

Summer Programme 'The Abbey

Players' America Tour 1913

Date

1913

Primary Maker

John Butler Yeats

Medium

Linen

Dimensions

48 × 44.5 cm

Description

Lady Gregory was one of the founders of the Abbey Theatre in 1904 and in her mind the Irish cultural revival as exemplified by the Abbey theatre and Hugh Lane's project for a gallery of modern art for Ireland were fused. Hugh Lane was the nephew of Lady Gregory, thus adding a significant impetus for her support. As a practical way of assisting the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art cause, Lady Gregory decided to dedicate some of the receipts of the Abbey's North American tour in 1912-13 to the Gallery. However, this proved to be unpopular with many members of the theatre company and led to humiliating legal action. Those opposed to Lady Gregory's plans of Abbey benefit performances in aid of the Gallery dismissed such involvement as distinctly 'a family affair.' Written at the top of this commemorative souvenir is 'Sold by the Irish Players at \$1.00 Towards a Building to Save Sir Hugh Lane's Great Gift of Pictures for Ireland April 1913'. Each \$1.00, though modest, would accumulate and thus be 'like the right twigs for an eagle's nest.' Look up at the sun's eye, and give What the exalted heart calls good, That some new day may breed the best, Because you gave, not what they would, But the right twigs for an eagle's nest. The textile is printed with reproductions of portraits by John Butler Yeats of eight of the Abbey Players: Sara Allgood, Eithne Magee, Sydney J. Morgan, J. A. O'Rourke, Arthur Sinclair, Udolphus Wright, Fred O'Donovan, and J.M. Kerrigan. These portraits, in pencil, were commissioned in 1911 by Yeats's friend and patron, John Quinn, when the Abbey Players were on their first tour of America. The following quote appears below these images: - Michael Cooney: Where is the use of calling it a lend, when I know I never will see it again? It might as well earn me the value of charity.