

The Ferryman

Jez Butterworth

Directed By David Lester

Performance dates: Monday 26th September to Saturday 1st Oct 2022 at the QMT

Audition dates: Sunday 12th June at 10am, Tuesday 14th June and Thursday 16th June 2022 at 7:30pm

Northern Ireland, 1981. The Carney farmhouse is a hive of activity with preparations for the annual harvest. A day of hard work on the land and a traditional night of feasting and celebrations lie ahead. But this year they will be interrupted by a visitor.

Much praise has been lavished on Jez Butterworth's writing, including several 'Best Play' awards in the UK and US. The play is about Quinn Carney, a loving father whose life has been haunted by the unexplained disappearance of his brother Seamus, leaving him and his distant wife Mary to take in his brother's vivacious wife Caitlin who always clung to the possibility Seamus would return. But a body has been found preserved in a bog, and a watchful peace made possible by uncertainty is about to end.

Each character has their moment on stage, but despite the large cast and interwoven plot lines it remains intimate, set in the kitchen of a single Armagh farmhouse in 1981. It is a play about a mystical idea of Ireland in which fairies and banshees and magic all exist, somewhere. It is a play about youthful idealism and brutal adult pragmatism. It's also a love story. And like most of Butterworth's work, it is funny as it builds to a devastating climax.

All are well rounded characters in the play. which stands comparison with Butterworth's other major hit, *Jerusalem*. On the following pages are descriptions of all the characters with their acting ages and backgrounds. If you do not know the play it's well worth checking out clips of the West End production and in particular, interviews with Jez Butterworth about his play on YouTube. **It is not essential to speak with a Northern Irish accent for the Audition, but with the help of our voice coach, you will need to develop the accent during rehearsals.**

For more information contact : davidlester46@gmail.com

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Character	Acting age	Context	How often appears
Quinn Carney	40s	<p>Quinn Carney is husband to Mary, and father of seven children. They live together on a rural farm, along with his sister-in-law, Caitlin, and her son, Oisín. Quinn is a former member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) but left to protect his family. His brother, Seamus, was also a member of the IRA, but mysteriously disappeared twelve years previously. When Seamus' body is revealed, Quinn realises that he was murdered and that he cannot escape the IRA's influence in his life. Initially, he refuses to acquiesce with their demands to keep quiet about Seamus' links to the IRA, but agrees when Seamus' widow, Caitlin, implores him to protect the family. Quinn's wife, Mary, has kept to her room upstairs for several years with an unknown sickness. As a result, the couple have lost all intimacy and have grown apart. Quinn has grown close to Caitlin and the couple indulge in flirtatious banter. When Father Horrigan reveals that Caitlin has confessed to being in love with Quinn, Quinn admits that he is in love with her too. He desperately wants to protect Caitlin and cannot stand back when Muldoon, an IRA member and former colleague of Quinn's, tries to take Caitlin to Derry to 'protect' her.</p>	<p><i>(Leading role)</i> Act1, p 12 to p16, p19 to p22, p34 to p42, p47 to p52, Act 2, p63 to p64, p66 to p85, Act 3, p114 to p129 (end).</p>
Caitlin Carney	Mid 30s to late 30s	<p>Caitlin is in her thirties and is Quinn's sister-in-law. She has one son, Oisín, who is fourteen years old. Caitlin and Oisín live with Quinn, his wife Mary, and their children. Caitlin was abandoned twelve years ago when her husband, Seamus, disappeared amidst rumors that he had fled to Liverpool. When she finds out the truth about his demise at the hands of the IRA, she is shaken but refuses to spoil the harvest feast with her bad news. She does not realize that Oisín overheard her conversation with Quinn, and knows everything, and is hurt when he withdraws from her. When IRA member, Muldoon, threatens the family, Caitlin is quick to tell him that she already knew in her head that Seamus was dead.</p> <p>Caitlin uses confession with Father Horrigan to confess her love for her brother-in-law, Quinn, which has steadily grown over the years. Her love is reciprocated by Quinn but Caitlin knows that they can never be together. She wants to protect Oisín and the Carney family but, when Oisín is killed by Tom Kettle in self-defence, she loses control. Caitlin has lost her husband and her son thanks to the IRA's influence and she is stopped from attacking Muldoon by Quinn, who kills him instead.</p>	<p><i>(Leading role)</i> Act 1, p12 to p16, P16 to p39, p43 to p51, Act 2, p61 to p78, p82 to p89, Act 3, p99 to p101, p119 to p129 (end)</p>
Mary Carney	Late 30s	<p>Quinn's wife and in her thirties. She and Quinn have seven children, with the youngest still a baby. However, Mary has kept to her room for several years with an unspecified ailment. She depends upon her older children to help out with chores and look after the baby. She and Quinn have lost their intimacy, and she leaves the running of the house to her sister-in-law, Caitlin. Mary is aware that Quinn and Caitlin have grown close, but when Caitlin's estranged husband, Seamus, is revealed to be dead, Mary realizes she must act to prevent Caitlin and Quinn becoming intimate.</p>	<p><i>(Supporting role)</i> Act 1, p39 to p47, Act 2, p67 to p78, Act 3, p116 to p120, p123 to p129 (end).</p>

