

# Introduction

This issue of *ABEI Journal* is a reflection and a record of some of the highlights of the *First Symposium of Irish Studies in South America*, which took place at the University of São Paulo in September 2006. The aim of this international encounter was to gather professors, lecturers, postgraduate students and other specialists from both sides of the Atlantic in order to discuss contemporary production and tendencies in Irish Studies.

The Brazilian Association of Irish Studies (ABEI), organised the three-day meeting with the support of the University of São Paulo, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of Ireland in Brasília. The Symposium itself was opened by the Irish Ambassador to Brazil, Michael Hoey, who also inaugurated the Beckett Centenary Exhibition at the Faculty Library. The event consolidated the study of Irish literature and culture in Brazil with lectures, seminars and papers on contemporary fiction, drama and Irish-Argentine literature.

In this issue of the *Journal*, therefore, we have selected some of the papers presented at the Symposium. We are pleased to include articles from three of our keynote speakers: Hedwig Schwall (Leuven University, Belgium), Inés Praga Terente (Burgos University, Spain) and Maureen Murphy (Hofstra University, USA), as well as articles based on papers presented at the Symposium by Maria Conceição Monteiro, Cielo G. Festino, Beatriz Kopschitz Xavier Bastos, Rosalie Rahal Haddad, Peter James Harris, Domingos Nunez and Noélia Borges. We are also publishing an interview that Irish Argentine writer Juan José Delaney gave to Laura Izarra during the event.

The current issue of the *Journal* is not restricted to material arising from the Symposium. We are also delighted to be able to reflect the increasingly international nature of the publication with articles and reviews received from contributors around the world including author Chris Arthur, Andrea P. Balogh, Csilla Bertha, David M. Clark, Nicholas Grene, Maura Harrington and Rüdiger Imhof, as well as Eoin Ó Néill and Sandra Vasconcelos from Brazil.

Finally, a note about our cover, which shows a production photograph of Marie Jones's *Stones in His Pockets*, translated into



Latin American Parliament in São Paulo.  
Architectural project by Oscar Niemeyer.

Portuguese and directed by Domingos Nunez. Following on from its extraordinary success in London the play achieved critical acclaim and impressive box-office returns at theatres in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Tickets to the show were included as part of the programme of events at the Symposium, and many delegates will remember the play as one of the highlights of a very rich and fulfilling schedule.