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## NIGHTLIFE & THE ARTS

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- Abbey Theatre (p184)
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# NIGHTLIFE & THE ARTS

Wait a minute...we've already included a chapter devoted to drinking, what else is there that falls under 'nightlife' in this town? Doesn't *everybody* come here to drink the beer and discover their inner poet? Even the most hard-nosed business deal is discussed and delivered at some point with a pint (or two) in one of the city's 1000-or-so boozers.

Believe it or not, there is life beyond the pub or, more accurately, *around* it. Dublin's status as an entertainment giant has been hyped out of all proportion by the tourist authorities and other vested interests, but it is – for its size at least – a pretty good town to amuse yourself in, with a range of options to satisfy most tastes. There are comedy clubs and opera nights, recitals and readings, cinemas and concert halls. There is the theatre, where you can enjoy a light-hearted musical alongside the more serious stuff by Beckett, Yeats and O'Casey – not to mention a host of new talents. There is music, and lots of it – you can trawl through the listings virtually every day and find a live gig, from classical to contemporary, featuring musicians both homegrown and internationally renowned. There are festivals, dozens of them running throughout the year, devoted to film, theatre, literature, dance and music. And when everything else has closed its doors for the night, you can go back to the pub, or negotiate your way past club bouncers, and strut your funky stuff on a packed dance floor. Whatever it is that floats your boat, you can be sure you will find a version of it in Dublin.

A word to the wise: if you really want to get a full slice of what's available, look beyond Temple Bar. We're not saying you should avoid it – a night of sloppy hedonism should always feature on the schedule – but we do believe that the district is a victim of its own success. The south side remains the part of Dublin with most to offer, but ignore the north side at your peril; not only does it have the city's most important theatres, but the nightlife is constantly evolving, thanks in large part to the influx of nationals from all over the world who have added new flavour to the business of having fun.

## BOOKINGS

Theatre, comedy and classical concerts are usually booked directly through the venue. Tickets for touring international bands and big-name local talent are either sold at the venue or through a number of booking agencies, including **Big Brother Records** (Map p85; ☎ 672 9355; www.bigbrotherrecords.com; 4 Crow St), which sells tickets to smaller alternative gigs and DJ sets (see also p137), **HMV** (Map pp66–7; ☎ 24hr credit-card booking line 679 5334; 65 Grafton St), which sells tickets to pop and rock gigs (see also p135), and **Ticketmaster** (Map pp66–7; ☎ 0818 719 300, 456 9569; www.ticketmaster.ie; St Stephen's Green Shopping Centre), which sells tickets to every genre of big- and medium-sized show – but be aware that it charges between 9% and 12.5% service charge *per ticket*.

## CLUBBING

Dublin's veteran clubbers will fondly reminisce about the good old days of the early 1990s, when exploring the underground fuelled by ecstasy (lovingly referred to as 'disco biscuits') and dancing to the pounding beats of white-label floor-killers virtually defined a

whole generation's experience of what a good night out really was. Then dance music went mainstream, venue owners cottoned on to the fact that there was a lot of money to be made from kids in Day-Glo tops and crazy smiles, and the scene more or less fell into the safe mainstream and hasn't budged since.

In Dublin, the big problem has been the late-night bar licence (see the boxed text, *opposite*), which sees pay-in clubs run only about an hour later than free-entry late-night bars, prompting thousands of punters to keep their euros in their pockets and stay put, where the music is just as loud and the booze is (marginally) cheaper.

The other issue here is variety. Dublin is just too small and ground rents too expensive for a club owner to push out the boat and promote a night of Afro-beat or Nu Jazz that might only attract a few dozen devotees: cost margins dictate the bottom line, which invariably means quantity over quality and the overwhelming dominance of a tried-and-tested menu of unchallenging dance music, rock and chart stuff. Which doesn't mean to say that there aren't great DJs who play really great music (see the boxed text, p176), but most

## WHAT'S ON

To make sense of Dublin's entertainment options, a number of resources will come in handy. Listings of virtually every event appear in the following websites and publications – available at all newsagents except for the *Dublin Event Guide*, which is found in hostels, cafés and bars.

### Newspapers

**Dublin Event Guide** (www.eventguide.ie; free) A comprehensive fortnightly listings newspaper.

**Evening Herald** (www.unison.ie; €1) The Thursday edition features listings of pop and rock concerts, movies and other popular activities.

**Hot Press** (www.hotpress.com; €3.50) Dublin's premier weekly entertainment magazine lists all gigs and events.

**In Dublin** (www.indublin.ie; €1.50) A monthly look at the city's events, with solid listings.

**Irish Times** (www.ireland.com; €1.50) The Friday edition has an excellent pull-out section called the *Ticket*, with reviews and listings of upcoming events.

### Websites

**Dublinks** (www.dublinks.com) Good for all kinds of entertainment in the capital.

**Dublinpubscene.com** (www.dublinpubscene.com) An exhaustive list of where to go for night-time fun, including club nights.

**Entertainment.ie** (www.entertainment.ie) A catch-all listings page detailing what's on.

**Events of the Week** (www.eventsoftheweek.com) An excellent website that does exactly what it says and is updated weekly.

**MCD** (www.mcd.ie) Ireland's biggest promoter provides a comprehensive list of upcoming gigs.

of them play irregular one-off club nights or stick to bar sets. Check out the Drinking chapter (p164) for details of the best DJ bars.

Yet the city's reputation as a clubber's capital endures, which is almost entirely down to the atmosphere generated by the clubbers themselves. Dubliners love to dance and will not let the total absence of rhythm or style get in the way of getting down – a lack of inhibition brought on by a long night's drinking. The other bonus is the city's fixed position on the gigger schedules of some of the world's best DJs, who complement the cream of local talent and help generate some truly memorable nights.

The busiest club nights are Thursday to Saturday, but there's something going on vir-

tually every other night of the week except Sunday. The listings publications and websites (see *above*) have comprehensive, night-by-night coverage of who and what's playing where and when. Admission to most places is between €5 and €8 Monday to Thursday, rising to up to €15 or €20 Friday and Saturday. For discounts, look out for the thousands of fliers that are distributed around most of the city centre's pubs.