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Aunt Patricia Carney	Late 70s,	Aunt Patricia is Quinn's elderly aunt. She has a fierce hatred of Margaret Thatcher and her policies in Northern Ireland. Aunt Pat had an older brother, whom she loved dearly. However, he was killed during the Easter Rising of 1916 and she has never forgiven the British for his death. Aunt Pat listens vigilantly to the radio, to keep herself informed on current political activity. In particular, she follows news about those on hunger strike in prison, and informs the rest of the family about their plight.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Act 1, p22 to p38, p45 to p47 , Act 2, p73 to p79, Act 3, p127 to p129 (end).
Uncle Patrick Carney	70s,	Quinn's uncle and is in his seventies. He enjoys reminiscing about his childhood and spouting off about Greek mythology. He also enjoys a drink and begins drinking early in the day. By the evening of the harvest celebrations, he is drunk and falls down the hill coming back to the house. Although he is in his seventies, Uncle Pat is still expected to help out around the farm, and goes with the men to bring the harvest in.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Act 1, p17 to p45 , Act 2, p64 to p78, Act 3, p113 to p115.
Aunt Maggie Faraway	Late 70s - 80s,	Quinn's elderly aunt in her late 70s to eighties. She is confined to a wheelchair and spends much of the play silent. She is often forgotten about in the room, while the action happens around her. When she does speak, it is clear that she is suffering from mental deterioration, and is frequently stuck in the past. However, Aunt Maggie has rare moments of lucidity and foresight, when she fills in family history for the younger members of the Carney family and predicts their futures. Aunt Maggie predicts the arrival of the banshees, the mythical Irish spirits who are heard at the end of play, signalling death and grief.	<i>(Supporting role - this character spends her time in a wheelchair and is quiet for long periods but has several monologues)</i> Act 1, p16 to p38, Act 2, p54 to p 59 , p59 to p89, Act 3, p111 to p129 (end).
Muldoon	40s,	Muldoon is from Derry, Northern Ireland. He is a prominent member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and is feared by many. Muldoon is violent and threatening, using his influence to organize terrorist activities in Northern Ireland. He recruits Shane Corcoran, an impressionable young man, to be his eyes and ears on the street. However, Shane is only valuable to him if he keeps his mouth shut and his head down, as there are plenty of others to take his place. Muldoon is concerned that the Carney family will implicate the IRA in Seamus' murder, and tries to threaten them to keep quiet. He goads Quinn, who abandoned the IRA to protect his family, leading Quinn to violently slash Muldoon's throat at the end of the play.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Prologue, p74 to p84 , Act 3, p123 to p129 (end).
Frank Magennis	20s	Is in his twenties and from Derry, Northern Ireland. He works for the IRA and is the violent henchman for Muldoon, an IRA member. Magennis sets up Muldoon's meetings, including his initial meeting in Derry with Father Horrigan. Magennis is shot dead by Quinn at the end of the play.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Prologue P6 to p10, Act 2, p74 to p84 , Act 3, p123 to p128.

