

THE KEENERS

An intimate, music-filled portrait of **women, loss, and the fight to hold onto tradition** in a changing Ireland.



A play with music
by Barbara Grecki

THE KEENERS

Set in 1970's Ireland, *The Keeners*, follows a resilient family of women who make their living keening at wakes...when a charismatic band promoter arrives promising fame and fortune their world is upended. With sharp, raw emotion and unexpected tenderness the play delves into the shifting landscape of grief, resilience, and the pull of tradition alongside the allure of change. It explores what we cling to, and what we are willing to leave behind in pursuit of possibility.



The Creatives

Barbara Grecki



(Writer/Co-Director) is a writer, director, actor, and teacher whose work blends sharp storytelling with a deep sense of humanity. She co-wrote *A Woman in Morocco* with composer Daron Hagen (Kentucky Opera, Butler School of Opera) and the opera triptych *New York Stories* (Florida Grand Opera, Chicago Opera Theater). Her stage works, from *In Our Own Words* to *Split Decision*, often center on resilience, community, and transformation — themes at the heart of *The Keeners*. As a director, she has helmed cabaret, one-woman shows, and benefits featuring Broadway luminaries including Victoria Clark and David Hyde Pierce.

James A. Rocco



(Producer/Co-Director) is an award-winning director, producer, and performer whose career spans more than five decades in music and theatre. He made his New York directorial debut in his teens and has since helmed over 200 productions worldwide, including *33 Variations*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Wizard of Oz* (starring Eartha Kitt, Mickey Rooney, and Roseanne), and *Singin' in the Rain* in Tokyo. As CEO of Thirty Saints Productions, Rocco oversees the development and licensing of new musicals, jukebox revues, and his acclaimed *Songbook Series*, now being produced by regional theatres nationwide. On Broadway, he appeared as *The Rum Tum Tugger* in *CATS*, and as a vocalist he toured with jazz legend Herbie Hancock. Through his ongoing *Legacy Recording Series*, he is remastering highlights from 50 years of music-making. Rocco has served as Producing Artistic Director at *The Ordway*, CEO of *Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma*, and as an investor in Broadway's *Come From Away*. www.jamesrocco.com

Gilda Lyons



Is responsible for the *Keening Recordings* which were commissioned Gilda made this comment: "I continue to be deeply moved by the immensity and weight of the Irish tradition of mourning out loud. I found the research/composing/recording process to be intensely personal, layered, and rich—and I want very much now to see your *The Keeners* in Ireland. After writing these movements and living in all the materials that informed them, I feel strongly that I need to return to Ireland myself for some additional layers of research and to spend time living in the Irish sound and language. For now, very glad to be placing these in your hands."

Emily Villano



(Production Associate/Thirty Saints Productions) Emily Villano is a dynamic singer, music director, vocal coach, and arts administrator dedicated to fostering the next generation of performers. She is Managing Director and co-founder of *ETC Productions*, an education-focused theater company serving schools and communities across Minnesota. Emily also sings professionally throughout the Twin Cities and works with *Thirty Saints Music Licensing* and *Crooners Lounge* in music rights and promotions.

Chris Ranney



(Music Supervisor) is a musical director, conductor, and pianist in NYC. Broadway credits include *Come From Away* and *A Christmas Story*. He has worked extensively in Seattle at the 5th Avenue Theatre, Village Theatre, and Seattle Rep. Chris performs traditional Irish and Scottish music on the button accordion and piano. His work has been heard at festivals around the country including the Alaska Folk Festival, Yachats Celtic Music Festival, and O'Flaherty Irish Music Retreat. Internationally, he has been featured as an artist at the Medellín Féile in Colombia, and his work as an arranger has been featured in major venues in China. (chrisranney.com)

Bruce Alan Johnson



(Stage Manager and Sound Designer) performed on Broadway as Joe Gillis in *Sunset Blvd* with Elaine Paige, and as Fyedka in the national tour of *Fiddler On The Roof* with Theodore Bikel. He is a recording artist and music producer (brucejohnsonmusic.com), a multi-award winning filmmaker (*Transcending: The Wat Misaka Story*, *Riding Out The Storm*, *All-American Eyes*) and multi-award winning photographer (brucejohnsonphotography.com). He has stage managed, directed and designed in New York and across the United States. Bruce has collaborated artistically in various forms with James A. Rocco for over 25 years. He is a graduate of the University of Iowa with a BFA in film production.

