Hibernicizing the Russians

by Nicholas Grene*

A perceived affinity between Ireland and Russia led to a proliferation of Irish plays derived from Russian sources in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, no less than fourteen between 1981 and 2011. This essay focuses on three of these: Brian Friel's version of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* (1981), John McGahern's treatment of Tolstoy's *The Power of Darkness* (1991), and Tom Murphy's adaptation of Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin's novel *The Golovyovs* as *The Last Days of a Reluctant Tyrant* (2009). The object of the analysis is to show the nature of the Irish-Russian association and how the playwrights re-fitted their Russian materials for a contemporary Irish context.

Keywords: Ireland, Russia, theatre, Brian Friel, John McGahern, Tom Murphy.

There is a widespread idea of a special affinity between late nineteenth century Russia and Ireland which is always offered as an explanation for the many versions of Chekhov and other Russian writers by Irish playwrights. Apparently, the first suggestion that Chekhov would benefit from an Irish colouring came in 1968, with a production of *The Cherry Orchard* at the Abbey, Ireland's national theatre. It was a big occasion for the theatre because they had hired Maria Knebel from the Moscow Art Theatre to direct the play. The Moscow Art Theatre was of course where Chekhov's plays had been premiered and Knebel had worked under Stansislavksi himself. For this production, two of Ireland's then leading actors were cast, Siobhan McKenna as Ranevskaya, and Cyril Cusack as her brother Gayev. It was a very clever pairing, as each of them had an acting style to match the character: McKenna the *grande dame* of Irish theatre, histrionic and volatile like

* Trinity College Dublin.

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the owner of the cherry orchard, Cusack renowned for his understated manner, ideal for the aimless, fidgety Gayev for ever playing imaginary games of billiards to himself. They played in their own Irish voices but neither the translation nor the setting were identifiably Irish.

Though all the critics praised both leading actors, one felt that an opportunity had been lost. Knebel's might be *The Cherry Orchard* "as in Russia," said Seamus Kelly in his review for the *Irish Times*, what was needed was Chekhov as in Ireland:

> the truth of Chekhov's thesis would be more strongly emphasised if it were interpreted in terms of the decaying Irish Great House, with Gombeen-men taking over, and good old Somerville-and-Ross-type slaves left behind to die instead of Firs. No dramatist translates to an Irish scene and idiom of our very recent past more accurately than Chekhov. (Kelly 1968)

Edith Somerville and Martin Ross were the two late nineteenth-century women who collaborated on novels and stories about the Anglo-Irish gentry in their dilapidated big houses, as power passed from such landowners to the Catholic middle classes. 'Gombeen-men' was the insulting term for the pushing farmers and businessmen who were enriching themselves at the expense of their neighbours: the equivalent term in Russian would have been 'kulak', literally a 'fist'. You can see why Kelly saw an obvious resemblance between the Anglo-Irish dispossessed of their estates by local self-made men, the subject of so many novels and plays, and the situation in *The Cherry Orchard*. The oddity is that no-one seems quite to have seen that before.

But once the association was made, Irish versions and adapations of Russian plays and novels came thick and fast. Thomas Kilroy's *The Seagull* was the first of such Hibernicised Russian plays, but there were no less than fourteen Russian related shows over the thirty years from 1981 to 2011. (See Appendix 1). Several of these were versions of Chekhov. Friel and McGuinness both 'translated' *Three Sisters* and *Uncle Vanya*. (None of these Irish writers actually knows Russian: they work from existing English versions or specially commissioned literal translations.) Friel's *Three Plays After* is made up of a dramatization of Chekhov's short story "The Lady with the Little Dog," the one-act farce *The Bear*, and Friel's own short *Afterplay* in which characters from two separate Chekhov plays, Andrei from *Three Sisters* and Sonya from *Uncle Vanya*, are imagined meeting up in Moscow years after the end of the plays' action. There are adaptations like Friel's staging of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* and Tom Murphy's *The Last Days of a Reluctant Tyrant*, taken from the nineteenth-century novel

The Golovyovs, by Mikhail Saltykov-Shchredin. Marina Carr's *Sixteen Possible Glimpses* is based on the life of Chekhov, while Roddy Doyle's *The Government Inspector* re-locates Gogol's satire on the corruption of the Russian provincial town to the Ireland of the collapsed Celtic Tiger. I consider here three of these plays, Friel's *Three Sisters*, McGahern's *The Power of Darkness* and Murphy's *The Last Days of a Reluctant Tyrant*, to tease out the nature of the Irish-Russian association and how the playwrights went about making these Russian works their own.

