

Denis Rafter
**beloved
sinner**

Beloved Sinner

-The last days of Oscar Wilde in Paris-

Paris 1900 – Oscar Wilde faces the last few days of his life. He has lost everything apart from his wit and his profound Humanity.

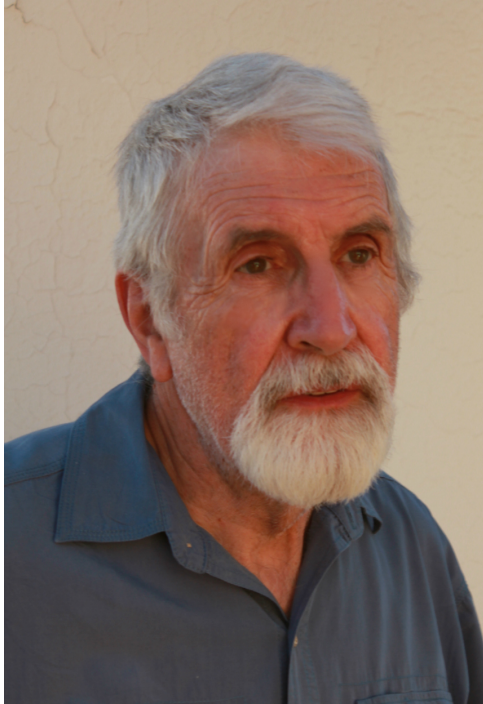
This is a new one-man show based on the last days of Oscar Wilde in Paris. Seated at a small table outside a French Café he explains to the audience what it was that led to his downfall. Very much alone he still clings to his great sense of humour and brilliant wit, telling his story without self-pity. What we see is a very human figure who realizes that his tragedy was mainly self-inflicted but that the punishment he suffered was imposed with cruelty and vindictiveness.

He believes that his life has been a total failure and that those who suffered most because of him were the ones who loved him most. His mother, the inimitable Speranza, died whilst he was in gaol and his devoted and loyal wife Constance had died soon after he was released from prison. For years he has not been allowed to see his two young sons and most of his aristocratic and wealthy friends in London now ignore and shun him.

Yet there is no hate in his heart and he shows a deep compassion and concern for those who still suffer from the moral hypocrisy of Victorian society of which he himself was a victim. Quoting at times from his own work, he gives a profoundly human insight into some of his best known writings such as, *The Nightingale and the Rose*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Expertly interwoven into his work is the story of his great triumph and painful disaster. The result is a highly dramatic and captivating encounter with one of life's great tragic heroes, that is both touching and entertaining.

Running time 1hr 15min (no interval)

ABOUT Denis Rafter



Denis Rafter is a highly acclaimed actor and director. Originally from Ireland, Rafter has spent most of his professional theatre career working in Spain.

He first studied acting at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and later at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. In Spain he has directed over fifty shows including plays by Sophocles, Shakespeare, Calderon, Valle Inclan, Beckett, Pinter and many contemporary writers such as Martin McDonagh, Mike Bartlett as well as many of Spain's current playwrights.

His work has been presented with great success throughout Spain including all the major theatres and festivals, such as, the

Roman theatre in Merida, the Corral de Comedia in Almagro, and the Teatro Español in Madrid. He has been visiting director at the Spanish National Classic Theatre a number of times and is currently directing a play by Cervantes for the Young Company of the National Theatre.

He is a versatile actor who has played in the works of writers such as, Sophocles, Shakespeare, O'Casey, Merriman, Carroll, Synge, Stoppard, Chekhov and Simon. He has also written and performed his own one-man shows on Beckett, Joyce, Wilde, Dickens and Shakespeare. These shows have been presented with critical acclaim throughout Spain and internationally. His show on Oscar Wilde won the Best Solo- Show award at the Edinburgh Festival. He has been invited several times to perform his work at the Teatro Español, Madrid's main theatre.

He has won many awards for his theatre work including the Adolfo Marsillach award, awarded by the Spanish Association of Theatre Directors in recognition of his work as director and *maestro* of actors, as well as his work in building cultural ties between Spain and Ireland.

He holds a Doctorate on the Theory, History and Practice of Theatre from the University of Alcala de Henares (suma cum laude) and has published a book on Shakespeare *Hamlet y el Actor*.

NOTE FROM Denis Rafter

Over thirty years ago I wrote and performed, 'The Remarkable Oscar Wilde', my first one-man show based on the life and work of Oscar Wilde. It enjoyed significant international success and won the Best Solo Show award at the Edinburgh Festival.

Now many years later and after writing, directing and performing numerous other shows, Wilde has returned to inspire me again. And with the benefit of my own maturity and life experience I can reflect on Wilde the man and not just on Wilde the performer.

I am now more aware of Wilde as a tragi-comic, heroic and very human figure, contradictory in his nature but remarkably compassionate and kind to his fellow man. My admiration for him is renewed and it is the deeply human aspect of his character that I want to portray.

My first show focused on the work and life of Wilde; in *Beloved Sinner* I have focused on the soul of Wilde, the greatness and generosity of his spirit and at the same time the weakness and flaws of his character.

Much of the play is based on my own imaginings of how he may have felt and what might have passed through his mind seated outside a café during the last days of his life in Paris. It is the beginning of a new century and Oscar expects no legacy for his work but ruin and ridicule.
How wrong he was!



Reviews of some of Rafter's works:

Rafter gave one of the most electrifying renderings of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" that was ever heard in the Assembly Rooms which Wilde may have once graced himself. It was a crescendo, a salute and an understanding not alone of Wilde's pitiful plight, but the fate of the wretched hanged man as well.

Wexford Echo

Naturalism was the keynote for Denis Rafter's one-man show. He has the storyteller's art, the simplicity of diction, the intimacy with the audience, the air of a man with something whose content will hold his hearers without tricks on his part

The Irish Times

Denis Rafter with his "The Remarkable Oscar Wilde" gives us a combination of charm, dignity, professionalism and compressed compassion that carries conviction to an incredible rendering of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol".

R.T.E.

Rafter eschews the epigrammatic in favour of the sentimental and it is an appealing choice. We all know the quotable Wilde but we tend to forget the compassionate one. Both Wilde's life and his work were elegant, witty and paradoxical but Rafter looks deeper to find a touching humanity that is as unexpected as it is pleasing.

Time Out

The most important thing about Rafter's show is that he doesn't act it, he reverts, very effectively, to a much older Irish art, that of story telling. His forte is simplicity, with which he proves Wilde's argument that it is the best refuge of the complex. It works extremely well; at times, notably in his delivery of "The Nightingale and the Rose", phenomenally well.

The Scotsman

Contact details in London:

Jane Cox
Studio 5
Ossian Mews
London N4 4DT
Email: studio@slinks.com
Tel: 07946 277 169

Contact details in Madrid:

Denis Rafter
Cerro de Valdemartin 30
Mirasierra
Madrid 28034
Email: denisrafter@hotmail.com
Tel: + 34 699 908 129