### BUTTON FACTORY Map p85

☎ 670 0533; Curved St; admission €8-12;

☎ Thu-Sun

Temple Bar's newest venue is a top-class joint for late-night clubbing (to 3.30am) that deserves a merit badge on two counts:

## OPENING HOURS

It's difficult to be one of Europe's coolest clubbing cities if everything has to shut down just as the night is getting going everywhere else. So difficult, in fact, that Dublin clubs are not too cool at all. Unless a club has a 'theatre licence' granted to venues that have 'live' performances – a handy loophole abused by some of the city's clubs by having something like a snake charmer walk around the crowded dancefloor for 10 minutes every couple of months – then the needles come off the decks at 2.30am sharp and everyone has to clear out within half an hour. The authorities listen to the complaints about a nanny state and then do nothing about it; there are much more powerful forces exerting influence than a bunch of clubbers looking to stretch the good times by a couple of hours, namely the publicans themselves, who hate the idea of late openings and will fight tooth and nail to resist them.

# top picks

## CLUB NIGHTS

- **Backlash** (Pod, *opposite*; www.backlash.ie; Thursday) The loose collective of Irish DJs and producers that make up Bodytonic are behind this great night, where you're as likely to hear anything from house, electro and techno to soul, hip-hop and drum and bass.
- **Pogo** (Pod, *opposite*; Saturday) Barry Redsetta is lord of the dancefloor with his superb mix of house, electro, breaks and funky techno. He is supported by Irish and international guests, including local boy DJ Arveene (see p40), one of our favourites.
- **Soundstream** (Rogue, *opposite*; Friday) Deep, deep techno brought to you by the always excellent D1 crew – they usually feature an invited international guest as well as their own brilliant DJs.
- **Strictly Handbag** (Rí Rá, *opposite*; Monday) Dublin's longest-running club night is the Irish version of London's super-popular School Disco, only better. This excellent tribute to the '80s is a weekly reminder that underneath the dodgy hair and synthesizer beats were some incredibly good dance songs.
- **Underground@Kennedy's** (Kennedy's, *right*; Friday) A rotating menu of top-class sounds from visiting DJs and local favourites including the likes of techno maestro Billy Scurry.

firstly for offering something to the left of the usual Temple Bar cheese; and secondly for being swanky and carpeted. Great sound, big room, terrific spot.

### COPPER FACE JACKS *Map pp66–7*

☎ 475 8777; www.jackson-court.ie; Jackson Court Hotel, 29-30 Harcourt St; admission €6-12  
Dublin's ultimate meat market packs them in and has a reputation for being the destination of choice for off-duty police officers, nurses and anyone looking to avoid music that didn't chart. Don't let the presence of the law put you off though. From what we've heard, they're the biggest miscreants of the lot, especially if there are nurses about!

### GAIETY THEATRE *Map pp66–7*

☎ 677 1717; www.gaietytheatre.com; South King St; admission €12; ☎ 11pm-4am Fri & Sat  
More than 800 punters cram into the theatre (see p186) after hours of dancing

and plenty of drinking. It's loose, fun and very popular. The music is a mix of Latin and soul.

### HOGAN'S *Map pp66–7*

☎ 677 5904; 35 South Great George's St; admission free; ☎ 11pm-2.30am Thu-Sun  
The basement of this popular bar is now home to Under The Stairs, a free club loosely run by local legend Billy Scurry and featuring a rotating mix of home-grown and visiting DJs. The emphasis is on soul, funk, hip hop and disco – all of which serves to keep the dancefloor going.

### HUB *Map p85*

☎ 670 7655; www.thehubmezz.ie; 11 Eustace St; admission €6-15  
The Arctic Monkeys, We Are Scientists and comedian Jimmy Carr have all graced the decks at the legendary rock-indie-electronic night Trashed on Tuesdays, hosted by Trev Radiator. Otherwise it's a mixed bag of indie hits and drinks promos for all and sundry.

### KENNEDY'S *Map pp78–9*

☎ 661 1124; 31-32 Westland Row; admission €10; ☎ Fri-Sat  
Not to be confused with the adamantly old-fashioned pub of the same name on the quays, Kennedy's suitably sweaty and darkened basement is home to the Underground, which plays regular host to a rotating menu of top-class hip hop, techno and house, played by some of the best local and international DJs around. Very much for those in the know.

### LILLIE'S BORDELLO *Map pp66–7*

☎ 679 9204; www.lilliesbordello.ie; Adam Ct; admission €10-20  
Dublin's most prestigious nightclub is all about exclusivity – it claims greatness not so much by whom it caters to (Dublin's power brokers, their ligger mates and visiting celebs) but by whom it refuses entry to (ie everyone else). And, just to prove that even when you've arrived there's always somewhere else to go, those on the inside really wish they could get into the ultra-VIP Jersey Lil's, where some visiting mega-rapper might be swishing Cristal and dropping it like it's hot. Even if they let us in, we wouldn't want to stay – the music is rubbish.

### POD *Map pp66–7*

☎ 478 0025; www.pod.ie; 35 Harcourt St; admission €5-20; ☎ Wed-Sat  
The name is still the same, but the one-time legendary dance club (in Dublin terms, anyway) has been resized and incorporated within the confines of John Reynold's newest entertainment venue, made up of three attached but separate rooms. The much smaller Pod is still home to club nights, ranging from Wednesday's indie faves at Antics to the always excellent dancefest that is Pogo (Saturday).

### RENARD'S *Map pp66–7*

☎ 677 5876; www.renards.ie; South Frederick St; admission €8-15  
Snooty Renard's offers little in terms of interesting music (it mostly has pop hits and old classics), but it is a top spot for a little social credibility. The problem, however, is that most of the celebs – including some of U2 and their entourage when they're in town – are safely ensconced in the upstairs lounge, while the ordinary plebs have to make do with the main room. Frankly, the main floor is far better than the stuffy, slightly depressing celebrity lounge, unless, of course, Bono is buying the drinks.

### RÍ RÁ *Map pp66–7*

☎ 677 4835; www.rira.ie; Dame Ct; admission €5-12  
One of the true veterans of the nightclub scene, Rí Rá – one half of the Irish expression *rí rá agus ruaile buaile* (ree raw aw-gus roola boola), which translates roughly as 'devilment and good fun' – changed hands in 2007, with the new owners promising the same mix of laid-back grooves and funky beats that made it one of the most popular in town. Monday night's Strictly Handbag, with its great menu of '80s music, has been going for more than a dozen years.

