



Derbhle Crotty

Fear only gets in the way of everything. It's only a distraction.

In conversation with **Joanne Hayden**, Irish Independent, 28 January 2018.



Derbhle addressing a Waking the Feminists meeting 2015.
Source: *thejournal.ie*

Derbhle Crotty was born in County Cavan in 1968, the eldest of four children. While studying law in University College Dublin, she developed an interest in acting, taking part in *Dramsoc*, the university theatrical society. Upon graduation, she completed an acting diploma at the Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College Dublin.

Derbhle is also part of the long-standing tradition of Irish actors working in London and has performed with a variety of theatrical companies, including the *Royal Shakespeare Company* and the *National Theatre*, interpreting both Shakespearean and contemporary roles. She has a successful film and television career, appearing in Irish and UK television productions and in Richard Eyre's 2006 film *Notes on a Scandal*.



Derbhle receiving The Irish Times Irish Theatre Award 2008.
Source: *The Irish Times*.

Derbhle has enjoyed success in Dublin and London. She enjoyed a fifteen-year career in the Abbey Theatre, where she played twenty-one different roles during this time. In addition to reinterpreting classic Abbey works such as *The Plough and the Stars* and *Sive*, she played leading roles in new drama, most notably Marina Carr's 1994 work *The Mai*. She played the lead role in the Abbey's revival of Teresa Deevy's 1936 impressionist play *Katie Roche*. She has enjoyed a fruitful relationship with the *Druid* theatre company, winning her second Irish Theatre Award for her portrayal of Henry IV as part of its *DruidShakespeare* series, having first won the award for her 2008 interpretation of Masha in Anton Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*.



Theatrical poster for Notes on a Scandal 2006.
Source: Fox Searchlight.



Theatrical poster for Citizen Lane 2018.
Source: Mammoth Films.



A Waking the Feminists protestor outside the Abbey Theatre 2015.
Source: *thejournal.ie*.

In November 2015 Derbhle rose to prominence for her protest against the underrepresentation of women as performers, writers and directors in Irish theatre. This was in response to the Abbey Theatre's *Waking the Nation* season, which marked the centenary of the Easter Rising but included just one female playwright in the ten writers selected for its 2016 productions. This omission gave rise to the *Waking the Feminists* movement, which sought to explore the way that women had been side-lined and excluded in Irish arts.

Speaking at a meeting which sought to address these issues, Derbhle described how her early roles allowed her to explore her own 'contrary, turbulent and passionate nature'. She also noted that most of the women she had studied acting with in the Samuel Beckett Centre had left acting, such was the paucity of roles for women. She has previously discussed the invisibility of female performers over 40 and throughout her career has called for imagination, innovation and inclusivity in Irish theatre.

Derbhle in Marina Carr's *Hecuba*, Royal Shakespeare Company 2015.
Source: *Royal Shakespeare Company*.

