

GAY SWEATSHOP 'BLOOD GREEN'. GRANERY THEATRE? CORK  
SUNDAY 19th and MONDAY 20th OCTOBER 1980.

The staging of the play "BLOOD GREEN" in cork happened almost by accident. A woman who worked in the Grapevine in Dublin was in Cork for a weekend and mentioned that Gay Sweatshop were coming to Belfast and Dublin. A group of us decided to try to get to Cork as well. After a number of phonecalls to London GS were finally contacted and agreed eagerly to come for two nights on the basis of splitting whatever receipts there were.

The first major problem was to get a suitable theatre and to ensure that a gay political play could be performed there. To avoid last minute hitches we booked two theatres. In retrospect we overestimated the opposition to a gay political play in Cork and now realize that gay can push for more space than they sometimes think.

The next major problem was publicizing the event in the short time available. Ads. were put into the Cork Examiner and the Evening Echo. Radio stations were contacted but only RTE local radio gave it a 'play'. Posters were put up in shops and pubs around town and in the colleges. Handbills were given out around town and especially at the gay disco. Tickets and invitations were sent to the usual critics.

There were full houses on both nights of mostly young people and UCC based. Despite fairly ~~ext~~ intensive attempts to get gay people to see the play only a relatively small number came - it is difficult to explain why, <sup>this was</sup> but it certainly was disappointing.

Leaflets on gay rights were handed out each night. We put up a gay collage in the foyer. Discussions were held each night after the play and this was a useful opportunity for a straight/gay dialogue.

The play had mixed reviews in the press, on the local radio and from the audiences. We felt that the play, dealing with the morality and function of scientific research was not appropriate for Cork with only an emerging gay movement. Previous Gay Sweatshop productions such as Mr. X would have been more effective politically.

Despite the fact that none of the six of us knew anything about putting on a play and that there was very little time to learn, the event went smoothly. There was a risk of losing a couple of hundred pounds but, fortunately for our pockets, we broke even.

The main factor in the success was the full commitment and energy of the small number of people who decided to put on the play. However, without the considerable help of other people the event would not have been so successful. All the cast were put up in gay people's flats and houses. We were fortunate in getting in touch with a number of people who had experience of putting on plays (ie booking a theatre,



publicity etc. ), Gerry Barnes and Triskel Arts Centre were especially helpful.

The project was critical in our development as gays because the work put in and its success gave each of us a sense of our and collective strength and a feeling of solidarity from working together as gays

It was the first time that a gay political theatre group played in Cork. Despite the fact that there was little controversy locally, the play, discussion etc. helped to make gay rights more of an issue for Cork people.

Although at times it was a hard slog, it was an exhilarating experience for the gays involved. We have our bars and discos but for most of us this was the first time seeing a public performance by ~~gays~~ lesbians and gays in our own town-it was a step out of the ghetto. Also, it was re-inforcing to meet and work with strongly confident gays.

In addition to everything else it was fun and the ~~parties~~ especially the parties.  
~~We thank everyone /~~

We think Gay Sweatshop enjoyed themselves too and they hope to come back and also visit other centres like Limerick, Galway etc.

KIERAN 1/2/1988