



Kulturtid

By Pia Stilling

On Krudttønden's small black-box stage, the audience is greeted by a minimalist set. The back wall features a landscape photograph of rural Ireland. Eleven pairs of shoes are lined up along the back of the stage, and the floor is covered in artificial grass. Otherwise, the stage is bare, apart from two large wheeled boxes which are used throughout the performance as a table, a bar, a suitcase and various other things.

Here, Kevin Kiernan-Molloy and Jefferson Bond perform Irish playwright Marie Jones's 1996 play *Stones in His Pockets*. Between them, the two actors play 15 different characters, although they mainly portray Charlie Conlon and Jake Quinn, one local County Kerry lad and the other from

Ballycastle in Northern Ireland. Jake Quinn is the more well-travelled of the two. He has lived in New York but returned to Ireland following a failed love affair. (At least, that is the official explanation.) Charlie Conlon has a writer inside him and constantly carries a film script around in his pocket. And with good reason: the town has been invaded by a Hollywood film crew, who are there to shoot a film, with many of the locals hired as extras.

The play explores the challenges faced by both the locals and the film crew as they attempt to interact. The culture clash is enormous. For their part, the locals are delighted to earn £40 a day and get free meals, perhaps even managing to blag an extra dessert. They are also starstruck at the prospect of meeting film star Caroline Giovanni, while at the same time becoming increasingly irritated by being bossed around by the various directors, cameramen and other members of the crew. The biggest clash occurs when a young local drug addict takes his own life by drowning.

There is a great deal at stake on both sides. The film crew wants the extras to be in position and ready, despite the fact that everyone in the town knew the young man. The American film-makers show little empathy in this respect. The locals find it difficult to put on a cheerful face when they have just lost someone in such tragic circumstances. Further problems arise when it is not clear whether they will be allowed time off to attend the funeral.

Kevin Kiernan-Molloy and Jefferson Bond change their voices every time they take on a new character, whether male or female. Jefferson Bond is particularly funny as the film diva Caroline Giovanni. There is no doubt whatsoever that he is playing a woman. With a single shrug, he lets his jacket slip off his shoulders and adopts a seductive, coquettish voice. Both actors switch from an Irish to an American accent in the blink of an eye. It is impressive and highly entertaining. Kevin Kiernan-Molloy is equally amusing as the increasingly desperate floor manager on the film set, barking orders at the extras and practically beside herself with frustration.

The writing is almost cinematic, and the play is full of references to films. One of the older local men has also been an extra in *The Quiet Man* (1952), set in Ireland. It is a story he tells over and over again. There is also a reference to *The Graduate* when Jake confides in Charlie that the female film star has been making advances towards him: “She is trying to seduce me”.

The play is both funny and tragic, as the sense of hopelessness in the small town is palpable. Things are made even worse by the condescending attitude of the American film crew towards the locals. In their own eyes, they can get away with anything. Yet the whole thing is delivered with great humour, and the two actors are nothing short of linguistic virtuosos.

Once again, it is a pleasure to see Ian Burns directing English-language productions. They offer something valuable to the English-speaking community living in Denmark, although the performance is accessible to everyone. The production comes highly recommended for English teachers, who can find inspiration in the teaching materials available on the theatre’s website and should then waste no time in taking their students to see the show.

Stones in His Pockets at Krudttønden

Director: Ian Burns
Cast: Kevin Kiernan-Molloy, Jefferson Bond
Playwright: Marie Jones

Running time: 2 hours, including interval
Performance dates: 31 October – 28 November 2026
Language: Performed in English