



## **BWW Review: EVERY PIECE OF ME: Irish Family Drama at Boston Playwrights' Theatre**

By Nancy Grossman  
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### *Every Piece of Me*

A Boston University New Play Initiative Production by Mary Conroy, Directed by Zohar Fuller; Scenic Design, Lindsay Fuori; Lighting Design, Aaron Henry; Sound Design, J Jumbelic; Costume Design, Stephanie K. Brownell; Dramaturgy, Alexis Scheer; Stage Manager, Katherine Humbert; Assistant Stage Manager, Tasha K. Matthews; Dialect Coach, Christine Hamel

**CAST:** Maureen Adduci, Stephen Cooper, Sarah Hirsch, Maggie Markham, Charlie Tisch

Performances through April 30 at Boston Playwrights' Theatre, 949 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA; Box Office 866-811-4111 or [www.BostonPlaywrights.org](http://www.BostonPlaywrights.org)

There have been countless stories written around the theme of going home, some alleging that you can never go home again, and others subscribing to [Robert Frost's](#) theory that "home is the place that, when you have to go there, they have to let you in." Closing the season at Boston Playwrights' Theatre, *Every Piece of Me* by Mary Conroy is a drama about a family in Ireland whose daughter is coming home after nearly five years living in America. Her departure was marked by high dudgeon, but she is returning with hopes of reconciliation. Will they let her in?

Complicating matters, Aine (Sarah Hirsch) is bringing her fiancé Hunter (Charlie Tisch) to meet the family, even as she has some serious issues to work out with her mother Bridie Joe (Maureen Adduci). Living abroad and being on her own have changed Aine, except that, like the rest of the family, she has secrets and doesn't like to communicate much. Hunter is working on that with her and encouraging her to open up to her parents. Things on the old sod haven't changed substantially because her mother doesn't like change and she is still over-controlling. Oh, except that her dad Joe (Stephen Cooper) has developed a heart condition

and bookish younger sister Deirdre (Maggie Markham) is very pregnant. All in all, it should make for an interesting visit.

We quickly learn that each member of the family has an agenda that is in conflict with someone else's plans. For example, Joe wants Aine to take over his pub so he can grab a business opportunity in the Canary Islands, but she is blindsided by his offer because she wants to live in the States with Hunter. Deirdre's nose is out of joint that Dad doesn't want to turn the pub over to her, and Bridie Joe has no intention of leaving her little grocery shop to go on Joe's adventure. Lacking an in-depth understanding of the family dynamics, Hunter is amenable to the idea of taking over the pub and becoming an expatriate with Aine by his side.

Beneath the already complicated surface lies a web of family secrets that are eventually disclosed and account for some of the tension and bad feelings. When Aine finally decides to open up to Hunter, against her mother's advice, she gives him the intimate knowledge he has been seeking, but risks losing him. His reaction is predictable and, therefore, lacking in dramatic impact. It doesn't help that Tisch takes the news with a look that indicates he tasted sour milk, rather than having just heard a disclosure of epic proportions. Conroy might also rethink the action Hunter chooses as a result of the news.

Hirsch has a lot of the responsibility on her young shoulders and has good chemistry with each of her scene partners. She convinces us that Aine is secretive, yet eventually chooses to come clean as she grows in her relationship with Hunter. Aine and Deirdre are not alike, and the actors convey the dissonance between the sisters. Markham inhabits her character, but her dialect is often difficult to comprehend. Cooper is a lovable Joe whose brogue is more relatable. Adduci's accent is also easy to understand, and she gives Bridie Joe a no-nonsense, down to earth quality that anchors the play.

Director Zohar Fuller authentically creates the world of the play with the help of her design team Lindsay Fuori (scenic), Aaron Henry (lighting), J Jumbelic (sound), and Stephanie K. Brownell (costume). Fuller paces the action well (the show runs 90 minutes with no intermission) and molds the actors into a unified ensemble. She has also collaborated with Conroy on the development of *Every Piece of Me*. As it stands, there is a good story with relevant themes, but some of the characterizations are too thin and the repercussions of their actions need more heft to achieve a greater impact.

**Photo credit: Boston Playwrights' Theatre (Sarah Hirsch, Maggie Markham, Maureen Adduci)**

<http://www.broadwayworld.com/boston/article/BWW-Review-EVERY-PIECE-OF-ME-Irish-Family-Drama-at-Boston-Playwrights-Theatre-20170425>