Brendan Dalton



(Dialect Coach) is a voice, speech, and dialects coach in NYC. He works with actors and non-actors alike, helping guide each toward effortless, natural-sounding, and authentic vocal performances. He also works as an actor, sound designer, audio engineer, and composer. Theatrically, he's worked with: Hartford Stage, Playwrights Horizons, Clubbed Thumb, Atlantic Theater Company, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, New York Theatre Workshop, Ars Nova, The Flea, and Blue Man Group. His TV credits include: "Younger" (Paramount+ / TV Land), "FBI" (CBS), "Dickinson" (Apple TV+). (brendan-dalton.com)

Caitlin Warbelow



(Violinist) hails from a family of entrepreneurs and bush pilots in Alaska. For many years, she served as the violinist/fiddler with the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *Come From Away*. Caitlin is on the faculty at Manhattan's Irish Arts Center, is a coordinator and instructor for festivals nationwide, maintains a large teaching studio, and performs as a symphony soloist. An All-Ireland and New England Fiddle Champion who holds degrees from Columbia University (M.S., Urban Planning) and Boston University (B.A., Anthropology and B.Mus., Violin Performance), Caitlin's expertise lies not only in music, but also entrepreneurship, writing, and activism. Caitlin is the founder of Tune Supply and Alaska Supply.

The Cast

Ciaran Byrne



(Cillian Conroy) Since making his professional acting debut in The Irish Repertory Theatre's 25th Anniversary Production of The Freedom of the City, Ciaran has appeared in numerous U.S. Regional and Off Broadway productions. Most notably in Studio Theatre's multiple Helen Hayes Award nominated production of Moment and Irish Reps Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Award nominated revival of Philadelphia Here I Come.

Handpicked by Steven Spielberg, the Northern Irishman made his U.S. television debut in a recurring role on TNT's Edward Burns and Steven Spielberg produced crime drama, Public Morals, and can be seen back on U.S. television screens in Marvel Studios' upcoming second season of Daredevil: Born Again. Ciaran's latest feature films, Little Audrey, and The Best Friend, are both set for U.S. theatrical release in 2026

Brooke Davis



(Keira Moynihan) is an Actor, Singer, Producer & Educator. The founder of Arizona Stage Company, and Music Theatre Arizona, she's also a proud member of SAG/AFTRA and AEA. TV credits include Murphy Brown, Orange Is the New Black, Little America, Law & Order. Film credits include Movie 43, The Atlantic Story & Me & My Gal. Theatre credits include several productions as Earth Mother in Menopause: The Musical, Chicago, Sound

of Music, Sweeney Todd, Guys & Dolls, Glass Menagerie & White Christmas. Favorite role Mom to Sarah & Jake and Grandma to Davis, Ari & Leo.

Terry Donnelly



(Margaret Malin) has performed extensively on both sides of the Atlantic, including with Dublin's Abbey Theatre and London's National Theatre. A longtime member of the Irish Repertory Theatre company, her many appearances there include The Tinker's Wedding, Lady G, The O'Casey Cycle, The Dead, 1904, Riders to the Sea, Transport – The Musical, Crackskull Row, and The Irish and How They Got That Way. Regional credits include Dancing at Lughnasa and The Streets of New York. On screen, Terry has been seen in A Hungry Feeling, The Silver Tassie, Law and Order, The Crezz, Bully Tiny, and The Sash.

Kate Flanagan



(Brigid Malin) is a New York born and raised actress and holds an MFA in acting from Columbia University. She starred in the award-winning independent film Penitencia and the short film 20 Seconds, Jury Prize Winner for the New Ohio Theater Festival. Her work has been featured at the Cannes Film Festival and on stage at Classic Stage Company. Her humor writing has been featured in The New Yorker's

Daily Shouts and Overheard New York and she performs stand up comedy in both New York and Philadelphia. She is thrilled to bring her blend of dramatic skill and sharp wit to The Keeners. For Bill and Susan who gave her a love of Ireland and that year at Trinity.

