

Oona Doherty

HARD TO BE SOFT – A BELFAST PRAYER

Avec 16 interprètes



Vendredi 10 & samedi 11 octobre 2025 • 19h30
au Grand Théâtre

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Durée **45min. (pas d'entracte)**

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Bord de plateau

avec l'équipe artistique après chaque représentation.

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Conception & chorégraphie **Oona Doherty**

Conception sonore & composition **David Holmes**

Interprètes **Oona Doherty, Sam Finnegan, John Scott**

Sugar army & Gate boys **Jenny Bock, Alicia Cardoso,**

Renz Chateau-Ducos, Matthew Faber de Montigny,

Rewa Jain, Lena Kosch, Martim Lourenço, Morgane Nonet,

Sara Pereira, Martine Pierrot, Helena Saputo, Juliette Solvi,

Sophie Weidig

Décors & conception lumières **Ciaran Bagnall**

Photographie & film **Luca Truffarelli**

Projections **Jack Phelan**

Régie générale **Lisa Marie Barry**

Assistant régie **Maxime Jerry Fraisse**

Construction décors **Atelier Contrevent** d'après le design
de **Peter Lorimer**

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Production **OD works**

Directrice de développement **Dorothee Alemany**

Chargée de production **Lucie Gissinger Maurandy**

Administratrice **Christine Maupetit**

Production originale **Prime Cut Productions**

Coproduction **Pôle européen de création – ministère de
la Culture / Maison de la Danse aide pour la Biennale de
la danse de Lyon 2018 ; Belfast International Arts Festival ;
Dublin Dance Festival**

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Soutiens **La Briqueterie, CDCN du Val-de-Marne ; Arts
Council of Northern Ireland's Support for the Individual
Artist Major Award ; The British Council**

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Remerciements **Danzschoul Cathy Moes by Li Marteling**

HARD TO BE SOFT – A BELFAST PRAYER

EN Oona Doherty's *Hard to be soft – A Belfast Prayer* is an unflinching portrait of her hometown's working-class communities, capturing their violence and vulnerability, quirks and courage. Blending brutal insurrection with fragile hope, the choreography distils the city's energy into a four-part physical prayer, where street swagger meets intimate reflection. Set to a powerful score by David Holmes, *Hard to be soft* explores masculinity, sectarianism, and class, portraying a place where defiance is survival and beauty, armour. Hailed as one of Europe's most exciting contemporary dance voices, Doherty crafts a deeply human tribute to Belfast, where pain, pride, and faith collide in motion. A workshop programme with girls and boys in Luxembourg will strengthen ties between the performance and the community.

FR Avec *Hard to be soft – A Belfast Prayer*, créé avec le compositeur David Holmes, né à Belfast, la chorégraphe Oona Doherty présente une pièce qui tient de la prière physique. Composé de quatre parties, le spectacle explore le rapport difficile des hommes avec leurs propres émotions. La pièce s'ouvre par un solo qui s'approprie la gestuelle puissante de jeunes nord-irlandais, puis, dans le deuxième tableau, Oona Doherty dresse le portrait des jeunes femmes adolescentes, les «Sugar army», et de leurs luttes quotidiennes pour être entendues et vues. S'en suit une partie kaléidoscopique sur les tares de la virilité et un dernier tableau qui célèbre la fin du cycle et la renaissance. *Hard to be soft* est une pièce qui évoque la mémoire brisée de Belfast, mais c'est aussi un travail poétique de sensibilisation et de transmission que la chorégraphe développe au cours d'ateliers dans chaque ville pour intégrer de jeunes amateurs dans le spectacle.

DE Bei ihrem zweiten Besuch am Grand Théâtre erkundet Oona Doherty, wie Menschen dazu erzogen werden, ihre Gefühle zu verbergen. Im Solo, das den Abend eröffnet, eignet sich die gefeierte Tänzerin und Choreografin die kraftvollen Gesten nordirischer Jugendlicher an. Im Hintergrund vermischen sich derweil Stimmen aus Belfast mit sakral anmutender Musik von David Holmes, mit dem Doherty dieses „Belfaster Gebet“ gemeinsam erschaffen hat. Doherty fängt den Alltag der Arbeiterklasse ein, den man selten im Tanztheater sieht, seine Gewalt und Verletzlichkeit, seine Klischees und Laster, aber auch den Mut, die Kraft und die Energie, die in ihm stecken. Im Rahmen der Aufführungen finden Workshops für junge Frauen und Männer statt, die dann auch bei den Vorstellungen mitwirken werden.

EPISODE 2 / SUGAR ARMY – JANIE DOHERTY

Janie Doherty

One northern Irish woman's mixed emotions on the life we live here and the fuel behind it.