### ROGUE *Map p85*

☎ 675 3971; 64 Dame St; admission €8-12; ☎ Mon-Sat  
Relative newcomer on the block, Rogue is an intimate two-floored venue and home to the Bodytonic crew, who specialise in expertly mixed disco, house and electro. Expect to hear melodic and deep house and techno at the excellent Discotonic on Saturday nights.

### SPIRIT *Map pp102–3*

☎ 877 9999; www.spiritdublin.com; 57 Middle Abbey St; admission €5-20; ☎ Thu-Sat  
A veritable temple to hardcore clubbing and the New Age mantra of mind-body-spirit, this three-floored club belies its touchy-feely promos with an edginess that can sometimes verge on nasty – or maybe that's just the coke-fuelled paranoia that so many of the clubbers seem to display. Strictly for the hardened clubber.

### TRIPOD *Map pp66–7*

☎ 478 0025; www.tripod.ie; 35 Harcourt St; admission €5-20; ☎ Wed-Sat  
It's all very confusing, but this newish venue – part of the overall centre that also includes the Pod and Crawdaddy (p182) – mostly hosts live music. Wednesday and Thursday nights are student nights, with the DJs playing a safe-but-fun mix of chart stuff, R'n'B and indie.

### VILLAGE *Map pp66–7*

☎ 475 8555; 26 Wexford St; www.thevillagevenue.com; admission €8-10; ☎ Thu-Sat  
When the live music ends (see p183), the club kicks off and takes 600-odd groovers through a consistent mix of new and old tunes, dancefloor classics and whatever else will shake that booty. A great venue, an eager crowd and a top night out overall.

## COMEDY

The Irish can be hilarious. Off-the-cuff, in the pub, their real speciality is deflationary, iconoclastic humour as used within that other great art form, storytelling. It's all about pacing and not taking yourself too seriously. On a stage, though, they tend to take themselves far too seriously.

### SODOM & BEGORRAH

Ah, those Dubs and their word plays. One of our favourites was coined by the country's first film censor, James Montgomery, appointed in 1932. He took his job very seriously and dedicated himself to protecting Irish audiences from the 'californification' of American films (Red Hot Chili Peppers, eat your hearts out). He also cast a suspicious eye on the activities of the Gate and Abbey theatres, which he dubbed Sodom and Begorrah. Brilliant.

Still, a few names have risen out of the mire of mother-in-law jokes and earned that elusive tag of great comic. Besides stars like Dermot Morgan and Ardal O'Hanlon – who gave us the utterly brilliant *Father Ted* – these include the observational genius of Dara O'Briain, the laconic wit of Dylan Moran, the superb Deirdre O'Kane and the utterly brilliant Tommy Tiernan.

The highlight of the comedy year is the annual **Bulmers International Comedy Festival** ([www.bulmerscomedy.ie](http://www.bulmerscomedy.ie)), which takes place at 20-odd venues over three weeks, usually in September, and features a barrel-load of local and international talent. Big laughs.

### BANKER'S Map pp66–7

☎ 679 3697; 16 Trinity St; admission €5; 🕒 9–11pm  
A Friday-night improv club takes place in the basement of this bar near Trinity College. It has yet to establish itself as a success, but it's a good spot to watch wet-behind-the-ears wannabe comics go through their (often terrified) paces. And who said *Schadenfreude* wasn't fun?

### COMEDY DUBLIN

☎ 872 9199; [www.comedydublin.com](http://www.comedydublin.com); admission €8; 🕒 from 8pm  
Some of Dublin's best comic talents have grouped together to create a comedy troupe that takes to the stage on Sunday nights in the **Belvedere** (Map pp102–3); ☎ 872 9199; Great Denmark St) and Tuesday nights in **Sheehan's** (Map pp66–7); ☎ 677 1914; 17 Chatham St). Some of their stuff is hilarious.

### HA'PENNY BRIDGE INN Map p85

☎ 677 0616; 42 Wellington Quay; adult/concession €6/5; 🕒 9–11pm  
From Tuesday to Thursday you can hear some fairly funny comedians (as well as some truly awful ones) do their stuff in the upstairs room of this Temple Bar pub. Tuesday night's **Battle of the Axe** (☎ 086 815 6987; [www.battleoftheaxe.com](http://www.battleoftheaxe.com)), an improvisation night that features a lot of 'crowd participation' (read 'trading insults'), is the best of them.

### INTERNATIONAL BAR Map pp66–7

☎ 677 9250; 23 Wicklow St; admission €7.50; 🕒 9–11pm  
The upstairs room above this pub (see p165) hosts three comedy nights a week. Monday night is Comedy Improv, the best of the lot,

where the audience throws up subjects for the established comedians to work with. Wednesday night is Comedy Cellar, Ardal O'Hanlon's original creation, where blossoming talent is given the chance to find out if their material is up to scratch, and Thursday night is the International Comedy Club, hosted by Aidan Bishop, which generally has a line-up of good comedians.

### LAUGHTER LOUNGE Map p85

☎ 1800 266 339; [www.laughterlounge.com](http://www.laughterlounge.com); 4–6 Eden Quay; reserved/unreserved seat €30/25; 🕒 doors open 7.30pm  
This newly refurbished comedy theatre is the place to see those comics too famous for the smaller pub stages but not famous enough to sell out the city's bigger venues. Think comedians on the way up (or on the way down).

## FILM

Ireland boasts the highest number of young cinemagoers in all of Europe. Forty years ago, O'Connell St and the surrounding streets were literally awash with cinemas, but now most of them have long since disappeared. This has left many film-hungry Dubliners queuing up in the foyer of a suburban multiplex, waiting to be fed a diet of first-run blockbusters and the odd independent movie. Of the four cinemas left in the city centre, however, two offer a more challenging list of foreign releases and art-house films.

Save yourself the hassle of queuing and book your tickets online, especially for Sunday-evening screenings of popular first-run films. Out on the piss Friday and Saturday nights, most Dubliners have neither the energy nor

### DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

If you're around in early spring (late February to early March), most of Dublin's cinemas participate in the **Jameson Dublin International Film Festival** (☎ 679 1616; [www.dubliniff.com](http://www.dubliniff.com)), a two-week showcase for new films by Irish and international directors, and a good opportunity to see classic movies that hardly get a run in cinemas. A major criticism of the festival, however, is that many of the films included in the schedule would have earned a cinema release regardless, making it more difficult for small-budget films to find a slot.

