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Luck of the Irish

by [Kevin D. Williamson](#)

On *After Luke & When I Was God* at the Irish Repertory Theater, New York, *A Lifetime of Burning* at e59e, New York & *The Bacchae* in Central Park.

Much of Irish history and a great deal of Irish drama appear to have been cleverly constructed to substantiate the least plausible fancies of Sigmund Freud. All those raging sons of Cuchulainn, *The Playboy of the Western World*, endless contests of fathers and sons (including *Fathers and Sons*, as adapted by Brian Friel)—it's really something to discover anything fresh in that old sod, but happily that is the case with two recent plays at the Irish Repertory Theatre in New York City. *After Luke* is a fugue on the theme of the Prodigal Son, while *When I Was God* is an exploration of sports and the ways its ritualized combat provides an avenue of sublimation for complex, painful, and often unspoken father-son conflicts.

After Luke is as much about the real-estate boom as it is about ramshackle lives lived in contemporary Cork. Maneen (Michael Mellamphy), the shifle ...

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