

BALLINROBE MUSICAL SOCIETY TITANIC - THE MUSICAL



Titanic epic to dock in Ballinrobe

▲ **THE CAST** Ballinrobe Musical Society cast, crew and committee members who will perform 'Titanic' from February 9 to 16 in Ballinrobe Community School.

DENISE HORAN

WITH 42 main parts, a financial investment of €100,000, a set that was 1,000 hours in the making, music of epic quality and a tragic storyline that captured the imagination of the world like no other single event in the 20th century, Ballinrobe Musical Society promise audiences a 'night to remember' when 'Titanic - The Musical' takes to the stage next week.

The Irish premier of the musical, which first opened on Broadway in 1997 and subsequently received five Tony awards, takes place in Ballinrobe Community School, starting this Saturday night and running for eight consecutive nights. With 'Titanic' itself

described as 'the star of the show' by musical society Chairman, Pat McGovern, patrons will see the stage in the school's auditorium to be transformed into a spectacular replica of the ill-fated ship. With nine sets of stairs and three levels, the set is 60 feet wide and runs the full 30-foot height of the auditorium, and the sinking of the 'ship' is expected to be one of the outstanding special effects features of the show.

Ballinrobe Musical Society have earned a reputation for top-quality productions, a standing that has been embellished by numerous AIMS awards over the years, but the Chairman is in no doubt that this is their biggest undertaking to date - and also their most exciting project.

"Everything about Titanic is big and epic, so when we decided to do it we knew we had to do it on a grand scale," said Pat, at the launch of the show in Flannery's Bar and Restaurant last week.

"It requires the biggest budget we've had so far, the biggest cast, the biggest effort, the biggest orchestra and presented the greatest technical difficulties. It has taken a huge commitment from everyone involved - the cast, the backstage crew, the set construction team, the director, musical director and choreographer, the committee and the community - to make it possible, but we are confident that every piece of the jigsaw is in place and that it will be a night to remember for everyone who

sees it."

Pat first saw the show in Belfast two years ago and has seen it twice more since then. It had a 'profound effect' on him, he recalls, and he is now excited about the prospect of so many people having that same experience courtesy of the Ballinrobe Musical Society production.

"This is epic, something that audiences won't get to see again in Ireland for a long time. All great shows such as 'West Side Story', 'Fiddler on the Roof', 'Ragtime, The Musical' or indeed the modern classic, 'Les Miserables', have three essential ingredients which set them apart - a wonderful score, great drama and rich emotion. 'Titanic' contains all three of those ingredients and that is why it is considered to be one

of the best shows out there.

"It also has something indefinable about it that makes you come away from it feeling emotionally uplifted," he explained.

Eighty performers will take to the stage next week, including many well-known stars of Ballinrobe shows down the years, including Seán Costello, Daithí Ryder, Michael Coen, Siobhán Campbell, Lauragh Gill, Michelle Conroy and Richard Crumlish, along with recently-unearthed talents like Mairéad Coughlan, Niall Conway, Patrick Howley and Walter Donoghue.

In an example of the wonderful attention to detail that makes Ballinrobe Musical Society productions so professional and highly-regarded, each cast

member who is not playing a lead role has been given the life story of a person who was on Titanic on that fateful night, April 15, 1912, and will be assuming the role of that person on stage.

'Titanic - The Musical' will take place in Ballinrobe Community School auditorium from February 9 to 16, with half of the proceeds from the performance on Sunday, February 10, going to Mayo/Roscommon Hospice. Students and school groups are encouraged to attend on the opening night.

Each performance will commence at 8.30pm. Tickets are available from Seán Costello, Abbey Street, Ballinrobe, 094 9541405 between 9.30am and 6pm. Credit card bookings are accepted.

Poignant reminder for the people of Lahardane

ONE village more than other in Mayo will be thoroughly familiar with the tragic event that shook the world on April 15, 1912.

Fourteen inhabitants of Lahardane, in the parish of Addergoole, boarded the famous ship in Cobh but tragically only three survived to tell the tale of that harrowing night.

This multiple loss of life had a profound effect on the community and in recent years the Addergoole Titanic Society have gone to great lengths to ensure that the eleven people who lost their lives are never forgotten.