### MOVIES IN THE SQUARE

Every Saturday night throughout the summer (from June to August), Temple Bar's Meeting House Sq hosts free screenings of films beginning at 8pm. The movies on offer are usually classics and are often preceded by an Irish short. For tickets, contact the **Temple Bar Information Centre** (Map p85); ☎ 677 2255; [www.visit-templebar.ie](http://www.visit-templebar.ie); 12 East Essex St).

the cash for more of the same, so it's a trip to the cinema at the end of the weekend. Admission prices are generally €5 to €6 for afternoon shows, rising to €8.50 after 5pm. If you have a student card, you pay only €5 for all shows.

### CINEMORLD MULTIPLEX Map pp102–3

☎ 0818 304 204; [www.cinemorld.ie](http://www.cinemorld.ie); Parnell Centre, Parnell St  
This 17-screen cinema replaced many smaller cinemas and shows only commercial releases. The seats are comfy, the concession stand is huge and the selection of pick 'n' mix could induce a sugar seizure. It lacks the style of the older-style cinema, but we like it anyway.

### IRISH FILM INSTITUTE Map p85

☎ 679 3477; [www.irishfilm.ie](http://www.irishfilm.ie); 6 Eustace St  
The Irish Film Institute (IFI) has a couple of screens and shows classics and new art-house films, although we question some of their selections: weird and controversial can be a little tedious if the film is crap. The complex also has a bar, a café and a bookshop. Weekly (€1.70) or annual (€20) membership is required for some uncertified films that can only be screened as part of a 'club' – the only way to get around the censor's red pen. It's a great cinema, but sometimes it can be a little pretentious.

### SAVOY Map pp102–3

☎ 0818 776 776; [www.savoy.ie](http://www.savoy.ie); Upper O'Connell St  
The Savoy is a five-screen, first-run cinema, and has late-night shows at weekends. Savoy Cinema 1 is the largest in the country and its enormous screen is the perfect way to view really spectacular blockbuster movies.

### SCREEN Map pp78–9

☎ 671 4988; [www.screencinema.ie](http://www.screencinema.ie); 2 Townsend St  
If you like art-house movies or foreign films that wouldn't get a run in a multiplex,

this is your best bet. Devoid of the self-awareness that afflicts the IFI, this place puts the emphasis on well-made films rather than experimental ones.

## KARAOKE

Even in Dublin you can rule the mike for a night of out-of-tune balladeering and all-round fun.

### UKIYO Map pp66–7

☎ 633 4071; [www.ukiyobar.com](http://www.ukiyobar.com); 7–9 Exchequer St; per hr €25  
The basement rooms of this trendy sake bar can fit up to 10 people each for a night of singalong fun from the 30,000-odd songs on the menu (in a variety of languages).

### VILLAGE Map pp66–7

☎ 475 8555; 26 Wexford St; [www.thevillagevenue.com](http://www.thevillagevenue.com); admission free; 🕒 Sun  
Sunday nights are the ever-popular Songs of Praise, hosted by Rory, Murt and Sister Barbara: just put down your name and choice and wait for your turn to get up and belt out songs like Whitesnake's 'Here I Go Again'.

## LIVE MUSIC CLASSICAL

Classical music is constantly fighting an uphill battle in Dublin, with inadequate funding, poor management and questionable repertoires all contributing to its limited appeal. Resources are appalling, and there's neither the talent nor the funding to match their European counterparts. But before lambasting Ireland's commitment to classical forms, it's well worth bearing in mind that this country has never had a tradition of classical music or lyric opera – the musical talents round these parts naturally focused their attentions on Ireland's homegrown repertoire of traditional music. And still they managed to produce one of the great lyric tenors of the 20th century in Count John McCormack (1884–1945).

But it's not all doom and gloom. Classical music is small fry, but it's getting better all the time, thanks to the efforts of promoters who attract performers and orchestras from abroad; one local success has been the **Anna Livia International Opera Festival** (☎ 661 7544; [www.dublinopera.com](http://www.dublinopera.com)), which celebrates its fifth edition in September 2008 with two productions

running on alternate nights for two weeks: Verdi's *Rigoletto* and *Samson and Delilah* by Saint-Saëns.

Bookings for all classical gigs can be made at the venues or through Ticketmaster and HMV (see Bookings, p174).

## BANK OF IRELAND ARTS

**CENTRE** Map pp66–7

☎ 671 1488; [www.bankofireland.ie](http://www.bankofireland.ie); Foster Pl; admission free

The arts centre hosts a regular Wednesday lunch-time recital at 1.15pm, usually featuring a soloist with accompaniment. The performers are excellent. It also hosts an irregular evening programme of concerts; call for details.

## DUBLIN CITY GALLERY – THE HUGH LANE

Map pp102–3

☎ 874 1903; [www.hughlane.ie](http://www.hughlane.ie); 22 North

Parnell Sq

From September to June, the art gallery (see p101) hosts up to 30 concerts of contemporary classical music. Concerts start at noon on Sunday.

## GAIETY THEATRE

Map pp66–7

☎ 677 1717; [www.gaietytheatre.com](http://www.gaietytheatre.com); South

King St

Amid its repertoire of popular plays (see p186) the Gaiety occasionally plays host to the more salubrious sounds of classical music, including some outstanding performances by [Opera Ireland](http://www.operaireland.com) (www.operaireland.com).

## HELIX

Off Map p118

☎ 700 7000; [www.thehelix.ie](http://www.thehelix.ie); Collins Ave, Glas-

nevin; ☎ 11, 13A or 19A

Based in Dublin City University, the impressive Helix theatre hosts, among other things, a fantastic array of international operatic and classical recitals and performances. Check the website for details.

## NATIONAL CONCERT HALL

Map pp66–7

☎ 475 1572; [www.nch.ie](http://www.nch.ie); Earlsfort Tce

Leaden acoustics and a none-too-aesthetic conversion of University College Dublin's old lecture hall are the main criticisms levelled at Ireland's premier orchestral venue, but the cream of the classical crop perform here throughout the year as part of a rich and various programme of concerts and recitals. There's also a series of excellent

lunchtime concerts (€9) from 1.05pm to 2pm on Tuesday, June to September.

## ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY SHOWGROUND CONCERT HALL

Map p99

☎ 668 0866; Merrion Rd, Ballsbridge; ☎ 7 from Trinity College

The RDS (see p99) hosts a rich line-up of classical music and opera throughout the year.

