

# ACT II playhouse

World-class theatre • intimate venue

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**For Media Release:** Aug. 31, 2010      **Press Contact:** Rosemarie DeLuca, 215-654-1011 / roe@act2.org

## **Act II Playhouse Receives Prestigious \$60,000 Grant from the Philadelphia Theatre Initiative**

**AMBLER, PA** – Act II Playhouse has been awarded a \$60,000 grant from the Philadelphia Theatre Initiative (PTI), one of seven grant-making initiatives of the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

The grant will assist Act II in its March 2011 production of the regional premiere – and first American production – of Irish playwright Sebastian Barry’s drama *The Pride of Parnell Street*, which will be directed by Act II Associate Artistic Director Harriet Power.

“The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, through the Philadelphia Theatre Initiative, is one of the most meaningful sources of funding for the region’s professional theatres,” said Power. “Having been fortunate enough to participate in many PTI professional development trips, workshops, and guest speaker events since 1994, I am especially gratified that Act II Playhouse and *The Pride of Parnell Street* have been chosen for this most prestigious grant.”

Act II was one of only 13 theatre companies in the five-county Philadelphia region to receive PTI grants, awarded annually and totaling more than \$960,000 for the 2010 cycle.

“It’s very exciting news,” said Act II Development Director Kimberly Reilly. “The selection process is very, very competitive. It’s probably the most sought-after grant in Philadelphia for theatres like Act II. For us, a grant of this size and scope is a real validation of the great work the Playhouse is doing.”

In *The Pride of Parnell Street*, Ireland’s demoralizing exit from the 1990 World Cup took its toll on many Dubliners - especially Janet and Joe Brady of Parnell Street, who lost far more than the match that night. In two interweaving monologues, Janet and Joe reveal the intimacies of their love and the rupture of their marriage, as well as their affection for Ireland’s most famous city. An intimate tale of life on the streets of Dublin by one of Ireland’s greatest living playwrights, Ireland’s *Sunday Independent* calls *The Pride of Parnell Street* “quiveringly beautiful...quite simply magnificent.”

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Power has cast Kittson O'Neill and David Whalen to play Janet and Joe Brady – two veteran actors of Irish descent who share her excitement about the play. Tony and Obie-award winner Rob Kaplowitz is composing and designing sound; Barrymore award winners Jim Leitner, Dirk Durossette, and Cloe Fox are creating lighting, scenery, and costumes. "With an all-star cast and design team, and the support from this grant, I hope *The Pride of Parnell Street* will be an electrifying production that does honor to The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage and to our art form," added Power.

Sebastian Barry is an internationally renowned playwright, novelist, and poet. He is winner of the Critics' Circle Award for Best New Play, the Ireland/America Literary Prize, and recipient of multiple nominations for the Man Booker Prize.

"I am honored to call Mr. Barry a close friend as well as colleague, having worked with him in 2006, directing the second-ever production of his one-act *Fred and Jane*," said Power. "He has been called an 'international treasure' as a writer and poet of exceptional insight, complexity, and beauty."

*The Pride of Parnell Street* is on stage at Act II Playhouse March 22 through April 17, 2011. Ticket prices range from \$22 for the three pre-Opening Night preview performances to \$33 on weekends. For tickets and information, visit [www.act2.org](http://www.act2.org) or call 215-654-0200.

## ABOUT ACT II PLAYHOUSE

Act II Playhouse, entering its 12<sup>th</sup> season of professional theatre in the Philadelphia suburb of Ambler, PA, is committed to creating world-class theatre in a venue whose intimacy draws audiences and actors into dynamic interaction. Act II produces new, classic, and contemporary plays and musicals under the direction of **Bud Martin** (Producing Artistic Director), **Harriet Power** (Associate Artistic Director), and **Pam Dickler** (Managing Director). In July 2010, Howard Shapiro of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* declared: "Act II Playhouse is arguably the most up-and-coming of the region's small professional theaters outside Center City."

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