SOUVENIR PROGRAMME

AGAP THEATRE PRESENTS

GAUDÍ

GOD'S ARCHITECT

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY STEPHEN CALLAGHAN

DISCOVER THE STORY OF THE VISIONARY BEHIND

BARCELONA'S
SAGRADA FAMILIA

WWW.GAUDI-PLAY.CO.UK

GAUDI: GOD'S ARCHITECT
SCENE BY SCENE

- **PROLOGUE: Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes and Carrer de Bailèn in Barcelona**
- **SCENE ONE: The Gaudi Household in Reus, Catalonia**
- **SCENE TWO: Poblet, the ruins of a Cistercian Monastery**
- **SCENE THREE: Student life in the Born, Barcelona**
- **SCENE FOUR: The School of Architecture, Barcelona**
- **SCENE FIVE: Punti's Arts & Crafts and Carpentry Workshop**
- **SCENE SIX: A walk in the park near Matarro**
- **SCENE SEVEN: The Moreu Household, Matarro**
- **SCENE EIGHT: The Lenten Fast, Gaudi's Bedroom**
- **SCENE NINE: The Tragic Week, Park Guell**
- **SCENE 10: The Sagrada Familia, a work in progress**

Cast and Crew

Stephen Callaghan
Writer / Director / Player 1

Taxi Driver/Doctor/ Prof Villar/Antoni Gaudi

Glasgow-based playwright and theatre-maker Stephen Callaghan has written extensively on faith-related subjects in new and challenging ways. Works include "'Star of the Sea' (2020), commissioned by the Vatican for an international conference, and past Fringe shows, 'The Margaret Sinclair Story' (2016), 'Among Women' (2016) and solo shows, 'The Pew With A View' (2018) and 'Oggie! Oggie! Oggie!' (2023). Early acting appearances include STV soap, *Highroad*. www.stephencallaghan.com

Bernadette McCluskey
Player 3

Passer-by / Antonia Gaudi / Jose Ribera Sans/ Prof Rogent / Josefa Moreu / Rosalita / Woman in Street

Bernadette (Berni) McCluskey has lived in Dundee for 5 years. Prior to that she lived in Glasgow where I had the opportunity to join AGAP.

She performed in several AGAP productions. Roles included Mary Magdalene in 'Sign of Contradiction - the Passion Story' (2019) and Mareska, in 'Among Women' (2016) as well as tragic and comedic parts in other plays. Berni feels very blessed, privileged and excited to have the opportunity to take part in Gaudi: God's Architect.

Russell Wheeler
Stage Manager / Player 2

Passer-by / Francesc Gaudi Snr/ Eduardo Toda Guell / Francesc Gaudi Jnr / Prof Domenech / Eusebi Guell / Fr Torras i Bages / Fr Pares

Russell Wheeler has been involved with acting, tech and music in 10 AGAP productions to date. He is a founding member of folk duo Heelster Gowdie, and has been supplying church music in various forms since around 1985. Russell was also involved in amateur musicals in early 2000s. Originally a principle controls, instrumentation and electrical engineer, he is now retired and is part of the Strathclyde University Morning choir, playing guitar, bouzouki, harp, and percussion.

Rachel Callaghan
Assistant Director

Rachel's acting interest began at Dundee Rep Youth Theatre, followed by Higher Drama, HNC in Acting and Performance at The Space in Dundee. She went on BA Theatre Arts (Directing) at Middlesex University, London. She directed a modernised interpretation of Stridberg's Miss Julie at the Edinburgh Fringe. During her time in London, she worked with TenTen Theatre as facilitator, actor and director before returning to Dundee where she applied her theatre experience in youth work and in a production with Write To Life for SPUC. She played the part of Margaret Sinclair in the touring productions in 2017 and 2025, and in the video production for the schools pack in 2020. She is married to AGAP Director, Stephen Callaghan and helps out with AGAP Theatre whilst raising their family.

To enquire about forthcoming performances, please contact:
0141 552 5527 or visit www.gaudi-play.co.uk

DRAMATISING THE LIFE OF ANTONI GAUDI

By Stephen Callaghan

GENIUS? MADMAN? SAINT?