Three Sisters

Friel's *Three Sisters*, produced the same year as Kilroy's *The Seagull*, is important for its political underpinnings. Brian Friel, then generally regarded as Ireland's leading contemporary playwright, established the Field Day Theatre Company together with the Irish actor Stephen Rea in 1980. Against a background of sectarian violence in the North of Ireland -- and both of them came from the North, though from different religious backgrounds, Friel Catholic, Rea Protestant – felt that they wanted to get involved in a cultural initiative to counteract the polarized politics of the time. Their first hugely successful production was Friel's play *Translations*, which used the detailed Ordnance Survey mapping of Ireland in the 1830s as a metaphor for British colonial occupation and the loss of the Irish language. After the great success of *Translations*, and the determination of Friel and Rea to continue the Field Day enterprise, the question was what to do next.

Clearly Brian Friel could not be expected to come up with a new original play every year, but a version of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* made sense. Friel had a long standing love for Chekhov's work – Chekhov who like himself had been a short story writer before he became a playwright. Friel's play *Aristocrats* from 1978 is often thought of as a Chekhovian play. There may also have been a specific reason for the choice of *Three Sisters*. This was one of the plays produced by Tyrone Guthrie in Minneapolis in 1963; it was to be one of the opening productions of the new theare named in the director's honour. Guthrie, invited the young Brian Friel, who had almost no experience of professional theatre at the time, to attend rehearsals there, an event of great importance to his career. So picking *Three Sisters* from among the Chekhov plays may have been in some sort an *hommage* to Guthrie. But Friel's objective in taking on the play was to provide a specifically Irish *Three Sisters*. In an interview at the time he made this clear:

The first purpose in doing *Three Sisters* like this is because for a group of Irish actors, only American or English texts are available. If it's an English text of a Russian scenario, there's a double assumption there. I felt we should be able to short-circuit this double assumption so that they [the actors] can assume a language that can simply flow out of them. (Friel 1999: 99)

Productions of Chekhov in English had a way of sounding very Home Counties, very Bloomsbury. Friel was bent on moving Chekhov from Bloomsbury to Ballybeg, the fictitious small town in rural Ireland which was the setting for virtually all his plays. If Chekhov was originally Russian, the Irish had just as much right to appropriate him as the English.

Friel stayed relatively close to Chekhov's text; the setting was still in Russia not transposed to Ireland as in Kilroy's *Seagull*. The Prozorov sisters were still marooned in a remote provincial Russian city, pining for their adored metropolitan Moscow. All that Friel sought to do was to create a text that was speakable for Irish actors. One of the most basic problems Friel had to deal with was that of Russian names. It is normal in Russia to address people by name and patronymic: it's polite but not especially formal. So Chebutykin, though a very old family friend, will always be Ivan Romanich, while the new brigade commander Vershinin is addressed as Alexander Ignatich. Only close family members or intimates are called by first name alone, and then often by pet versions of those names: Andrei will be Andriushka, Nikolai Nikolenka. It's hard for English speakers to get their tongues round these forms. In many cases Friel just leaves out the names altogether but for Chebutykin he devises a special affectionate nickname: Irina repeatedly calls him "dear dopey Doctor."

Friel seeks to naturalize Chekhov's language, as in the characteristic self-narration of Olga's opening lines:

It's hard to believe it's only a year since Father's death, isn't it? Twelve months to the day. The fifth of May. Your birthday, Irina. (Friel 1992: 11)

This is just a single sentence in the original and it is not Irina's birthday but her name-day; for nineteenth-century Russians, as important as your actual birthday was the feast day of the saint for whom you were named. It is only occasionally that the language of the sisters is very obviously Irish English. So, for example, Olga compares her own looks to those of her siblings: "I'm the only one of the four of us that – that's standing the times badly. Oh yes; I know I've become lean and hard." (Friel 1992: 13) This is an expansion of Chehov's original which

translates simply as "As for me, I've just aged and grown a lot thinner;" "standing the times badly" is an Irish colloquialism for showing your age. When Vershinin arrives, posted to their town as the brigade commander, whom the sisters remember from the time he was a junior officer to their father, Masha recalls how they used to tease him as "the Lovesick Major:" "You were a lieutenant then. And you must have been in love. And everyone took a hand at you and called you Major for some reason." (Friel 1992: 23) To 'take a hand at' somebody in Irish English is to mock or tease them.

