The Abbey Theatre: The Years Of Synge, 1905-1909

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The Abbey’s staging of Synge’s satire The Playboy of the Western World, on Jan. 26, 1907, stirred up so much resentment in the audience over its portrayal of the Irish peasantry that there was a riot. The years 1907–09 were difficult times for the Abbey. Changes in personnel affected the management of the theatre, and the Fay brothers, whose commitment to nationalistic and folk drama conflicted with Yeats’s art-theatre outlook, departed for the United States. Horniman withdrew her financial support, and the management of the theatre changed hands several times with little success until the post was filled by the playwright-director Lennox Robinson in 1910. The onset of World War I and the Irish Rebellion of 1916 almost caused the closing of the theatre. The Abbey Theatre (Irish: Amharclann na Mainistreach), also known as the National Theatre of Ireland (Irish: Amharclann Náisiúnta na hÉireann), in Dublin, Ireland, is one of the country’s leading cultural institutions. First opening to the public on 27 December 1904, and despite losing its original building to a fire in 1951, it has remained active to the present day. The Abbey was the first state-subsidized theatre in the English-speaking world; from 1925 onwards it received an annual subsidy from