## JAZZ

Sadly, jazz is a marginal art form in Dublin and mostly the preserve of a small clique of loyal listeners; for most others it's nothing more than background music. The small scene is nonetheless pretty active, promoting gigs and sponsoring the visits of international artists, although for the most part the gigs are held in pubs. Keeping the jazz flame burning is the [Improvised Music Company](http://www.improvisedmusic.ie) (☎ 877 9001; www.improvisedmusic.ie), whose website will keep you abreast of the jazzy goings on in the city, including a yearly series of summer lunchtime gigs at a number of changing venues.

## AVOCA HANDWEAVERS

Map pp66–7

☎ 677 4215; 11-13 Suffolk St; admission free;

☎ noon-4pm Sun

Sunday brunch has some live jazz accompaniment at this gorgeous department store (see p132). The [restaurant](http://www.restaurant) (p149) is upstairs.

## BLEU NOTE

Map pp102–3

☎ 878 3371; [www.bleunote.ie](http://www.bleunote.ie); 61-62 Capel St;

admission €8-14; ☎ 9-11.30pm Mon-Thu & Sun, to

2.30am Fri-Sat

The self-proclaimed Dublin home of jazz and blues, the Bleu Note has performed a minor bit of syntactical trickery to ensure that it 'borrows' from the world-famous New York club without actually stealing from it, a balancing act it's in no danger of doing with the musical policy, which remains firmly on the safe side. Blues-infused New Orleans jazz is about as far out as this venue will go. There are two live gigs nightly on Friday and Saturday.

## CAFÉ EN SEINE

Map pp66–7

☎ 677 4567; 40 Dawson St; admission free; ☎ 2-

4pm Sun, 9-11pm Mon

A tidy jazz band for Sunday brunch and some Big Band Swing on Monday nights fill out the musical menu at one of Dublin's

## DANCING IN THE STREETS

We're not kidding – some of the best performances in town are on the street. Grafton St is the buskers' Carnegie Hall, operating an unforgiving theory of natural selection by separating the gifted wheat from the crappy chaff. And believe us, some of these performers are absolutely sensational. During the day is the best time to hear the really good stuff – the plucky string quartets, rapid-fire lick merchants and other solo performers, including the juggling fire-eater and the group of break-dancers body-popping the change out of your pockets. Once the shutters come down, the talent slinks away – presumably to spend their well-earned coins – and are generally replaced by the B-team, mostly performers who should be applauded for their efforts and little else.

The other great busker's hangout is Temple Bar, where performers tend to be a little more informal, in keeping with the slightly more relaxed crowd that surrounds them. Fire dancers, African drummers and other suitably left-of-centre performances make up the bill, but you'll also find impromptu performances by tourists themselves – how nice it is to join in with a group of Italian kids singing Dylan tunes phonetically.

Finally, the pavement opposite the main entrance to Trinity College is popular with artists, who can be seen of a Saturday, adding lines and colour to their re-creations of Renaissance masterpieces.

biggest and most wildly extravagant bars (see p162). The Belle Epoque décor make it easy to imagine that you're actually at one of F Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald's decadent parties.

## GLOBE

Map pp66–7

☎ 671 1220; [www.globe.ie](http://www.globe.ie); 11 South Great

George's St; admission free; ☎ 5.30-7.30pm Sun

This trendy café-bar (see p164) has a popular Sunday afternoon session. The atmosphere is usually terrific, and the players are generally pretty good, even though you're unlikely to hear John Coltrane's successor.

## JJ SMYTH'S

Map pp66–7

☎ 475 2565; 12 Aungier St; admission €8-12;

☎ 8-11.30pm Thu & Sun

The best place in Dublin to hear good jazz is at this pub, located in an upstairs lounge where the stage is almost on top of the punters. Sunday's Pendulum Club, run by the Improvised Music Company, is a consistently good night. The intimacy of the place, coupled with the generally high standard of musicians performing here, make this a definite must for any fans of the genre.

## POPULAR

Dublin rocks. The city is now a definite stop on the international touring schedule of virtually every rock and pop act in the world. In part it's because Dublin is no longer a pissant capital, but mostly it's because promoters promise big fees (the cost of which is duly handed down to you, the out-of-pocket fan) and big crowds (it seems the high fees offer

little deterrent!) to anyone willing to stand in front of thousands of screaming, cheering fans who do a damn fine job of making you feel like you're the biggest star in the world. From Dolly Parton to Arcade Fire, they've all come, sung and gone away very, very happy.

A far cry from the days of yore, before Dublin produced any rock star worthy of the name. Then, in the mid-1970s, along came Phil Lynott and Thin Lizzy (see the boxed text, p182), followed by Bob 'don't fuck with me' Geldof and the Boomtown Rats. As popular as they were, they were but the pre-show routine for four young lads from Ballymun, who took to the stage in 1978 with dodgy haircuts and even dodgier clobber. The clobber is still pretty suspect, but U2 are officially the world's biggest band, and have raised the bar to such an impossibly high level that no-one even bothers to wonder where the 'next U2' will come from any more, and most will happily settle for a few crumbs from the fabulous U2 cake. Still, their success has inspired plenty of bands and the local scene has developed a vitality and confidence never before seen – even if some of the contemporary acts would do well to leave the confidence alone and work a little on their songwriting.

Big and small, Dublin has venues to suit every taste and crowd requirement. Check the newspapers for upcoming events. The city is also awash with music festivals, especially in summer – check p16 for the list of the ones you don't want to miss.

You can sometimes buy tickets at the venue itself, but you're probably better off going through an agent. Prices for gigs range dramatically, from as low as €5 for a tiny local act to anywhere up to €140 for the really big international stars.

**BOOM BOOM ROOM** Map pp102–3☎ 873 2687; [www.theboomboomroom.tv](http://www.theboomboomroom.tv); Patrick Conway's, 70 Parnell St

Most people run for the hills when they hear the words 'avant garde' and 'music' in the same sentence, but we urge you to keep still, for this venue has done more to reflect the cultural diversity of the new Dublin – with its absolutely fabulous blend of folk, jazz, blues, electronica and other diverse styles – than any other. Dubliners are always bemoaning the absence of somewhere they can listen to something genuinely new and different; that just means they haven't climbed the stairs above [Patrick Conway's](#) (p171) to one of the coolest music venues in town.

**BUTTON FACTORY** Map p85

☎ 670 0533; Curved St

This venue offers a wide selection of musical acts, from traditional Irish music to drum and bass (and all things in between), to a non-image-conscious crowd. One night you might be shaking your glow light to a thumping live set by a top DJ and the next you'll be shifting from foot to foot as an esoteric Finnish band drag their violin bows over their electric guitar strings.