The three sisters are educated Irish speakers of English, only once in a while using an obviously Irish colloquialism. Friel, though, uses Irish English through the play to mark class difference. Anfisa, the old nursemaid so obligatory in a Chekhov play, is sketched in as a permanently grumbling housekeeper, with a markedly colloquial Irish voice:

> Colonel Somebody-or-Other has arrived. Never clapped eyes on him before. He's taken off his coat if you don't mind and he's on his way upstairs. Irina, you just behave yourself now, madam. And I suppose you're complaining that your lunch is late. Well, I've only one pair of hands, you know! (Friel 1992: 21)

A standard English language translation of this renders it as follows:

> My dears, there's a strange colonel just arrived. He's taken off his coat and he's coming up now. Irenushka, do be nice and polite to him, won't you? And it's high time we had lunch too... Oh, dear! (Chekhov 1959: 256)

Friel has fun too with the language of Natasha, the appallingly vulgar girl from the town whom Andrei will marry and who will eventually oust the sisters from their home. These are her entry lines:

> Sweet mother of God, I'm late – they're at the dinner already. (*Quick look in the mirror. She adjusts her hair.*) It'll have to do now. (*She sees* IRINA *and goes to her. Her accent becomes slightly posh*). Irina darling, many, many happy returns. (*She gives* IRINA *a vigorous and prolonged kiss*) And look at the crowd of the guests! Goodness gracious I could never face in there! (Friel 1992: 36)

The exclamation, "Sweet mother of God," the use of the definite article in "the dinner" are class markers in Irish English, as is Natasha's attempt to move her accent upmarket, becoming "slightly posh" when she meets with the better educated Irina.

Music was always very important for Friel, and he takes pains to find songs to fit in his Irish English version of Chekhov. So, for

example, in the first act Chekhov's text only specifies that Tusenbach plays the piano. In Friel what he plays is "Won"t You Buy My Pretty Flowers?" a sentimental ballad from the late nineteenth century, and he sings snatches of the refrain: "There are many sad and weary in this pleasant world of ours... Crying every night so dreary, Won't you buy my pretty flowers?" (Friel 1992: 14) This points up the undertow of melancholy in the atmosphere in contrast to the flowers which flood the stage for Irina's nameday. Chebutykin has an absurd little snatch of song that he sings or hums recurrently, which most translators translate as something like "Ta-ra-ra boom-de-ay / I'm sitting on a tomb today." This, it seems, is a specifically Russian version of the US minstrel show song, "Ta-ra-ra boom de ay." As such, it is an interesting reflection of the global circulation of popular music: the earliest known version of the song was in a 1891 American revue, yet Chekhov's original audiences in 1900 would apparently have known it well in this Russian form; for them it would presumably have seemed a fitting expression of Chebutykin's defeated cynicism. The trick was to try to find something that works in an equivalent way for an English-speaking Irish audience. What Friel did was to substitute an English music-hall song from 1906: "There I was waiting at the church." In the original lyrics, it is the comic/pathetic story of the lady deserted on her wedding day by the man who promised to marry her but turns out to be married already. In the play, Friel changes the genders to make it refer to Chebutykin's own situation: "When I found she'd left me in the lurch, [she for he] / Oh how it did upset me." (Friel 1992: 122) Chebutykin was in love with the mother of the three sisters and never married because of his unrequited love. But the song also reflects obliquely on the situation of the sisters in the play disappointed in love or in marriage.

Friel was not in the business of making his version of Chekhov immediately 'relevant' to the Field Day audiences of 1981. After all, early twentieth century Russia as portrayed in the play was not really very like late twentieth century Ireland. Anyone in 1981, in however remote a part of Donegal or Derry, could take a bus to Dublin or Belfast if they wanted to get a taste of the pleasures of the capital. Where in Ireland could you find an equivalent to the three sisters, stuck in a city of a hundred thousand people, a cultural desert, so remote from Moscow that getting back there is always going to remain a hopeless dream? Chekhov never names his city, but he didn't need to: there would have been hundreds like it in the provincial Russia of his time – literally thousands of miles away from Moscow or Petersburg, some

distance even from the railway station that could connect you with them. That is a situation quite unlike being stuck in Friel's trademark village of Ballybeg.

