



A
*Living
Breath*
PRODUCTION

Forever Mine

*The love story behind
the world's best-loved hymn*

Amazing
Grace
1773-2023
250

Forever Mine

THE CAST

John Newton - Ellis J. Wells

Polly Newton - Susie Garvey-Williams

James Gronniosaw/Olaudah Equiano - Gideon Asuming

William Cowper/William Wilberforce - Ryan Moss

THE CREW

Director - Ruth Garvey-Williams

Technical Director - Benjamin Driver

Musical Director - Hilary Kemp

Set Design - Andrew Garvey-Williams

Costume Design - Ruth Garvey-Williams and Emma Porter

Producer - Susie Garvey-Williams

Written by Ruth & Susie Garvey-Williams

Forever Mine was produced by Living Breath Productions CIC
in partnership with the Amazing Grace Festival, Buncrana.

In loving memory of

Kieran Henderson
1973 - 2019

"Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."

Forever Mine

It is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language." - Brian Friel



It was the letters of John Newton and his beloved wife 'Polly' that first inspired us to write *Forever Mine*. Here the dramatic story was embodied in the language of love and powerful historical themes were embedded in realities of separation and reunion, of life and loss.

Living in Amazing Grace Country - beautiful Buncrana on the shores of Lough Swilly, Co Donegal – where John Newton was shipwrecked in 1748, we share in a global story that spans centuries and has touched lives on multiple continents.

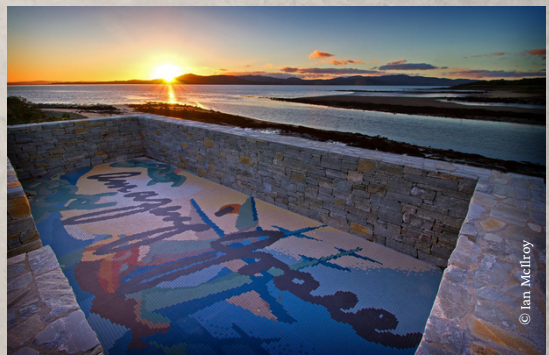
But while we may sigh over the romance, this is not a comfortable tale. It is overshadowed by the violence and greed of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade in which John Newton played an active part both before, and for six years after, his conversion to Christianity.

It has been a joy to unearth the true stories of those whose lives intersected with Newton on his slow journey to repentance. Elevating their voices seems a fitting tribute to the many unknowns who fought for the abolition of slavery. If grace was the means to transform a perpetrator, restore victims and sustain those who campaigned against oppression 250 years ago - is there hope for our modern day battles against injustice?

Ruth Garvey-Williams (Director)

Amazing Grace 250

On 1 January 1773, in a church in Olney, England, the congregation sang a new hymn written by their minister to illustrate his New Year's Day sermon. Two hundred and fifty years later, *Amazing Grace* is the world's best-loved hymn and one of the most recorded songs of all time. It became the anthem of the American civil rights movement and the song of choice for a myriad of iconic moments from Robben island to the Twin Towers.



Amazing Grace Viewing Point, Buncrana, Co. Donegal



Ellis J. Wells

TRAINING: B.A. Theatre – Iowa State University (USA)

THEATRE CREDITS INCLUDE: Col. Pickering in "Pygmalion" (Tour of Italy), Prof. Snape in "Puffs" (Colorado, USA), Christopher Wren in "The Mousetrap" (New York, USA), Dr. Watson in "The Accidental Adventures of Sherlock Holmes", the title role in "Richard III" and "The Scarlet Pimpernel", Cardinal Richelieu in "The Three Musketeers", Caliban in "The Tempest", Allworthy in "The History of Tom Jones", Fleshcreep in "Jack and the Beanstalk" and Matt in the one-man show "Facehugger".

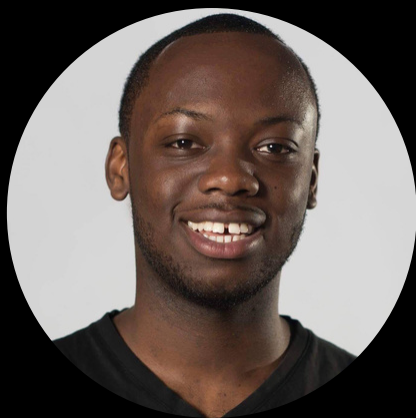
Susie Garvey-Williams

TRAINING: SLP College - Leeds (UK)

Susie has a wealth of experience performing in both the UK and Ireland with a particular interest in bringing historical figures to life with characters including Jean Armour, Jane Goodall, Hannah More, Vera Lynn, Grainne O'Malley and even the Virgin Mary. Her most recent theatre credits include Viola/Sebastian in "12th Night Lite", Jasmine in "Aladdin", Jane Goodall in "STEM Theatre in a Box" and Kitty in "A Weaver's Thread"



Gideon Asuming



TRAINING- Identity School of Acting
Gideon has been performing since 2010. Through the years he has played many roles, both lead and supporting which have shaped him to be an all-round performer. His most recent theatre credits include "And There Was War", "After the Storm" and "My Place". He is no stranger to the stage and plans to carry on telling stories through acting.

Ryan Moss

TRAINING - Academy of Performance Training

A passionate character actor, Ryan throws everything at the parts he plays. He is absolutely thrilled to be appearing in "Forever Mine", allowing him to be a part in keeping John Newton's story alive.

Previous credits include; Arthur Cabbage in "Your Country Needs You", Colin Humperdinck in "Robin Hood", Max in "The Legend of Grimm's Tales", Charlie Chaplin in "Tonight at the museum, Charlie Chaplin", Raleigh in "Journeys end", Ben in the "Dumb Waiter", Freddy in "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" and Joe Casey in "Our House"





Ruth Garvey-Williams

With 30 years experience writing, directing and choreographing multiple community and professional theatre productions, Ruth Garvey-Williams loves to bring history to life, re-telling true stories through the medium of theatre and film. She is delighted to be the director of *Forever Mine* - working with such a talented cast to bring this moving story to Irish audiences.



