

Waakin fur Ettlin fur Godot

Walking for Waiting for Godot
– *in Ulster-Scots*

**ARTS
OVER
BORDERS**

Samuel Beckett Biennale
2026-2038

WAITING FOR GODOT HEADS FOR THE HILLS

26 and 27 September 2026

Slemish Mountain and the Wicklow Hills

- NEW ULSTER-SCOTS LANGUAGE VERSION OF BECKETT'S MASTERPIECE TO BE PERFORMED AROUND SIR ANTONY GORMLEY SCULPTURE ON THE PLUG OF AN ANCIENT VOLCANO

- 55 years after it was translated into Irish, *Godot* finds a new Ulster-Scots voice
- Cross-border Samuel Beckett Biennale performances see audiences walking from secret locations to find the actors waiting on the hillside
- *Tree for Waiting for Godot* by Sir Antony Gormley to cross the border for both performances
- Part of the Irish-British Samuel Beckett Biennale - a major new celebration of the great Irish playwright, presenting key plays in key places of his life. A post-conflict play for a post-conflict region.
- *'Part of the revival of the Ulster-Scots language must be taking the language to new artistic places and new heights. This new production fulfils both those goals.'* Lee Reynolds, Northern Ireland's Commissioner for the Ulster-Scots and Ulster British tradition

7/9/26 – Later this month, Samuel Beckett's most celebrated – and most performed – work, *Waiting for Godot*, will reinvent itself. In ***Waakin fur Ettlin fur Godot (Walking for Waiting for Godot)***, lovers of the classic play will be able to experience Beckett's masterpiece performed in the Ulster-Scots language as the **Samuel Beckett Biennale** presents two new performed readings, either side of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.



The new Ulster-Scots translation, by Frank Ferguson of Ulster University, will take place on **26 September 2026 at Slemish Mountain in Co. Antrim, N. Ireland** and **27 September 2026 in the Wicklow Hills, south of Dublin in the Republic of Ireland**. On both days, *Waakin fur Ettlin fur Godot* begins with **the audience catching a bus to a**

secret location, from which they will walk a gentle kilometre to the spectacular rural scene of the performance, where, fittingly, **the actors will already be waiting for them around Antony Gormley's *Tree for Waiting for Godot* sculpture.**

Tickets and more information www.artsoverborders.com

Seán Doran, Director of the Samuel Beckett Biennale, said, "This will be an unmissable new experience for lovers of *Waiting for Godot*. Almost thirty years after the Ulster-Scots language was formally recognised by the Good Friday Agreement alongside the Irish language, we are pleased to be crossing the border with *Ettlin fur Godot*. In Ulster-Scots, the play becomes an earthier, more visceral and even more moving experience, as two Northern Ireland actors meet two Republic of Ireland actors. Many words are distantly familiar and, when experienced outdoors in the silence of deep countryside, the play gains a new currency."

Lee Reynolds, Northern Ireland's Commissioner for the Ulster-Scots and Ulster British tradition, said, "Part of the revival of the Ulster-Scots language must be taking the language to new artistic places and new heights. This new production fulfils both those goals."

Frank Ferguson, Research Director for English Language and Literature at Ulster University, said, "The Ulster Scots language is waiting for preservation, like Estragon and Vladimir longing for their Godot, it passes the time in the dialogue of tragicomedy; one-part revelling in comic wordplay and one-part transfixed by the eloquent pathos of loss."

On 26 September, audiences will meet at Gracehill Old School, Ballymena, which Beckett's mother, May, attended and from which **she was expelled for talking to a boy over a fence**. *Godot* will be performed on the lower slopes of **Slemish Mountain**, the site of legend, where St Patrick lived after being kidnapped, brought to Ireland and made a slave.

The following day, the **Biennale heads to the 'birthplace' of *Godot*, the Wicklow Hills where Beckett often walked with his father**. The only Beckett play to be set outdoors, *Waiting for Godot* was written in France (and in French, as *En Attendant Godot*) at the end of the Second World War, after Beckett had emigrated, as a final nod from Beckett to Ireland, the place he had chosen to leave behind.



Beckett was a linguist, who wrote much of his work in French and translated it into English (his *Godot* characters are French, Slav, English and Italian. The new translation follows previous Arts Over Borders productions in French, Yiddish and German and anticipates future global productions in Inuit, Aboriginal Noongar and other First People's languages. (Photo, Tadhg Murphy performing *Lucky*)

The Antrim performance takes place close to the coast, just a short ferry ride from Scotland, where many of the words of the new translation are still in use or very familiar. Marking the 250th anniversary of the US Declaration of Independence, three of the signatories of which were Ulster Scots immigrants, the translation chimes with the lead characters' reminiscences about the 1890s, a time when Ulster-Scots was widely spoken in rural north-east Ireland.