It was rather the sense of being stuck that might have struck a chord for Irish audiences in the 1980s, the dreariness and hopelessness of so many lives. It was a terrible time in Northern Ireland: 1981 was the year when Republican prisoners in Northern Ireland went on hunger strike in protest and ten of them starved themselves to death. This was an event which affected the whole country but Field Day would not have wanted to address that highly divisive political issue directly. Instead Friel dramatizes the sense of frustration and depression in ordinary lives, and the desire to transcend those lives as they were. The characters in *Three Sisters* repeatedly lament the way they live, and wonder about how it might be improved, how it might be different in generations to come. Chekhov himself at one point in his life was attracted to the Utopian teachings of his great older contemporary Tolstoy. A return to the simple life, to hard manual labour, was Tolstoy's recipe for putting right the ills of a developed civilisation. There are traces of this in *Three Sisters* in the speeches of Vershinin, Tusenbach and even Irina. But Chekhov became sceptical of such magic bullet prescriptions, and the people who express such beliefs in his plays tend to be ever so gently mocked. Let's sit around and talk about the joys of work while the servants slave in the background getting us our meals. What he does sympathise with is the need his characters feel for another life, a better, different life, if only hundreds of years from the present. And it is that sympathy that Friel too shares, and probably felt his 1980s Irish audiences would share too. Field Day was not in the business of proposing instant resolutions to the problems of the day; *Three Sisters* is in many ways quite a bleak play. But it is a play of humane compassion and generous feeling for those forced to live in hope and aspiration.

The Power of Darkness

John McGahern's version of Tolstoy's *The Power of Darkness* originated in a 1972 commission from the BBC to adapt the play "into Irish speech for radio." (McGahern 1991: vii) The perceived affinity between Ireland and Russia and the suitability of Irish speech for Russian plays by the latter part of the twentieth century was a marketplace phenomenon. After completing the radio adaptation in 1972, however, McGahern "found [himself] returning again and again to *The Power of Darkness*." "I had come to realise," he says in his

Introduction to the published text of his later stage version,

> That the language I used for the adaptation had been too colourful and idiomatic and that it skimmed over what was at the heart of the play. *The Power of Darkness* is a perfect description of that heart and is uncannily close to the moral climate in which I grew up. The old fear of famine was confused with terror and damnation. The confusion and guilt and plain ignorance that surrounded sex turned men and women into exploiters and adversaries. (McGahern 1991: vii)

This is a telling statement for the understanding of the text that McGahern created, staged by the Abbey in 1991.

To start with, it is indeed written in a style bleached of the sort of self-consciously 'colourful' Irish dialect which was no doubt what the BBC was looking for in the original commission. Instead, McGahern writes in a crude and homely style suitable for the rural brutalism of his subject. Paul, the casually philandering equivalent of Tolstoy's protagonist Nikita, caught between the wife of his employer with whom he has started an affair and the young woman he has seduced and abandoned, exclaims:

> Once a man gets mixed up with women he never knows whether he's coming or going. He'd be far better to go out into the fields and eat grass with the horses. [...] God, when these women come abulling you'd think there wasn't a fence up anywhere in the country (ivi, p. 14).

This is Tolstoy's text as translated by his devoted disciples Louise and Aylmer Maude: "Here's a fine muddle. I'm as sweet as honey on the lasses, but when a fellow's sinned with 'em it's a bad look-out!." (Tolstoy 1923: 45) McGahern takes out any of the original Nikita's sense of guilt and gives Paul instead a sort of harried self-preening. Human sexuality is reduced to mere animal compulsion; the women who are attracted to Paul are "abulling," cows in season who break out of their fields in search of a bull.

McGahern fully assimilates Tolstoy's Russian play into his own Irish landscape, the border counties of Leitrim and Roscommon that provide the background for all his fiction. Paul works for the rich farmer Peter King, whose wife Eileen is encouraged by Paul's mother to poison her husband in order to inherit the property and be able to re-marry. Not content with marrying the widowed Eileen, Paul gets the stepdaughter Maggie pregnant and has to dispose of her miscarried foetus on the day she is supposed to be married off to prevent scandal. (McGahern spares us the horror of the original, where Nikita actually

murders his own live newborn baby.) Gripped by remorse, Paul goes out to make what is supposed to be his speech in honour of the bride – Maggie is being married off to another man -- but will actually be his full confession to all that has happened.