**CRAWDADDY** Map pp66–7☎ 478 0225; [www.pod.ie](http://www.pod.ie); 35a Harcourt St

Named after the London club where the Stones launched their professional careers in 1963, Crawdaddy is an intimate bar-venue that specialises in putting on rootsy performers – from African drum bands to avant garde Jazz artists and Flamenco guitarists. It's part of the Pod/Tripod entertainment complex.

**THE PEOPLE'S ROCKER**

Just in case you didn't recognise the bronze figure outside [Bruxelles](#) (p165), it is none other than the greatest of all Dublin rockers, Thin Lizzy frontman Phil Lynott (1949–86). Lynott's immense popularity with Dubliners is not especially hard to fathom – not only did Thin Lizzy lead the Irish charge onto the international rock stage but they turned out to be one of the best bands of their time – though it is reflective of more than just Lynott's talent or success. Dubliners loved Lynott because he was always one of their own, a true Dub who remembered where he came from long after his star had risen. And, just to prove that Dubliners aren't so easily understood, they loved him because he was an outsider – a black kid raised in a working-class Dublin suburb during the 1950s and '60s – and a tortured genius who died young from drugs and alcohol, but who left a musical legacy that we should all be proud of and cherish. So, find a copy of *Live and Dangerous* and listen to 'Still in Love with You'; U2 fans may disagree, but it never did get better than this.

By the way, take a close look at Philo's face: isn't it uncannily like the face on the James Joyce statue (p109) on North Earl St? Joyce with an afro or what?

**GAIETY THEATRE** Map pp66–7☎ 677 1717; [www.gaietytheatre.com](http://www.gaietytheatre.com); South King St; ☎ 11pm–4am Fri & Sat

This old Victorian theatre is an atmospheric place to come and listen to late-night jazz, rock or blues on weekends; performing bands are generally put on as part of the nightclub entertainment (p176).

**MARLAY PARK** Off Map p99

☎ 1890 925 100; Rathfarnham, Dublin 24; ☎ 15C, 16, 16A, 16C or 17 from city centre

In recent years, this park in the south Dublin suburb of Rathfarnham has been transformed into a major outdoor venue for some fairly heavy-hitting international acts, with Daft Punk, Aerosmith and The Who just some of the acts who played here in 2007. But it also hosts slightly more muted affairs throughout the summer. The yearly Bud Rising festival takes place here too (see p16).

**OLYMPIA THEATRE** Map p85

☎ 679 3323; 72 Dame St

This beautiful Victorian theatre generally puts on light plays, musicals and pantomime (see p186), but also caters to a range of mid-level performers and fringe talents that are often far more interesting than the superstar acts – this is one of the best places for a more intimate gig.

**POINT DEPOT** Map pp62–3☎ 836 3633; [www.thepoint.ie](http://www.thepoint.ie); East Link Bridge, North Wall Quay

The premier indoor venue for all rock and pop acts playing in Dublin, this 8000-capacity warehouse closed its doors for a major facelift in 2007. It will reopen at the end of 2008, and we only hope that it

manages to fix the problems that made it one of the most unsatisfactory venues to see our favourite gigs, mostly because the stage was so bloody far away.

**SUGAR CLUB** Map pp78–9☎ 678 7188; [www.thesugarclub.com](http://www.thesugarclub.com); 8 Lower Leeson St; admission €8–10; ☎ Tue–Sun

Table service and a cocktail bar draw in a slightly more sophisticated (read older) crowd who come for the cabaret-style acts performing here regularly.

**TRIPOD** Map pp66–7☎ 478 0025; [www.tripod.ie](http://www.tripod.ie); 35 Harcourt St; admission €15–40; ☎ Wed–Sat

R'n'B stars, reggae masters, indie guitar heroes, dance music monsters... You can see a full range of live shows at this excellent venue, which has quickly developed a reputation as one of the best in the city, as much for the quality of its acts as the acoustics and surroundings.

**VICAR STREET** Map pp90–1☎ 454 5533; [www.vicarstreet.com](http://www.vicarstreet.com); 58–59 Thomas St

Smaller performances take place at this intimate venue near Christ Church Cathedral. It has a capacity of 1000, between its table-serviced group seating downstairs and theatre-style balcony. Vicar Street offers a varied programme of performers, with a strong emphasis on soul, folk, jazz and foreign music.

**VILLAGE** Map pp66–7☎ 475 8555; [www.thevillagevenue.com](http://www.thevillagevenue.com); 26 Wexford St

An attractive midsize venue that is a popular stop for acts on the way up and down, the Village has gigs virtually every night of the week, featuring a diverse range of rock bands and solo performers. It's also a good showcase for local singer-songwriters.

**WHELAN'S** Map pp66–7☎ 478 0766; [www.whelanlive.com](http://www.whelanlive.com); 25 Wexford St

Whelan's is such an institution with Irish singer-songwriters and other lo-fi performers that the press often refer to them as the 'Whelan's clique'. This includes the likes of Glen Hansard and the Frames, Paddy Casey, Mark Geary, Damien Dempsey and Mundy.

**A TEMPORARY SOLUTION...**

During the Point Depot's refit, the big gigs in Dublin will be held in a huge, 5000-capacity [Big Top](#) (Map p115) in Phoenix Park. We hope it's such a success that they keep it up even after the Point has reopened. For details of gigs and tickets, contact the agents listed under Bookings (p174).

**TRADITIONAL & FOLK**

Dublin's ambivalent relationship with traditional music stems from its peculiar separation from the heart of traditional Irish culture; the capital has always seemed more concerned with the cultural goings on across the water in Britain and, latterly, continental Europe. Many middle-class Dubliners, eager to bask in a more 'cosmopolitan' light, have dismissed the genre as the preserve of rural types with nicotine-coloured fingers and beer-stained beards, all the while packing their own CD collections with the folk and traditional music of *other* cultures – inevitably found in the 'world music' section of their local CD store.

The irony has become all too apparent and in recent years there has been a slow (and often grudging) acknowledgement that one of the richest and most evocative veins of traditional expression is on their very doorstep – and it's *not* Riverdance, or any of the other versions of sex-and-reels that have led to Irish music becoming popular all over the world.