It is fair to say that the Becketts have not fared all that well in the part of the North where *Godot* will be performed; aside from his mother being expelled from Gracehill, Beckett also experienced a short-lived stint as a teacher at Campbell College in Belfast. While there, Beckett responded to the headmaster's: "Don't you realise you are teaching the cream of Ulster, Mr. Beckett" with "Yes, rich and thick, Headmaster". Now, mother and son will have some new reconciliation in the area, as Arts Over Borders brings Beckett's most famous work to the region in its own rich rural language.

AUDIENCE INFORMATION

Walking for Waiting for Godot - in Ulster-Scots

Date: Saturday 26 September 2026, County Antrim, Northern Ireland.

Time: Bus departs at 3pm and returns at 7pm.

Bus Meeting Point: Gracehill Old School, 19A Church Road, Gracehill, Ballymena BT42 2NL.

Tickets: £22 from [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) or www.artsoverborders.com

This project is supported by Ulster University.

Date: Sunday 27 September 2026 in the Wicklow Mountains, Republic of Ireland.

Time: Bus departs at 2pm and returns at 6.30pm.

Bus Meeting Point:

The Whale Theatre, Meridian Point, Theatre Lane, Greystones, Co. Wicklow, A63 V1F8

Tickets: €25 from whaletheatre.ie

This performance is supported by British Council Ireland.

Tickets links, location details and more at www.artsoverborders.com

The Samuel Beckett Biennale (SBB) is a new festival which is exploring Beckett's work through experimentation, stretching into specific locations in Ireland and Great Britain associated with Beckett's life and work. It presents one work in one place at one time, across the span of a year; Key plays closely linked to specific places will be revisited at the same location every two years but with markedly differing productions.

The SBB aims to meet the great Irish playwright's work with unexpected approaches and world-first theatrical experiences, connecting with Beckett's ground-breaking sense of literary adventure.

Working in partnership with creative and educational organisations such as the Beckett International Foundation at Reading University, which holds the Beckett archive, and Ulster University, the SBB is a commissioning laboratory leading to new productions of the work of one of theatre's greatest innovators; all selected work will carry a sense of creative departure and experimentation. For more information please visit www.artsoverborders.com

Produced by Arts Over Borders, Ireland's leading producer of cross-border north-south arts festivals, the SBB succeeds the highly acclaimed annual *Happy Days Enniskillen International Beckett Festival*, which ran from 2012 to 2022. Conceived by Artistic Director Seán Doran and co-developed with his long-time artistic colleague, the late Liam Browne, it follows the launch of the five-year *FrielDays* 2025-2029 event, marking the centenary of playwright Brian Friel, and completion of Arts Over Borders's largest project to date, the pan-European *ULYSSES European Odyssey 2022-2024* project which celebrated James Joyce's masterpiece in 18 European cities.

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Notes to Editors:

Cast

Vladimir – Andrew Porter; Estragon – Patrick McBrearty; Pozzo – Andrew Bennett; Lucky – Tadgh Murphy
Boy – tbc (County Antrim, September 26); Boy – tbc (County Wicklow, September 27).

Creative Team

Director: Jonathan Burgess; Stage Manager: Fiona Harkin; Translation: Frank Ferguson; Event Concept: Seán Doran

Arts Over Borders has presented 13 cross-border literary multi-arts festivals in Ireland from 2012-2022 including the internationally acclaimed **Happy Days Enniskillen International Beckett Festival** (EIBF) which brought The Berliner Ensemble to Ireland for the first time (since 1939) with Georg Tabori's controversial *Warten Auf Godot* and which involved other international artists including theatre directors Robert Wilson and Peter Stein, actors Toby Jones and Klaus Maria Brandauer, choreographers Maguy Marin and Mark Morris and the work of visual artists Antony Gormley, Tacita Dean, Joseph Kosuth and Steve McQueen. Other AOB festivals have included **A Wilde Weekend** in Enniskillen and the **Lughnasa FrielFest** celebrating the work of playwright Brian Friel (1929-2015) in Donegal & Derry involving actors Maxine Peake, Imogen Stubbs, Alex Jennings, Rory Kinnear and Tamsin Greig.

For further information and images, please contact Michael Barrett on 07813-558772 or

mfbpressoffice@gmail.com



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WHALE

THEATRE