasa

The Set:

The room is simple with rough-hewn, functional furniture. There’s a large long table with two drawers at the front in the centre of the stage with a white cloth draped over it at the right hand end, before the play begins. A man sits on a simple wooden chair behind the table before the play starts. There are two other chairs round the table, one at either, short end and a crudely-made bench in front of it. Directly behind him is a free-standing sideboard with an old fashioned radio sitting on it, beside a bowl of apples and a large milk jug. On the floor to the right of the sideboard is a galvanised bucket of water. There’s a cooking range at back right of the stage, angled in towards the sideboard and equipped with a kettle, a teapot and other pots as well as a towel and cloths. A box for peat sits beside the range, with a wicker basket alongside it. Behind the range the stage rises as a ramp to an entrance and exit at right back. At the front of the range on the left, closest to the audience is a chair with wooden arms. Over to the left front of the stage, lying abandoned are some sticks with fabric beneath them. Above the entire set, almost tent-like, but hanging down at an angle, like a steeply pitched roof, is a quantity of loosely woven linen fabric. It sits over the action, enclosing it. From time to time reflections of the action beneath can be seen in the fabric above.

In the second act the kites have been completed and lie abandoned at left back, face down. There are writing materials at the left end of the table.

**The Cast**

The cast are listed in order of appearance.

**Charlie Bonner** acts the part of the adult **Michael Evans**, the narrator. His is also the voice of Michael Evans the child. He wears grey trousers, a blue jacket and a pale blue open neck shirt. His oval face and pleasant features are framed by short, dark hair with signs of greying and parted at the right side. He is of medium height.

**Christina Mundy**, the youngest of the Mundy sisters and mother of Michael is played by **Vanessa Emme**. She has shoulder length, thick dark wavy hair which is clasped behind her ears. Chrissy’s white apron is worn over a pale blue shirt dress, calf length with full skirt. She wears flat, beige shoes. She is slim, lithe, pretty and youthful looking.

Second eldest of the sisters, **Maggie**, is played by **Cara Kelly**. Maggie appears middle aged with chin length straw coloured hair that is frizzy and unkempt. Her shirt sleeves are rolled up and she wears a long tweed skirt and laced up boots. To keep her clothes clean Maggie puts on a brown wrap- over pinny which she secures with a belt tied at the front. She is plump and cheerful looking with a twinkle in her eye.

**Catherine Cusack** plays the part of **Agnes Mundy**. She wears a white and blue check overall over a grey calf length skirt and a white blouse. Agnes is slim, of medium height and her brown hair is combed rather severely away from her face into a knot at the nape of her neck. She moves gracefully and her face is well shaped with regular features. She appears stern and tight lipped and concentrates intensely on her knitting which provides her income.

The role of **Rose Mundy**, who is youthful looking like Chris, is played by **Mary Murray**. Rose has long, thick, black shiny hair tied back from her face. Her heart shaped face frames her dark eyes and eyebrows. When she is happy her whole face lights up. Rose wears a blue dress and cardigan and black laced up boots. She walks in an ungainly manner often appearing hen toed. When she dresses up to go out Rose presents herself in a striking two piece outfit patterned in navy and white checks.

The role of **Kate**, the eldest of the sisters, is undertaken by **Catherine McCormac**. She is tall and slim in her late forties and dressed smartly in a navy calf length shirt dress, belted at the waist emphasising her trim figure. She wears a cream cardigan and laced up flat black shoes. Her hair is pulled back into a plaited bun at the nape of her neck. Later in the play she wears a pale blue shirtdress.

**Father Jack Mundy**, a retired priest in his early fifties, recently returned home to his five sisters after 25 years in Africa, is played by **Declan Cotton**. He is a tall man, much stooped, who leans heavily on a walking stick. His heavy grey great coat reaches to his ankles. Jack’s unruly, white beard contrasts with his red necktie. There is a strained expression on his pale face which is framed by a grey broad brimmed felt hat. His eyes peer out from beneath heavy grey eyebrows. In Act 2 Jack wears a slim navy coat. The ceremonial suit which he also wears is a crumpled white military suit with red epaulets, one of which has unravelled and threads from it dangle down his sleeve. To complete that outfit Jack exhibits on his head a tall black hat out of protrudes large black and white feathers.

**Gerry Evans**, Michael’s father, is a dapper young man, played by **Matt Tate**. He is dressed in a white shirt with a striped tie, a brown sedate three piece suit and tan shoes. His straw boater has a black band and he swings his walking stick as he talks. He has dark brown hair and an alert, oval face. Later on Gerry sports a Fair Isle knitted waistcoat over rolled up sleeves and a pair of slacks.