

Belvoir Players Present

Steel Magnolias



Programme

Director's Note

Get ready to be swept away by the story of enduring female friendships in "Steel Magnolias"! This heartwarming tale blossoms tonight, filled with laughter, love, tears, and the strength that comes from having your sisters by your side.

Whether you're a longtime fan of the play or joining us for the first time, we guarantee you'll be touched by these unforgettable characters. They'll make you laugh, cry, and remember the importance of the women in your own life.

Our talented cast and crew have been working tirelessly to bring this beloved story to life. They've poured their hearts and souls into their roles, and we can't wait for you to see their dedication shine on stage.

So settle in, get ready for a beautiful journey, and prepare to be reminded of the power of friendship, love, and laughter. We're so grateful you're here with us tonight!

Claire Ashe

Cast



Niamh works full-time as a Project Manager for CloudM, an IT company based in Manchester. She graduated from Queen's University Belfast in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in Business IT.

During her time at university, Niamh co-founded the Queen's Musical Theatre society and served many committee member roles as well as performing in their showcases, concerts and full musical productions. She's performed in mainly musicals with various youth and young adult groups from Belfast and beyond, from childhood right up until the last few years. Niamh holds a Grade 7 in Musical Theatre, and is currently working toward a certification in screen acting.

Niamh joined Belvoir Players in 2022 for the Christmas pantomime, and has had subsequent roles in last year's spring play as Angela Leyton in 'The Continental Quilt', and as Susan Glover in the summer tour production 'Strictly for the Birds'. She's delighted to have been given the opportunity to play a dramatic role in a much loved and well known story.

Shelby Eatenton-Latcherie
Niamh Connolly

Sinead lives in Belfast with her husband and 3 rescue dogs. She joined Belvoir Players in 2015 following a decade's break from drama where she focused on obtaining her Law degree and qualifying as a Chartered Accountant.

Sinead recalls falling in love with the stage back in P3 when she won 1st place in the Dungannon (her original hometown) Feis with her recital of the poem 'Candyfloss' (which she still remembers the words of). She swiftly caught the performing bug so joined the local drama group and signed up for speech and drama lessons, which she attended for 10 years, achieving grade 8 in her studies. Throughout school Sinead also partook in several shows and competed in dozens of competitions/festivals, often a regular prize-winner. Consequently, Dungannon Council would acknowledge her achievements and presented her with a special 'Contribution to the Arts' award.

Despite stepping away from acting for several years to concentrate on her career, becoming a Belvoir Players member quickly reignited her passion for performing.

In the last 9 years she has played a variety of lead and support roles across the Spring, Summer Tour and Panto productions. Her most challenging role to date was playing Stella in 'A Streetcar Named Desire'.

She is excited to embrace the challenge of taking on M'Lynn's complex character in this classic play.



M'Lynn Eatenton
Sinead Fox-Hamilton



Truwy Jones
Lucia Beattie

Lucia is a Comber spud and currently lives there with her husband. She moved to Manchester to train to be a primary school teacher but returned to her roots in 2012.

She teaches Key Stage 2 and got involved in drama through producing school plays but in 2013 ventured on to the stage herself. She was involved with a local theatre company in Newtownards for many years, acting in a variety of roles and helping produce their Christmas pantomime. Her favourite role was playing Bob Cratchit in a panto version of 'A Christmas Carol.'

After Covid, she missed the community and camaraderie of a drama group and joined Belvoir Players last year, her first show with them was the panto 'Beauty and The Beast'.

Steel Magnolias is Lucia's first straight play, and she says herself it's a challenging one to have started with. She is enjoying the complexity of the characters and depicting the close the personal relationships, and getting to wear brilliant 80's outfits!

Emma is a native of Fermanagh, living in Belfast since graduating from Plymouth University in Mathematics. This is her first performance with Belvoir Players, and she has really enjoyed getting to know her fellow cast and production team.

Whilst being new to Belvoir, Emma has extensive performing experience. She first appeared in Enniskillen Light Operatic Society's 2014 production of Anything Goes, followed by 2015's Grease. More recently her musical theatre credits have included the mersister Adella in The Little Mermaid (2022) and multiple parents and teachers in 2023's School of Rock. She was also a featured dancer in these productions, following significant training in Ballet, tap and contemporary whilst at University. Dance remains a favourite pastime, and she trains and performs regularly with Dansa.

Emma completed her Performing Arts BTEC Level 3 through South-West College whilst studying for her A-Levels. Through this, she had the opportunity to participate in the National Theatre's festival "Connections", performing in The Accordion Shop at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast, in 2015. She went on to be involved with Fermanagh-based site-specific theatre company Escapade, performing as Juliet in their Shakespearean variety show All The World's A Stage (2017), and stage managing their promenade production of Cymbeline (2018).

Emma has always loved the arts and is excited to join Belfast's thespian community with Steel Magnolias. It is a fun challenge, with every character on stage for the majority of the play, and getting to play Annelle as she evolves as a character throughout each scene.