Just last April, the society commemorated the 95th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic in a very special way - for the tenth year in succession.

in Lahardane remains silent on every day of the year apart from the early hours of April 15 when, at 2.20am, a very special commemoration begins, as society member Toss Gibbons explains.

"We ring the bell every year for 25 minutes. Two slow knells for each of the eleven people lost and three happy, joyous minutes for the three that were saved. The bell tolls just once a year on this night between two and three in the morning."

In 2002, a commemorative plaque was unveiled in St Patrick's Church in Lahardane (pictured right) bearing the names of the eleven people who perished - John, Catherine and Mary Bourke, Nora Fleming, Mary Mangan, all from Carrowskeheen; James Flynn, from



Cuilnakillev; Bridget Donohue from Cum; Delia Martin of Derrymartin; Pat Canavan of Knockmaria; Mary Canavan, Tonacrick and Catherine McGowan from Terry. The three survivors were Annie Kate Kelly of Cuilmullagh, Delia McDermott of Knockfarnaught and Annie McGowan.

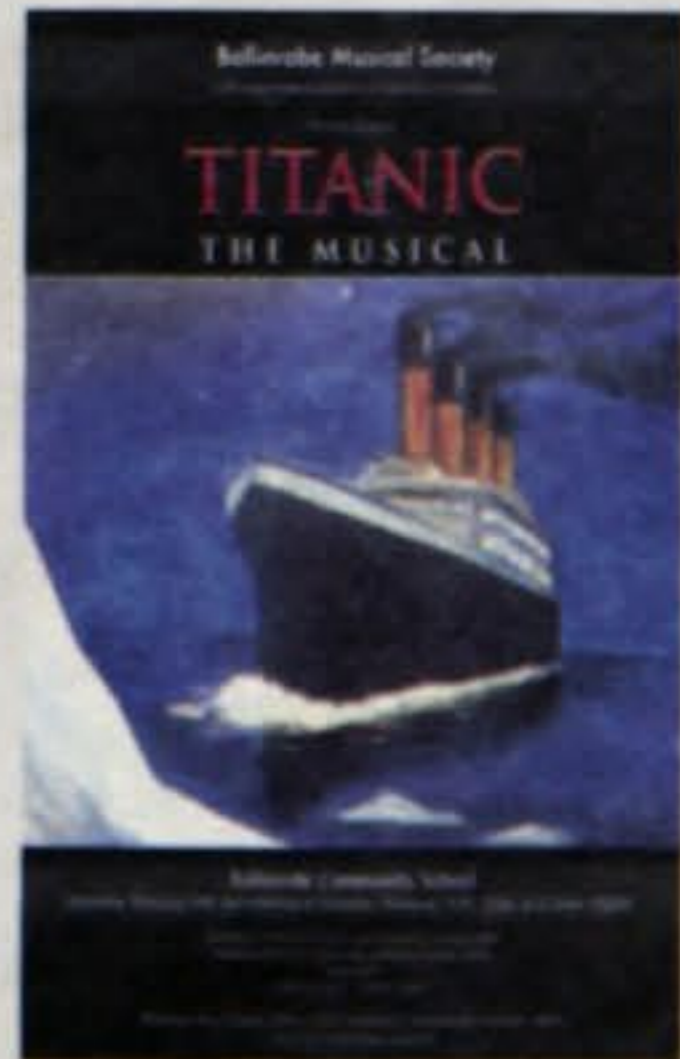
Anyone interested in garnering more information on this historic event can go to the **Addergoole Titanic Society** website at <http://titanic.thewestofireland.com>

► **IN MEMORY** A plaque bearing the names of all those from Lahardane, Co. Mayo who sailed on the Titanic which was unveiled at a commemoration in the village in 2002.

Pic: Keith Heneghan/Phocis

RMS TITANIC THE STORY

PURPORTEDLY unsinkable, The RMS Titanic set sail on her maiden voyage from Southampton on April 10, 1912, bound for New York, having been built at the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast. Four days later, she struck an iceberg, and finally sank on the morning of April 15, 1912. A total of 1,517 men, women and children lost their lives in what remains the greatest seafaring disaster of the 20th century. In 1958, a film about the



tragedy, entitled 'A Night to Remember', was released and it is on this film - rather than the 1997 film, 'Titanic', starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslett - that 'Titanic - The Musical' is based. Written by Peter Stone with music and lyrics by Maury Yeston, the show premiered on Broadway in April 1997.