The best place to hear traditional music is in the pub, where the 'session' – improvised or scheduled – is still best attended by foreign visitors who appreciate the form far more than most Dubs and will relish any opportunity to drink and toe-tap to some extraordinary virtuoso performances.

Also worth checking out is the [Temple Bar Trad Festival](#) (☎ 677 2397; [www.templebartrad.com](http://www.templebartrad.com)), which takes place in the pubs of Temple Bar over the last weekend in January.

**COBBLESTONE** Map pp102–3☎ 872 1799; [www.cobblestonedublin.com](http://www.cobblestonedublin.com); 77 North King St; admission free

This pub in the heart of Smithfield has a great atmosphere in its cosy upstairs bar, where there are superb nightly music sessions performed by traditional musicians (especially Thursday) and up-and-coming folk acts.

## COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ

**ÉIREANN** *Off Map p99*

☎ 280 0295; [www.comhaltas.com](http://www.comhaltas.com); 32 Belgrave Sq, Monkstown; admission €5-10; 🗓 Mon, Wed & Fri; 🚫 DART to Monkstown

The Friday evening traditional *céilidh* (communal dance) is the big draw at this informal venue, which is really a community club for the preservation of the traditional form, be it played or danced. Other nights feature regular sessions, but you'll find something just as good in the city centre.

**DEVITT'S** *Map pp66-7*

☎ 475 3414; 78 Lower Camden St; admission free; 🗓 from 9.30pm Thu-Sat

Devitt's – aka the Cussak Stand – is one of the favourite places for the city's talented musicians to display their wares, with sessions as good as any you'll hear in the city centre. Highly recommended.

**HA'PENNY BRIDGE INN** *Map p85*

☎ 677 0616; 42 Wellington Quay; adult/concession €6/5; 🗓 9-11pm Fri

An excellent session takes place upstairs on Friday at this lovely pub, best known for its comedy nights (see p178).

**HUGHES' BAR** *Map pp102-3*

☎ 872 6540; 19 Chancery St; admission free; 🗓 from 9pm

Traditional purists love the nightly sessions at this pub, which by day caters to barristers, solicitors and their clients from the nearby *Four Courts* (p106) – all of whom probably need a pint, but for different reasons! Although the playing is very good, the atmosphere is a little lacking and the sessions can be a bit dead.

**OLIVER ST JOHN GOGARTY** *Map p85*

☎ 671 1822; 58-59 Fleet St; admission free; 🗓 from 2pm

The best thing about this popular Temple Bar watering hole (see p169) is not that it's ram-packed with tourists or that the 'craic' is slightly manufactured, but that the sessions run virtually all day from 2pm, making this the only place you'll hear trad before nightfall. And it's pretty good stuff too.

**PALACE BAR** *Map p85*

☎ 677 9290; 21 Fleet St; admission free; 🗓 from 8.30pm Tue, Wed & Sun

Some of the best traditional music in Dublin can be heard at the excellent sessions laid on in the gorgeous upstairs lounge of this venerable boozier. If you want to hear the real deal in the city centre, this is the place.

## THEATRE

Dublin has a reputation for being a theatrical heavyweight, and while it's true that Irish theatre is going through something of a revival after several decades in the doldrums, theatre remains under threat by the overwhelmingly oppressive force of commerce. The prohibitively high price of real estate has drastically impeded theatre's ability to stretch its legs by reducing the amount of available space for theatrical ventures to operate in.

Despite the recent revival, no new theatres have opened up and companies have been forced to improvise – usually by going outdoors or co-opting non-theatrical spaces like pubs or offices. It makes for some interesting experimentation, but the jury is out on whether it makes for lasting theatre.

Theatre bookings can usually be made by quoting a credit-card number over the phone, then you can collect your tickets just before the performance. Expect to pay anything between €12 and €25 for most shows, with some costing as much as €30. Most plays begin between 8pm and 8.30pm. Check [www.irishtheatreonline.com](http://www.irishtheatreonline.com) and other online listings (see p175) to see what's playing.

**ABBAY THEATRE** *Map pp102-3*

☎ 878 7222; [www.abbeytheatre.ie](http://www.abbeytheatre.ie); 26 Lower Abbey St; admission €25

Ireland's national theatre has had its fair share of trouble and strife in recent years, marking its 2004 centennial with virtual bankruptcy and the possibility of closure. Enter a new regime under director Fiach MacConghail, and the Abbey is alive and well once again, financially secure and equipped with a whole new seating rig that has transformed the old theatre from a venue that we endured to one we positively enjoy. Under MacConghail's strict tutelage, the Abbey is rigorously following a twin stream of rendering old classics by the great stalwarts of the Irish theatrical firmament (JM Synge, Sean O'Casey et al) and supporting the work of new playwrights like Mark O'Rowe, Marina Carr and

contemporary international stars like Sam Shepard. The old box – built to replace the original building that burnt down in the 1950s – will eventually be abandoned in favour of a move down to the new Docklands development, but that won't happen for a few years yet. Monday performances are cheaper. Work by up-and-coming writers and more experimental theatre is staged in the adjoining *Peacock Theatre* (☎ 878 7222; admission €12-16).

**CIVIC THEATRE**

☎ 462 7477; [www.civictheatre.ie](http://www.civictheatre.ie); The Square, Tallaght; adult/child €20/16; 🗓 Tallaght

This purpose-built 350-seat theatre is inconveniently located in the southern suburb of Tallaght, but its state-of-the-art facilities are top-notch and include an art gallery. The plays it puts on, an interesting mix of Irish and European works, are uniformly good. The easiest way to get here is by Luas: the theatre is at the terminus of the red line.

**DRAÍOCHT THEATRE**

☎ 885 2622; [www.draiocht.ie](http://www.draiocht.ie); Blanchardstown Shopping Centre; adult/child €15/12; 🗓 38, 38A, 39, 39X, 236 or 239

This multipurpose arts centre (named after the Irish word for 'magic') is one of the most interesting venues in the city. Two

## THEATRE FESTIVALS

**Dublin Fringe Festival** (☎ 1850 374 643; [www.fringefest.com](http://www.fringefest.com); admission up to €20) Initially a festival for those shows too 'out-there' or insignificant to be considered for the main festival, this is now a three-week extravaganza with more than 100 events and over 700 performances. The established critics may keep their ink for the bigger do, but we strongly recommend the Fringe for its daring and diversity.