John Keating



(Dennis Feeny) John is a prominent New York theatre actor who just completed The Weir at Irish Rep- his 28th show with the Company - other recent Irish Rep favorites include Translations (2024 Lortel for best Revival), Molly Sweeney, Two by Synge, and Autumn Royal. John is a 2020 Callaway Award winner and received the 2019 Sustained Excellence Award for his work at Irish Rep. Other credits include 7 productions with Theatre for a NewAudience, most recently Henry IV last season. He has worked in many NYC Theatres, including Roundabout, Atlantic, Pearl, Mint, Irish Arts, Pond, and the Coop, as well as, most leading U.S Regional Theatres. John has done extensive work on TV and film - recent work includes A24 productions- Marty Supreme, A Different Man, and First Cow and Seanie Sugrue productions – Sticky and dasheR. 300 Audiobook narrations (Audie winner).

Cole Kaplan



(Paddy Sullivan / The Boy) is a recent graduate of NYU Tisch Drama, where he completed his BFA and won the Outstanding Achievement in Studio Award from Stonestreet Studios. He made his Off-Broadway debut at SoHo Playhouse in Sprawl, originating the role of Mitch. On screen, Cole recently played Randall in the short film Gratuity and performed lead motion capture and voiceover in the video game Ember Point. Cole is grateful to the entire cast and creative team of The Keeners, his girlfriend, and his family for all their love and support.

Stavros Koumbaros



(Michael Malin) is a Brooklyn-based actor and singer whose work spans national tours, regional theatre, and concert performance. National tour credits include Les Misérables (Joly/Marius u/s). Regional appearances include Beautiful (Barry), Titanic (Fleet), West Side Story (Tony), and Jesus Christ Superstar (Jesus). A 2023 Lotte Lenya Competition finalist, Stavros brings both vocal and dramatic range to his roles. He is grateful to his agent, Mikey, Joey, Hannah, and his family for their support. @stavros.koumbaros

Emma O'Donnell



(Mary Pat Malin) is a dual U.S.–Irish citizen whose work spans Off-Broadway, regional theatre, and national tours. At Irish Repertory Theatre, she has appeared in A Touch of the Poet, Juno and the Paycock, The Shaughraun, Prisoner of the Crown, and The Hairy Ape. Off-Broadway credits include Court Martial at Fort Devens (Audelco Award, Best Ensemble) and Freed (Audelco nomination). Regional highlights include Dancing at Lughnasa (Portland Stage), Marisol (Luna Stage), and productions with the Guthrie Theater, Walnut Street Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, and Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Emma trained at Circle in the Square and the British American Drama Academy.

Julia Walker



(Assistant Stage Manager) Off-Broadway: Good Bones (PA) Regional: Anastasia at Cape Playhouse (ASM), Anastasia at Bucks County Playhouse (PA/Replacement ASM) Other: Pride and Prejudice (PSM), After Pinocchio (ASM), Broadway Bares (ASM), Flight Path Dance Showcase (SM), World Science Festival (PA), Girlboss (PSM), Jimmy Awards (PA), Yes I Am A Freshman Theater Major...(ASM), The Girls (ASM). Education: Fordham University BA in Theatre - Stage Management.

534 Productions – Lead Producer

Founded by **Adrienne Shepherd**, is a New York-based stage and film production company dedicated to telling stories rooted in truth and humanity. Guided by the belief that truth changes lives, the company develops and produces work that entertains while sparking reflection and conversation. From intimate plays to innovative film projects, 534 Productions champions new voices and collaborates with established artists to create productions that reveal the extraordinary in everyday life. With a focus on both artistic integrity and audience impact, Adrienne Shepherd and 534 Productions are committed to work that inspires, connects, and endures. www.534productions.com

Thirty Saints Productions – Executive Producer

founded by Broadway and recording veteran James A. Rocco and estate attorney Jeffrey P. Scott, is an innovative theatrical company with five core specialties: Producing & Consulting (investor in Broadway's *Come From Away* and co-producer with Broadway Asia of the Japanese tour of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* starring Anthony Fedorov), Music Licensing (*The Marvelous Wonderettes*), Live Concerts (touring SRO-style themed concerts to performing arts centers and clubs nationwide), Recordings (original cast album of Albert Evans and Ron Kaehler's *A Country Christmas Carol*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *Nite Club Confidential*), and New Plays & Musical Representation (including **Christine Toy Johnson's** *Empress Mei Li Lotus Blossom*, *Chris Sherman's Life Alert*, *Oy to the World*, and *The Holiday Songbook*). Along with their associate **Emily Villano**, Thirty Saints continues to champion new projects that entertain, inspire, and connect audiences everywhere. www.thirtysaintsproductions.com

For further information



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