

**THE FACTORY GIRLS**  
**BY FRANK MCGUINNESS**  
**THURSDAY, 23RD AND FRIDAY 24TH JANUARY @ 8PM**  
**TICKETS: €10 (ADULTS) €5 (STUDENTS AND OAPS)**

Cast:

Eve Loughrey - Ellen  
Sheenagh Rowland - Una  
Kate Duffy - Vera  
Saoirse Free - Rebecca  
Alison Whelan - Rosemary  
Mark Mulqueen- Andy Bonner  
Killian Massey - Mr Rowan

The Factory Girls is set in the recession blighted Ireland of 1982. Unemployment was on the rise, emigration was the only option for many and for those who had jobs, there was a constant fear of losing it or enduring severe pay cuts.

One of the hardest hit parts of Ireland was Donegal. There was a long tradition of textile and clothes making and there were a number of shirt factories in the county. By the 1980s, however, many of these factories were barely surviving due to cheap imports from abroad. It is in one such factory that The Factory Girls is set. The five factory girls vary in age from 16 to 60. They are all formidable in their own way. The girls who have been working longest have grown tired of constant pay cuts, increased workload and a life generally made more difficult. This frustration is added to by the appearance of a new manager, Rohan. In his twenties and fresh out of university, he has no sense of the women's struggles and really views the factory as a unit of production. The other male in the play is Bonner, the trade union representative. Although he should be on the side of the women, there is a view that he is taking care of himself. Like Rohan, he shows no understanding of the plight of the factory girls.

The action comes to a head when the women stage an occupation of the administrative office in an attempt to force a compromise. Living, eating and sleeping together in such a cramped space leads to tension, humour and ultimately a realisation about their lives.

The characters are:

Ellen, in her fifties. She is the real leader of the girls. Her tragic back story informs her attitude to life. She can appear gruff and angry and is a formidable force, as the factory manager finds out as the play progresses.

Rebecca, in her late twenties. Although quieter than Ellen, Rebecca can stand up for herself when needed. There is a sense that she fears becoming like Una and Ellen, trapped in the factory.

Rosemary, sixteen. Rosemary has only begun working in the factory. She doesn't quite appreciate or understand the challenges facing the older women. Her innocence and naiveté are important in the telling of the story.

Una, in her sixties. The oldest member of the cast, she lives with her older sister. She and Ellen have a deep relationship based on years working together. Much of the comedy comes from her interactions with her fellow workers.

Vera, in her early thirties. Vera has two small children at home. Her relationship with her

husband is a difficult one. Like Ellen she is a formidable character, quick witted and clever. Bonner, in his forties. Bonner is the Trade Union representative. He is supposed to represent the interests of the workers but there is a suggestion that he is working with Rohan. He is patronising in his attitude towards the women.

Rohan, in his late twenties. A university graduate, Rohan is the first Catholic to manage the factory. He shows little care or understanding for the women's predicament. This is only a job for him, a step on the ladder to where he wants to be.

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