The 1991 production of the play, directed by Garry Hynes, was a disastrous failure, almost universally slated by the critics. This was in part because of a lack of awareness of the original. The play was presented as McGahern's own work and what was expected as a result was a stage equivalent of his fiction, a subtle, ironic, low-key study of rural Ireland. Reviewers were appalled by the stagey sensationalism of *The Power of Darkness*, unaware that if anything McGahern had toned down Tolstoy's original, written as a didactic Christian melodrama in 1886 when the novelist was in his most zealous post-conversion phase. In many respects, the transfer from Russia to Ireland works very well. So, for example, Peter King is not only a well-to-do farmer but a horse-dealer, picking up on the evidently symbolic opening lines of Tolstoy, featuring a stallion breaking out among the mares. Later when Paul has taken over the place, his form of dissipation is to hang out with the "horsey crowd" who will "fleece him:" "he thinks it's great to be the master of a place that has the name of horses." (McGahern 1991: 27) Baby, the counterpart of Tolstoy's Matryona, is a brilliant creation as the amoral mother who manages her manipulative designs with a mellifluous command of cliché. As she hands over the poisonous materials to Eileen to enable her to murder her husband, she reassures the poisoner that if they were found she could have an excuse ready: "if by any misfortune they saw the light, all you have to say is that they're for dogs that go around killing sheep. Actually, they work very well on dogs." (McGahern 1991: 8)

The designed contrast in Tolstoy is between the easily articulate Matryona and Nikita's father, the stammering but devout Akim. Akim is in the tradition of the Russian saintly fool, his lack of apparent worldly common sense and his inability to voice his ideas the marks of his spiritual integrity. McGahern has difficulty in finding an Irish version of Akim. His Oliver ends up sounding conventionally pious, as when he urges Paul to be honest about whether he has seduced Rosie (McGahern's stand-in for the innocent orphan Matrinka): "You can twist things before men but not before God. She's an orphan. She has no one to stand up for her. There's all the more need to be straight and decent." (McGahern 1991: 11) In place of Oliver, it is the grotesque drunken ex-soldier Paddy, equivalent to Tolstoy's Mitrich, who becomes the 'moral voice' of McGahern's play. It is his anarchic, anti-authoritarian vision that finally inspires Paul to

confess: "What does it all add up to? It adds up to fuck all. What should you be afraid of them for? All they can make you do is die once, and then you're with the kings and county councillors." (McGahern 1991: 50) McGahern saw in *The Power of Darkness* a reflection of the moral climate of his own 1940s and 1950s Ireland: a repressed, conformist rural community, always conscious of hardwon status and desperate for land and power. But with his own humanist reaction against the power of the Church within that world, there was no way he could go out imaginatively to Tolstoy's evangelical Christianity.

The Last Days of a Reluctant Tyrant

The Last Days of a Reluctant Tyrant is unlike any of the other texts considered in that it is an adaptation of a novel – the long glum nineteenth-century novel by Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin generally translated as *The Golovlyov Family*. Saltykov summed up the clan whose story he relates close to the end of the book: "This family's history, over several generations, is characterised by three distinctive features: idleness, unfitness for any kind of work and drunkenness." They are a Russian equivalent of the irreversibly dissolute Rackrents in Maria Edgeworth's great Irish novel *Castle Rackrent*. The only figure temporarily to halt the family decline was the forceful matriarch Arina: "Thanks to her personal energy," Saltykov tells us, "this woman had raised the family to its highest-ever level of prosperity." But all to no avail; failing to pass her qualities on to her children, she "died entangled in a web of lethargy, idle talk and pettiness." (Saltykov-Shchredin 1988: 277)

Saltykov's 300 page long, rambling narrative, published over five years and not originally planned as a novel, was clearly difficult to dramatize. Murphy's cue for his theatrical conception came from a late paragraph where Porphiry, Arina's spectacularly hypocritical, evil and predatory son begins to suffer belatedly from remorse.