**Dublin Theatre Festival** (☎ 677 8439; [www.dublintheatrefestival.com](http://www.dublintheatrefestival.com); admission €15-35) For two weeks in October most of the city's theatres participate in this festival, originally founded in 1957 and today a glittering parade of quality productions and elaborate shows.

separate theatres feature all kinds of work, from reinterpretations of classic plays to brand-new material by cutting-edge writers and performers.

**FOCUS THEATRE** *Map pp78-9*

☎ 676 3071; 6 Pembroke Pl; adult/child or student €20/15

The small Focus Theatre is committed to showcasing the work of new Irish playwrights, which is thoroughly laudable even

## SMALLER THEATRES & WORKSHOPS

**Ark** (p86) This children's centre has a 150-seat venue that stages shows for kids aged between three and 14.

**Bewley's Café Theatre** (*Map pp66-7*; ☎ 086 878 4001; [www.bewleyscafetheatre.com](http://www.bewleyscafetheatre.com); Bewley's Bldg, 78/79 Grafton St; adult/concession €15/13; 🗓 1.10pm) Fancy a bowl of soup and a sandwich with your theatre ticket? This marvellous space puts on interesting, experimental work by Irish playwrights in a suitably bohemian atmosphere. Mind your slurping.

**Crypt Arts Centre** (☎ 671 3387; [www.cryptartscentre.org](http://www.cryptartscentre.org); Dublin Castle) The beautiful church crypt in Dublin Castle (p74) has a space used by adventurous young Irish companies for experimental work.

**International Bar** (*Map pp66-7*; ☎ 677 9250; 23 Wicklow St; 🗓 6-8.30pm) Early evening plays in the upstairs space of this bar (p165) by non-established actors can offer up some worthwhile stuff; they're on early because they have to clear the room for the established comedy shows (see p178).

**Lambert Puppet Theatre** (*off Map p99*; ☎ 280 0974; [www.lambertpuppettheatre.com](http://www.lambertpuppettheatre.com); 5 Clifton Lane, Monkstown; adult/child €12.50/9; 🚫 DART to Monkstown/Salthill, 🗓 7, 7A or 8 from Trinity College) You think Gameboy and Xbox would spoil the magic of puppetry for your kids? Let the Lambert prove you wrong with its excellent performances, staged every Saturday (and daily at Christmas and Easter).

**New Theatre** (*Map p85*; ☎ 670 3361; [www.thenewtheatre.com](http://www.thenewtheatre.com); 43 East Essex St; admission from €15) Sitting above the left-wing Connolly Books, this refurbished little theatre puts on a pretty palatable fare of 'fun' plays and in-your-face work that might challenge social conventions but will hardly disturb the more serious critics.

**Samuel Beckett Theatre** (*Map p65*; ☎ 608 2266; [www.tcd.ie](http://www.tcd.ie); Trinity College; admission €5-20) Used mainly by drama students, the theatre also features the occasional show by established troupes. It's all pretty cerebral stuff.

## WHO WANTS BECKETT'S COAT?

The last great shadow cast by an Irish dramatist was that of Samuel Beckett (1906–89), who moved from Dublin to Paris before he wrote a single word. Thereafter, only Brian Friel has really come close to inheriting the mantle of the 'greatest Irish playwright'. Today, Irish theatre is at an exciting but uneasy crossroads. A new generation of talented dramatists has certainly emerged since 1990 – Conor McPherson, Mark O'Rowe, Marie Jones and Marina Carr among them – but their path to theatrical greatness is littered with the high expectations of critics and a media that is uncomfortable with the fact that Irish theatre currently has no outstanding behemoth, and that is chomping at the bit to proclaim the next Beckett, Wilde or Shaw. There are plenty of dramatists about (see p41), but if we had to pick one who has the mark of greatness rather than merely the rubber stamp of commercial success, it would be Eugene O'Brien, whose first play, *Eden*, was one of the best to hit a Dublin stage since Vladimir and Estragon sat around waiting for a guy who never showed up.

if the quality of the work isn't always top notch. Still, the company offers challenging work and is well worth checking out.

### GAIETY THEATRE Map pp66–7

☎ 677 1717; [www.gaietytheatre.net](http://www.gaietytheatre.net); South King St; adult/child or student €35/20 plus booking fee

The Gaiety's programme of plays is strictly of the fun-for-all-the-family type: West End hits, musicals, Christmas pantos and classic Irish plays keep the more serious-minded away, but it leaves more room for those simply looking to be entertained.

### GATE THEATRE Map pp102–3

☎ 874 4045; [www.gate-theatre.ie](http://www.gate-theatre.ie); 1 Cavendish Row, East Parnell Sq; admission from €25

The city's most elegant theatre, housed in a late-18th-century building, features a generally unflappable repertory of classic American and European plays. Orson Welles' first professional performance was here, and James Mason played here early in his career. Even today it is the only theatre in town where you might see established international movie stars work on their credibility with a theatre run.

### OLYMPIA THEATRE Map p85

☎ 677 7744; [www.olympia.ie](http://www.olympia.ie); 72 Dame St; admission from €21

You won't find serious critics near the place, but the much-loved Olympia, a Victorian beauty that began life as a music hall, attracts the crowds for its programme of variety shows and musicals. One of its

most popular runs was *I, Keano*, a (not very) comic rendition of the travails of Ireland's greatest-ever soccer player and the virtual civil war he provoked by falling out with the management of the national team on the eve of the 2002 World Cup.

### PAVILION THEATRE

☎ 231 2929; [www.paviliontheatre.ie](http://www.paviliontheatre.ie); Pavilion Complex, Dun Laoghaire; adult/child €22/14;

☎ Dun Laoghaire

Like the *Draíocht Theatre* (p185) and *Civic Theatre* (p185), this modern space in the seaside suburb of Dun Laoghaire offers a dynamic programme of theatre and performance art.

### PROJECT ARTS CENTRE Map p85

☎ 1850 260 027; [www.project.ie](http://www.project.ie); 39 East Essex St; adult/child €18/15

This is the city's most interesting venue for challenging new work – be it drama, dance, live art or film. Three separate spaces, none with a restricting proscenium arch, allow for maximum versatility. You never know what to expect, which makes it all that more fun: we've seen some awful rubbish here, but we've also seen some of the best shows in town.

### TIVOLI THEATRE Map pp90–1

☎ 454 4472; 135-136 Francis St; adult/child or student €20/18

This commercial theatre offers a little bit of everything, from a good play with terrific actors to absolute nonsense with questionable comedic value.

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