Annelle Dupuy-Desata
Emma McDowell



Julie-May is married with 3 children who have now flown the nest and has just become a grandmother. Julie-May teaches young people who are psychiatric in-patients in Forster Green Hospital whilst also completing a Masters in Creative Writing at Queens. She joined Belvoir Players in Christmas 2023 when she played the part of Marcella in their pantomime, Beauty and the Beast.

Her love of performing, although nascent at Methodist College Belfast, truly developed through Church youth organisations with the great tradition of performing sketches and dramas, particularly on youth weekends away. This led to a lifelong love of writing and performing in sketches which have been used extensively in many community, church and fundraising activities. Julie-May has written and directed and acted in 2 church pantomimes, 'Snow White' and Robinella and Cinderhood', along with writing, directing and performing in other church and community productions such as 'Hopes and Dreams' (adaptation) 'The Church on the Styne Brae', 'There Will Come A Day' and 'Noah'. Additionally, she has read and recorded two of her own stories for the BBC Storytellers Project.

As a new member of Belvoir Players, Julie-May is excited, albeit slightly daunted, by the challenge of her first straight play, a Louisiana accent and a credible portrayal of the blustering but loveable Ouiser Boudreaux.

Ouiser Boudreaux
Julie-May Noteman

Fionnuala joined Belvoir Players in 2009. She has played various roles with Belvoir including roles in summer tour productions and roles in festival plays. Belvoir Players has also enabled her to have fun 'Extras' roles in a TV advert and a professional production at the Grand Opera House.

She has a degree in History and Politics from QUB and works as a civil servant. Originally from Dungiven, Fionnuala now lives in Saintfield with her husband and three children; a 6 year old daughter and 2 year old twins. She took a break from drama for a number of years but is excited to be back on stage and to be part of such an enjoyable production.



Clairee Belcher
Fionnuala Weir



*Director
Claire Ashe*

Claire has been involved in drama since she was in primary school, working her way through the various LAMDA exams until she attained a teaching qualification. She has an honours degree in Drama with English from Stranmillis College and whilst she was there she took part in numerous pantos and played leading roles in 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle' and 'The House of Bernada Alba.' Claire joined Rosemary Drama Group in 1997 where she took part in the festival productions of 'Time and the Conways,' 'Anastasia' and 'Little Women'. She took a break from drama to look after her family but continued to direct children's plays and nativities at Greenwood Primary School where she is a P1 teacher. Claire joined Belvoir Players in 2017 and has had great fun touring with 'Stop it Nurse!', 'Wedding Fever' and 'Strictly for the Birds'. She has played the wicked stepmother in 'Cinderella', 'Snow White' and 'Aladdin', the Demon in 'Mother Goose' and recently Fairy Flora in 'Beauty and the Beast'. The highlight of her acting career was playing Blanche Dubois in the 2019 Belvoir production of A Streetcar Named Desire.

Claire has directed pantomimes and Sam Crees in various church halls but this is her first time directing for Belvoir Players.

She would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the cast and crew for their commitment and enthusiasm to this production and hope that it leads to many more projects together.

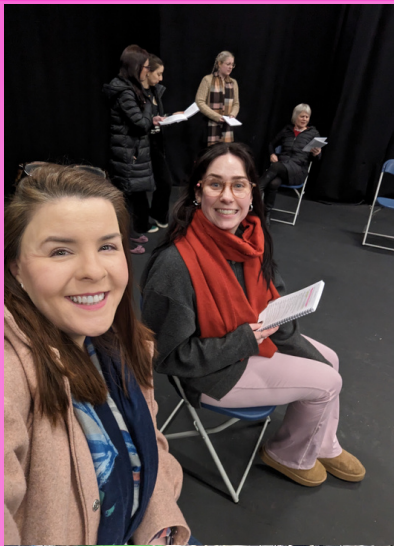
Ciaran has been with Belvoir Players for two and a half years now and has been in a number of plays since joining and while he enjoys the stage work, he has now decided to have a look at the other side of production and has worked to support Claire and the cast in preparation for the play

Ciaran works in the Financial sector, is married, and has twin girls both heading to university this year

Ciaran has enjoyed working with this cast of strong female talent and has learned so much from Claire our director during this experience



*Assistant Director
Ciaran Moore*



Production Team

Director

Claire Ashe

Assistant Director

Ciaran Moore

Wardrobe

Sheila

Hammonds

Phyllis McKelvey

Emma Lewis

Joy Hunter

Julie Brown

Set

Karl Smyth

Stephen Hyland

Mark McKelvey

Jim McDowell

Technical

Karl Smyth

Stephen Hyland

PR

Sinead Fox-Hamilton

Alex McKelvey

Hairdressing

Consultant

Lynsey Armstrong

Photography

Melissa Gordon

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FROZEN JR.

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ROBERT LOPEZ**

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