

## Thesis Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to compare the production history and reception of Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*, arguably one of his most famous and successful plays, in Irish and Czech contexts. Following its triumphant premiere at the Abbey Theatre in 1990 directed by Patrick Mason, the production transferred to London and Broadway, where it garnered further critical acclaim and several prestigious awards. The first Czech production, directed by Jan Burian, opened at Divadlo na Vinohradech in Prague in 1993, and over the course of the next twenty years it was staged another eight times on Czech professional – mostly regional stages.

The opening chapter of the thesis focuses on the analysis of *Dancing at Lughnasa* using the method of close reading, as well as consulting secondary literature. The following chapter is divided into two parts, the first of them attempting to outline the background of the play by focusing on the events of the 1930s in Ireland. The second part is concerned with the context of writing *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Chapters four and five comprise the main body of the thesis and deal with the description of the five most significant productions in Ireland and the Czech Republic. These chapters focus on the context, the directors' concept, the acting and the critical acclaim. The last chapter concentrates on comparing the most significant Irish and Czech productions as well as clarifying the issue of the play's popularity. The approaches towards *Dancing at Lughnasa* in the Czech Republic are also touched upon. The immense popularity of this play on Czech stages is often explained by the fact that it offers five interesting roles for women. This thesis would like to ascertain whether this fact has always been the main source of motivation for the theatre practitioners to stage *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Another question this thesis examines is whether the interpretation of the play by most Czech directors, namely the simplification of Friel's text, may have prevented a Czech audience from experiencing the play fully.