Benjamin Driver

Benjamin Driver is a filmmaker, photographer and technical director with a First Class Honours Degree in Television and Film Production. As a theatre Technical Director he has worked with Riding Lights Theatre Company for their "My Place" production and "12th Night Lite" at Edinburgh Fringe Festival.



Hilary Kemp

Hilary Kemp is an accomplished musician who has trained internationally and played gigs around the world. Classically educated and with a keen interest in ethnomusicology, she is honoured for the opportunity to bring to life 18th century musical styles alongside voices of the Transatlantic slave trade for modern audiences in her debut theatre score.



Andrew Garvey-Williams

Andrew Garvey-Williams is a community artist whose work enhances derelict buildings and iconic places. He designed the mosaic floor of the Amazing Grace viewing point in Buncrana and has often created scenery and props for theatre productions. He was thrilled to be able to design and build the set for *Forever Mine*.

The Characters of Forever Mine



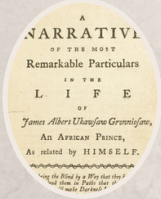
John Newton (1725 - 1807)

As a prolific letter writer and diarist, Newton's own words give a penetrating insight into his life, love and faith. From his brutally honest account of his dealings as a slave trader (*Diary of a Slave Trader*) and his journey to faith (*An Authentic Narrative*) to his abolitionist treatise (*Thoughts on an African Slave Trade - 1788*) and his correspondence with Polly (*Letters to a Wife*), Newton's works offer a "warts and all" picture of his life.



Mary Newton (1729 - 1790)

Mary Newton née Catlett (nicknamed Polly) was 13 years old when she first met John Newton in 1742. Newton wrote of that meeting, "Almost at first sight of this girl, I was impressed with an affection for her which never abated or lost its influence for a single moment in my heart from that hour." They were married for 40 years and their passionate love letters give a glimpse into their enduring romance.



James Gronniosaw (1705 - 1775)

The Narrative of the most remarkable particulars in the life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince, as Related by Himself, first published in Bath in 1772, contains the earliest known first hand account of what it was like for a black man to migrate to Britain. He stayed with Newton and Polly for three days in the vicarage in Olney in November 1772 before his book was published and shortly before *Amazing Grace* was written.



William Cowper (1731 - 1800)

English poet William Cowper met John Newton in Olney and they became close friends. They jointly published *Olney Hymns* in 1779 - a collection of 348 hymns. Newton supported Cowper through frequent bouts of depression and eventually spoke at his funeral in 1800.



Olaudah Equiano (1745 - 1797)

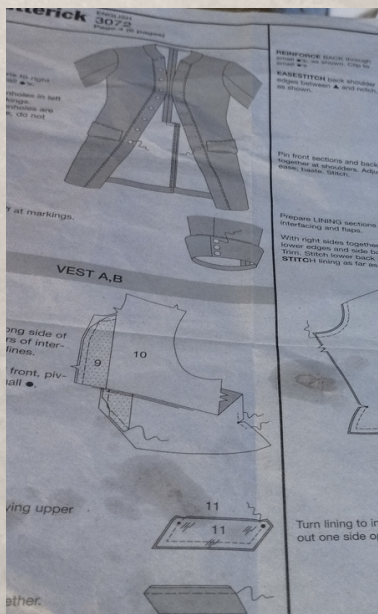
As a freedman in London, Equiano was part of the Sons of Africa, an abolitionist group comprised of Africans living in Britain. He was active among leaders of the anti-slave trade movement in the 1780s. Equiano published his autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789). He visited Dublin in 1791 to raise support for the cause.



William Wilberforce (1759 - 1833)

Probably the most well-known of our characters, William Wilberforce was the "face" of the abolitionist campaign. He had visited John and Polly as a child and turned to Newton at the time of his own spiritual awakening. Newton became his mentor, encouraging him to stay in politics and supporting him throughout the 20 year battle to end the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade.





Ending Modern Day Slavery

Imagine being at risk of slavery and violence – and not knowing if anyone will protect you. For too many people around the world, slavery and violence aren't just a risk – they're a reality. There are 12 million children trapped in slavery today. That's more than double the population of Ireland.

But it doesn't have to be this way. When we stand together, change is possible. Will you join us? The Forever Mine Tour is thrilled to be partnering with International Justice Mission UK (IJM). IJM is a global organisation working with local police, survivors and supporters like you to stop slavery and violence.



Courage Hope was just 13 when a trafficker tricked his mum with an offer of school. Instead, for the next five years he was made to risk his life, diving deep underwater on Ghana's Lake Volta, to untangle fishing nets caught on submerged trees. He saw other children drown and knew it could be him next: "I asked myself, is this going to end?"

But hope wasn't lost. Godwin, a boy who had been brought to safety by IJM and police, provided vital information that led police back to find Courage Hope and bring him to safety.

Thanks to the support of people like you, IJM and partners have brought over 85,000 people to safety from slavery and violence, and seen slavery reduce by up to 86% in places where they've worked. But millions of children are still trapped in slavery right now.

Will you join the movement and become a Freedom Partner now, giving regularly to build a world where all are free? All new gifts during the Forever Mine Tour will be matched by an extra 50%. Scan the QR code or give now at IJMUK.org/IrelandGive



Living Breath

Faith comes from hearing...



Living Breath Productions is a not-for-profit production company using creative media and theatre to explore stories, share the words of the Bible and point towards Jesus.



@livingbreathproductions

livingbreathproductions.com
team@livingbreathproduction.com





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