I think this specific place, this little bubble. That has tragedy in the walls,
it's like the politics of our comfort,
the politics of our comfort of staying somewhere
and we dress it up with glamour, because we have to make light of tragedy because what else are we gonna do, we'd cry otherwise we'd cry otherwise if you think that there's no jobs and theirs this and that and all your friends are pregnant and some friends are leaving for Australia and your jealous but you don't actually have the guts to do it yourself, so you get really dressed up and you make a name for yourself by being really fashionable and you put on the face of success and sometimes you can blag your way and get like better job opportunities if you put on a good face if you look good, then at least that's solving half the problem If you're in a shit hole but you look fucking amazing theirs something really ..erm..empowering about that and empowering about the women that do that They go threw so much shit and put up with... Fucking scumbag men as well but they put on the face and they look really amazing And that's also so.... empowering for other women? Also, it's like stardom Their super stars, their super stars in this granite, like stagnancy And their super stars like for putting on their Armor And getting on with the day

EPISODE 3 / MEAT KALEIDOSCOPE – PACKY LEE – LAUER RODY

A Father and son. Belfast Men. Son is now a PSNI Man, Father is a republican. They haven't spoken in years, this is them talking, biting at each other.

Son – I'm a good man, I'm in a good job, stable.

Provide for my family, security, pension, means, I'm sitting in your seat. Someone says to me, my son, how's work, I'd be able to fucking answer it.

Dad – and you know wear live

Son – I know you do

Dad – Aye, what do you think it's like going into the fucking shops them

Son – the same as it always is. Fucking smelly bastard

Dad – How's paddy, fucking RUC c'mon

Son – Bang, what, who's that, oh fucking corner shop your Da goes in to gets fucking robbed,

who do they call, who do they phone, who's there, fucking me, not on the mobile, in a fucking uniform, protecting, getting to the bottom of it.

Dad – should be ashamed of your self

Son – ashamed of myself? Ask me where I was this morning, I'll tell you where you were this

morning lying in fucking bed, I'll tell you where I was,

knocking on the door of a lovely

couple whose son was wrapped around a fucking lamppost, First at the scene me

It's not just war out their da

Car accidents, suicides, over doses, drug mistakes, underage drinking, house breaks, thefts, robbery, cars.

Dad – do you forget where you came from?

Son – do I forget wear I fucking I came from?

Dad – do you know where you came from anymore?

Son – I know where I came from

Dad – do ya?

Son – you'd have more respect for me if I was one of the people burning the cars, more

respect for me if I was one of the ones running around with the illegal gun, more respect for me if joined some type of fucking organisation. Or what? sat on my fucking hole only thing you look forward to is a bet in the star

Dad - you always good with your mouth weren't ye

Son - aye maybe that's the job am in, maybe that's why

Dad - mouth piece

Son - Mouth piece?

Dad - mouth piece for them

Son - aye good one

Dad - aye

Son - took a couple of people of the bridge before, typical you, you're still living in there
fucking 70's...80's

Times have changed, things haver past. My son grows up, your grandson,

Dad - yes

Son - the first place he'd be put into

Dad - your mummy would like to see her grandchildren

Son - I'm not bringing them round for a full-scale argument
Da, for them to witness the way
you disrespect me, I brought them up with respect, the way I was brought

Dad - I'll be out of the house then

EPISODE 4 / OONA DOHERTY - A CONCRETE SONG

Renaissance of a concrete's Song
Dig in to Dig out
Nothing's linear or clear anyway She said
Doubt
Rising Birds of Paradise
What if Jesus came back?
What if he was bricking your car in the holy lands?
What if she was necking WKD
Glug glug glug
Sparkles down your neck
Uch sure
Were all made of Germs the planets and the cells
The Buckfast and the God
People aren't so bad but ye see at night...
Stage Spotlights and duel carriage ways
Euroland ques and the white cube
A Da's back
The black box, My box
Filled up with passion and rage
Woman and Man and Son and Beast and Angel and nothing
All at the same time nothing
The adrenalin Future
Small town
Generational Cellular in-balance
Nervous System's five-pound entry
Hail to the Dot an inward shove
fucking Belfast Love

BIOGRAPHY

Oona Doherty

CHOREOGRAPHER

Oona Doherty is a Northern Irish based Dance Artist. She studied at The London School of Contemporary Dance, University of Ulster and LABAN London and has a BA Honours and Post Graduate in Contemporary Dance Studies. She has been performing Dance Theatre internationally since 2010 with Companies such as: TRASH (NL), Abbatoir Ferme (BE), Veronika Riz (IT), Emma Martin/United Fall (ROI), Enda Walsh & Landmark Productions (ROI). She has been creating, collaborating and performing internationally since 2010. In 2016, she created her internationally acclaimed solo *Hope hunt* and *The Ascension into Lazarus*. In 2021 she received the Silver Lion from the Venice Biennale for her choreographic work. In 2024 she created *Specky Clark*, a series of theatrical images. Alongside her choreographic works, the artist develops site specific performances, visual arts and installations, presented at Higher Bridges Gallery – Enniskillen, 180 The Strand-London, Fumbally Gallery –Dublin, or more recently Kunstmeile – Hamburg. She is currently associate artist to Ballet Preljocaj (France). Her Company is based in Marseille, France.







Grand Théâtre • 30 – 31.10.2025

saison

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Sylvain Groud

Le banquet des merveilles – Du chaos à l'harmonie



© Frédéric Iovino



Impressum

Photos © **Luca Truffarelli**

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