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Tom Kettle	40s	An English odd job man in his forties. He jokes that he collects rainbows by making a notch on his front door every time he sees one. He is an affable chap, and likes to amuse the Carney girls by producing apples from his pocket, along with the odd rabbit. However, Tom is quite slow and not the brightest person, so it often takes him a while to explain things. But he has a natural affinity with the land and nature around him (and proves it by catching the escapee wild goose). Tom's history is vague, and there are differing stories lingering around of how he was abandoned to live in Northern Ireland when he was a child. Tom is in love with Caitlin, and naively proposes to her when her husband's body is found. He is a strong man, and kills Caitlin's son, Oisin, in self-defence, when Oisin tries to shoot Tom.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Act 1, p24 to p26, p43 to p44, p53. Act 2, p64 to p70, p70 to p78 , p85 to p88, Act 3, p126 to P129 (end).
Father Horrigan	50s	A Northern Irish priest in his fifties. He has known the Carney family for many years and is the family's priest. Because of his connection with the family, Father Horrigan is picked up by Muldoon, a member of the IRA, to reveal everything he knows about Quinn Carney. Father Horrigan is a deeply moral man who has been placed in a no-win situation as he feels he must tell Quinn and Caitlin about the IRA's investigation. As a result, he realizes that the Carney family must now distance themselves from him. Despite Muldoon's threats against his sister, Father Horrigan cannot bring himself to break up the Carney family and destroy Quinn and Mary's marriage.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Prologue p6 to p10, Act1 p41 to p42, p51 to p52 , Does not appear in Act2, Act 3, p111 to p117 (end)
James Joseph Carney (JJ)	Mid teens	JJ is sixteen years old and is Quinn and Mary's eldest son. He is due to inherit the family farm from his father, which he is very proud of. JJ is a hard worker and been brought up on the land. He has many duties around the farm, and goes with the rest of the men to bring the harvest in. Unlike his younger brother, Michael, JJ is quiet and sensible. He doesn't like their cousin, Shane, talking about Caitlin behind her back and tries to shut him up.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Act1 p27 to p45 , p52 to p53, Act 2, p64 to p78, Act 3, p90 to p105 , P127 to p129
Michael Carney	Mid teens	Outspoken, extrovert of all the Carney children. Michael enjoys teasing and poking fun at others, often being cruel and unfeeling in the process. Although he is only fifteen years old, Michael enjoys a drink and curses frequently. Despite his jokes, Michael is fiercely protective over his family, and he dislikes Shane's jibes about Caitlin and Seamus. Michael likes Shane's stories about his activities in Derry to begin with but he stands up to his older cousin when he connects Shane's stories with his uncle's fate.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Act 1, p26 to p28, p34 to p45, Act2, p64 to p78, Act 3, p90 to p105 , p127 to p129.
Shena Carney	Mid teens	Eldest daughter of Quinn and Mary and has been put in charge of taking care of the baby of the family. She is kind and caring with the baby, but views her sickly mother as lazy for not taking care of the baby herself. Caught between being a child and an adult, she is expected to carry out duties around the farm, but is also ushered out of the room when an unsuitable topic of conversation arises.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Act 1, p25 to p28, p34 to p44 Act 2, p54 to p62 , p67 to p78. <i>Fleeting appearance in Act 3.</i>

