

**Press Release: 28-11-06**

**Embargoed Until Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December**

### **Nationwide Search for a Playwright**

The Irish Council for Bioethics (ICB) is launching a National Playwriting Competition 2006/2007 in the Dublin Writers Museum on 6<sup>th</sup> December from 6-7.30pm.

In recent years major medical and technological advances, such genetic modification and stem cell research, have been made which have given rise to numerous ethical questions. Given Ireland's literary tradition the ICB has decided to merge the fields of arts and science in order to raise public consciousness and stimulate discussion on these complex but ever more pertinent topics.

This unique competition provides a great opportunity for the winner to write a play and see it come to life on stage and is open to would-be writers as well as established playwrights. While the competition is not restricted to Irish residents, proposed plays must be of Irish interest.

The winner of the competition will be commissioned to write a full-length play. There is a prize package worth €11,000.

1. A commission of €7,500 to write a play based on an initial proposal.
2. €500 research expenses, which could be used for travel, buying books etc.
3. A staged reading (worth €3,000) in association with Fishamble Theatre Company.

Entrants will be asked to submit a synopsis of a script and a written statement outlining the specific manner in which the play relates to the field of bioethics and how the author envisages the development of the script. The winner will be selected from a shortlist following interview. The closing date for receipt of entries is **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007**. Entry packs will be available after the launch by contacting the Irish Council for Bioethics at 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2 or by e-mailing [info@bioethics.ie](mailto:info@bioethics.ie) or by calling +353 1 6380920.

We are delighted to announce that our esteemed panel of judges is: Liam Cunningham (Actor), Paul Fahy (Artistic Director, Galway Arts Festival), Aideen Howard (Literary Director, Abbey Theatre), Richard Hull (Member, ICB), Gavin Kostick (Literary Officer, Fishamble Theatre Company), Orlaith McBride (Director, National Association for Youth Drama), Helena Nolan, (Office of Science & Technology, Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment), Siobhán O'Sullivan (Scientific Director, ICB), Alan Stanford (Actor, Director at the Gate and Artistic Director, Second Age Theatre Company).

Dr Siobhán O'Sullivan, Scientific Director of the ICB said, "In Europe the relationship between science and the arts has grown with an increasing number of initiatives like the Science and Arts Foundation being established as well as artists working on projects with science institutions and so the Council is very excited about this initiative."

Ends:

**Notes to Editor:**

- The Irish Council for Bioethics is an independent, national body set up by the Government in 2002 to consider the ethical questions raised by biological research and biomedicine, such as stem cell research, IVF, genetic modification and euthanasia. An important objective of the Council is to promote public understanding, informed discussion and education with respect to bioethical issues. For more information see [www.bioethics.ie](http://www.bioethics.ie)
  
- Bioethics is a discipline dealing with the ethical implications of research and practice in the biological sciences and medicine. It facilitates a deeper understanding of a range of moral choices, which can inform decision-making in areas of public policy and with respect to the direction and control of science. Bioethics is also a forward looking discipline, working to anticipate future questions of concern, encourage awareness about them and stimulate progressive debate amongst the public.