> From everywhere, from all corners of that loathsome house, ghosts of the wronged seemed to be creeping. Whichever way he went, in whatever direction he turned, grey spectres were moving. There was his father, Vladimir Golovlyov, in white nightcap, mocking everyone and quoting Barkov. There was brother Stepan-Blockhead, together with the quiet and priggish Pavel. (Saltykov-Shchredin 1988: 280)

The playwright made Arina rather than Porphiry the protagonist and had her, the reluctant tyrant of his play's title, haunted by an ever

increasing train of ghosts on stage as one after another of her family members die. What is more, the casual mention of Barkov – Vladimir the father "mocking everyone and quoting Barkov" – inspired Murphy to introduce a whole series of poems deriving from the scandalously obscene verse of the eighteenth-century Russian poet Ivan Semenovitch Barkov. Victor, Murphy's Irish equivalent of Vladimir, shares a bawdy Barkov duet with his good-for-nothing son Steven (Stepan-Blockhead), and recites his own Barkov-like address to his penis:

> O glorious member mine,
> Patient in abstinence,
> Come, now arisen, unto your reward. (Murphy 2009: 6)

Later Steven continues in the same vein with the delivery of an equally explicit poem by the seventeenth century English poet Rochester. The anarchic sexual energies of the men in life, reprised as onstage ghosts, represent all that the tyrannically controlling Arina has to repress in her acquisitive drive to build the Golovlyov property empire.

What Murphy seized out of the long messy story of the Golovlyov misadventures was a mutant version of *King Lear*. Arina is a female Lear who disastrously divides her property between her three sons. Peter, Murphy's counterpart to Porphiry, is Goneril and Regan rolled into one, the "little Judas" endlessly professing love and duty to his "dearest Mama," unceasing in his pursuit of complete power. Neither of the other two sons, the "blockhead" Steven, nor the silent and withdrawn Paul, have the makings of a Cordelia. But Arina is like Lear in needing their love and being hurt by its denial. This matriarchal Lear is a recognizably Irish figure. Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist* famously denounced Ireland as the old sow who eats her farrow. There are more immediate theatrical precedents for Murphy's portrait of the strong mother who destroys her own family by the need to impose her will at all costs. Big Maggie in John B. Keane's play is another such maternal tyrant; Mommo in Murphy's own *Bailegangaire* is a cognate character. It appears to be a characteristically Irish type: the forceful woman among weak men who must struggle to survive in a patriarchal world, always at the cost of love. Murphy ends the play with a final tour de force, Arina's impassioned defence of her role as reluctant tyrant: "What was she to do? Things were out of hand. Let things go from bad to worse? – To nothing? Someone had to take over, full control. ... I showed you as much love as was safe!" (Murphy 2009: 84-85) Out of Saltykov's satiric novel of the decadent Russian

gentry, Murphy creates an Irish family tragedy of land hunger and the psychological deformations of patriarchy.

In many ways it seems an unlikely affinity. What can a small island with a population of less than five million off the westernmost coast of Europe have in common with the largest country in the world, the eastern empire that sprawls across two continents and nine time zones, taking in dozens of different peoples, languages and ethnicities? Ireland and Russia is an absurd mouse and elephant comparison. Yet there are points of comparison that have been brought out in the Hibernicizing of Russian texts discussed here. In the late nineteenth century both Ireland and Russia were backward rural economies on however massively different a scale. That produced in both the sort of predatory need for property that we see in Murphy's *Last Days*. It also contributed to the atmosphere of ignorance, fear and sexual repression featured in McGahern's version of Tolstoy. Irish admirers of Chekhov like Friel wanted to make his plays their own by using a Hiberno-English suitable for Irish actors. But equally such Irish English was thought suitable for Russian subjects outside the country; the BBC marketed their radio drama *The Power of Darkness* as "a modern version of LEO TOLSTOY'S play in living Irish speech by John McGahern." (*The Power of Darkness* 1972) The ramshackle country estate that features in so many nineteenth century novels and plays was equated with the crumbling Big House of the Irish gentry. And the situation of this gentry class, on the point of losing power to their Catholic neighbours, had its counterpart in the position of landowners like Ranevskaya and Gayev in *The Cherry Orchard* about to be dispossessed by the self-made Lopakhin.

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Appendix 1:
Irish staged plays of Russian orgins 1981-2011

1981	Thomas Kilroy	*The Seagull*
	Brian Friel	*Three Sisters*
1987	Brian Friel	*Fathers and Sons*
1990	Frank McGuinness	*Three Sisters*
1991	John McGahern	*The Power of Darkness*
1992	Brian Friel	*A Month in the Country*
1995	Frank McGuinness	*Uncle Vanya*
1998	Brian Friel	*Uncle Vanya*
1999	Michael West	*The Seagull*
2002	Brian Friel	*Three Plays After*
2004	Tom Murphy	*The Cherry Orchard*
2009	Tom Murphy	*The Last Days of a Reluctant Tyrant*
2011	Marina Carr	*Sixteen Possible Glimpses*
	Roddy Doyle	*The Government Inspector*