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Nunu (Nuala) Carney	11	As the second oldest daughter of Quinn and Mary, she now has chores to do around the farm with her brothers. She is curious about the conversations she hears around her, and asks a lot of questions. Along with her younger siblings, Nunu is often ushered out of the room by the adults when the topic of conversation becomes unsuitable.	<i>Supporting role</i> Act 1, p16 to p20, p23 to p28, p34 to p39 Act 2, p55 to p62 , p66 to p78. <i>Fleeting appearance in Act 3.</i>
Olson Carney	Mid teens	Caitlin's only son. He and his mother have lived with his aunt and uncle ever since he was four years old. His father went missing when he was a small boy and Oisín never knew what happened to him. Oisín overhears the truth about his father's demand at the hands of the IRA, but is annoyed that his mother does not share the truth with him. He is bitter and lurks in the shadows to listen in on people's conversations. Withdrawing from his mother, Oisín wants to take action and is easily convinced to kill Tom Kettle, who is in love with Caitlin.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Act 1 p19 to p26, p35, p64 to p79, Act 3, p106 to p111 and a non speaking short appearance P128.
Shane Corcoran	Mid to late teens	Shane Corcoran is seventeen years old. He and his brothers, Diarmaid and Declan, are cousins of the Carney children. Shane and his brothers arrive at the Carney's farm to help bring in the harvest and celebrate with the family. However, when he has too much to drink he becomes loud and aggressive, and it doesn't take too much encouragement from Diarmaid for him to boast about his work for the IRA. He is proud that he has been singled out by the IRA operative, Muldoon, and does not realise that he is being taken advantage of. Shane has a cruel, violent streak, and he relishes the opportunity to manipulate his impressionable young cousin, Oisín.	<i>(Supporting role)</i> Act 2, p64 to p79, Act 3, p90 to p111 , p125 to p129 (end)
Diarmaid Corcoran	Mid to late teens	He and his brothers, Shane and Declan, are cousins of the Carney children, and they live in Derry. They have come to the Carney farm to help with the harvest and celebrate with the family. Diarmaid enjoys his drink and banter with the boys. He eggs on Shane to tell stories about his activities with the IRA, knowing that it's easy to get him talking about a few drinks. Diarmaid is unrepentant when Shane accuses him of making him reveal secrets, arguing that Shane had a choice whether to join in the conversation.	<i>(Supporting role - very small number of lines)</i> Act 2, p64 to p79, Act 3, p90 to p111 .p
Lawrence Malone	20s	Is in his twenties and from Derry, Northern Ireland. He works for the IRA and is Muldoon's look out. Malone lurks in the shadows and rarely speaks. At the end of the play, Quinn spares Malone so that he can return to Derry and inform his bosses that Quinn is out for revenge.	<i>(Featured role)</i> Prologue p6 to 10, Act 2, p 79 to p84, Act 3, p 123 to p128 .

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Declan Corcoran	Early to mid teens	He and his older brothers, Shane and Diarmaid, are cousins of the Carney children, and they live in Derry. They have come to the Carney farm to help with the harvest and celebrate with the family. Declan looks up to his brothers, and follows their footsteps drinking and cursing.	<i>(Featured role - very small number of lines)</i> Act 2, p64 to p79, Act 3, p90 to p111 .
Honor Carney	7	When she first appears on stage, she is dressed up as Cleopatra at 5.30am in the morning for no other reason than it's fun. She is Quinn and Mary's youngest daughter and often does not understand what is going on around her. Like her siblings, Honor is often ushered out of the room by the adults when the topic of conversation becomes unsuitable.	<i>(Featured role - appears along with family, but small number of lines)</i> Act 1, p18 to 31, p34 to 44, Act 2, p54 to 62, p67 to p78. Doesn't appear in Act 3.
Mercy Carney	9	One of two of Quinn and Mary's younger daughters. She is often bewildered by the conversation she hears around her and asks lots of questions. Mercy is excited for the harvest feast, as it is a big celebration in the farming year. Along with her sisters, Mercy is often ushered out of the room by the adults when the topic of conversation becomes unsuitable.	<i>(Featured role appears along with family, but small number of lines)</i> Act 1, p15 to 31, p34 to 44, Act 2, p54 to 62, p67 to p78. <i>Doesn't appear in Act 3.</i>