

# STAND-UP COMIC AND ACTRESS, DEIRDRE O'KANE

“ I love the magnolia tree. I didn't notice them until I lived in London. There are a lot of them there, that's where I noticed them. I remember going: 'Oh my God, the beauty of them!' They just come and you go: 'Wow, spring is here!' Now I notice them. I think there are the most beautiful things — in the way that the cherry blossom is magical. It's like a plant but it's a tree, and because each flower is a fully formed flower, they are so beautiful. They remind me of orchids, a thing of beauty.

I have just moved back to Ireland and now there is a magnolia two doors up, so I probably will get my fix. Where I did live, they were abundant. The garden we have, there's no grass but it's a beautiful old garden, it's gravelled. There's a lovely apple tree. I'd say it's low maintenance, it's old in a classical way. What it needs is a load of pots. That suits me because that is all I have ever had. I'm a city gardener, and if you are a city gardener that is all you have — pots.

For the pots, I usually try to find the toughest thing. I keep buying ridiculous things, you think: 'That's gorgeous', you haven't a notion, and you go and spend €100 in the garden centre, and within weeks, they are dead. You live and learn, they are life lessons! You do, you buy pots that are ridiculous. Then you buy things like hydrangea, they just give and give.

I've only brought one pot back here with me, a hydrangea that flowers come-hell-or-high-water. I have had it probably ten years. It gets no attention and is still going strong. I do love them. I often want to buy hydrangeas for the table but they are so expensive. I need to grow more.

Mint is another thing that will grow anywhere, and vastly and wildly. You can make a pot of mint tea. I always laugh at what they charge for a pot of mint tea in a restaurant — sure, they are growing it wild out the back. Unlike coriander, my favourite herb, which just won't grow. I won't be buying it again. I have tried many times. Basil is great, I always have a basil plant on the go.

The daisy chain was big in my childhood. I remember when gardens were thick with daisies, myself and my sister used to spend hours making them. I remember our intention was to build a daisy chain to wrap around the house. The house was quite big and we nearly got the full way around it. I still love it when I see the daisies coming up, they evoke a happy memory.

My work is 50/50 indoor and outdoor. I filmed in Vietnam and we were out most of the time. That was for *Noble*, a film about Christina Noble. The most amazing thing was that we were in 43 degrees of heat. I used to leave the hotel, which was nice and air-conditioned, step out and get an almighty shock. Everything stuck to me,



every part of my clothing within ten minutes. Sweat just rolls off you, I remember drinking gallons of water, you think: 'I will be running to the loo', and worrying about where to go, but you don't need to because you are sweating.

There was one day it was absolutely sweltering, it must have been the midday heat, and we had to shoot the scene, it was the only day we could shoot it. I felt faint and thought I might pass out, but didn't say it. We had a Japanese and Vietnamese crew and, if you said something was wrong, ten people would descend on you — so you never said anything. That was one day I had to sit and put my head between my knees and get the blood going. Every time I watch the film, I look at that scene and think: 'Christ, I was dizzy and pale!' We were in Vietnam for 10 weeks.

For *Moone Boy*, there was always bit of on-location down the country, down in Boyle. It was all shot in Boyle, they were always delighted to see us coming. It was freezing, even in an Irish summer. We did also get some lovely weather but usually when we were in the studio. You would be desperate to get out into a bit of daylight. Typical to have the good weather when we were in studio —Moone's Law! ”

• in conversation with Yvonne Gordon

*Deirdre O'Kane is an actress and comedian, best known for her roles in Moone Boy and the feature film, Noble. Other film and TV roles include Intermision, Killing Bono, Paths To Freedom, The Clinic and Fergus's Wedding. She has also starred in theatre productions at the Abbey, Gaiety, Gate and Druid Theatres. She has performed stand-up comedy gigs worldwide, released two comedy DVDs and recently completed a nationwide stand-up comedy tour, 1Dee.*