With the 100th Anniversary of his death this year, the eyes of the world turn to the figure of Antoni Gaudi. Over the course of time, he has been variously hailed as "the father of Catalan modernism", as "God's architect", and reviled as a bad-tempered eccentric whose work continues to divide opinions to this day. Love him or hate him, Gaudi is hard to ignore. His towering landmark, the Sagrada Familia, is a World Heritage Site (one of four Gaudi creations with this status) and its completion coincides with the centenary.

I wrote the play, Gaudi: God's Archtect in 2024, shortly after the death of my father. I had always been fascinated by Gaudi and his unique artistic vision coupled with his profound Catholic spirituality. My research for the play coincided with my father's final iillness and nothing makes one more profoundly aware of one's own mortality and the meaning of life than being faced with the reality of death. This concept drove me to consider the way in which death played such a huge part in Gaudi's life. His own existence was threatened by illness from an early age, he suffered the loss of every other member of his family and his own end was sudden.

Yet, it is fair to say that the reality of death which dogged him all his days, seemed to keep him anchored. Like most of us, his journey of faith was not plain sailing. It was a tug-o-war with God. like Jacob and the Angel in the Book of Genesis, Antoni Gaudi had to wrestle with the Creator with whom he was also madly in love. He faced illness (chronic rheumatism) which would no doubt have affected his mood and might help us to appreciate the "fierce temper" that he repented of so often in the confessional. We might also say that he faced periods of serious mental illness (his "darkest moment" after the death of his mother and brother) and the extreme Lenten fast that he undertook at the age of 42, bringing him almost to the point of death. Surely in this, there is a lesson for all of us who might be tempted to despair amidst the problems of life.

TIMELY THEMES

The play addresses timely themes, such as: respect for nature and ecological awareness in the use of materials; the role of art and beauty in the life of the Church; religious observance in a time of political unrest and intolerance; mental and physical health issues and the value of life despite illness or difficulty; defence of the rights of workers; the humanity of the saint as a "sinner who tries"; and his untimely accidental death, which emphasises the need to seize the day and live "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10).

A SNAPSHOT OF THE MAN

The original version of the play ran at almost 90 minutes but it was intended to be a short, punchy piece of educational storytelling theatre suitable for the Edinburgh Fringe and for schools. I therefore set out to prune it down to 50 minutes in order to fit the specifications of our Fringe slot. The 2024 production had only three Fringe Preview performances in Glasgow and seven performances at the Fringe. To our amazement and delight, we were sold out to capacity at every show, proving that there is still a great appetite for Gaudi's work and a curiosity about his story.

The original cast of three comprised of myself, Russell Wheeler and Jacqueline Glencorse and it was well-received. Due to various circumstances and commitments, were unable to take the productioin forward but the centenary of Gaudi's death in 2026 provides the perfect opportunity.

The play gives an overview of Gaudi's life and invites the audience to look further. Following the last run at the Fringe, I received messages from people moved to visit the Sagrada Familia now that they had learned more about the story of the man behind it. Gaudi leaves behind very little written work. In fact, only two small documents remain, due to the destruction of his studio by fire during the Spanish Civil War. The rest is left to the accounts of others who knew and observed him. Several books are written about him but there remains an element of mystery about Gaudi.

The play does not seek to answer the question of his sancitity or otherwise, but simply to present him to an audience who might not otherwise get to hear anything of his story.

I am enormously grateful to Bernadette McCluskey and Russell Wheeler for their hard work on this production. They have worked tirelessly on honing their performances to fit the timescale and to bring to life numerous characters.

I am also very grateful to my wife, Rachel for stepping in as Assistant Director this time around, adding a whole new perspective. It is one thing having the privilege of acting in the play but it is another to carry the onus of portraying Gaudi himself. Rachel's input at rehearsals allowed that outside perspective that I simply couldn't have whilst on stage.

The original production had lights and sound designed by Zach O'Neill and we were able to use many of the elements for his design in this new production. I remain very grateful to him.

GAUDI AT THE FRINGE

We look forward to returning to the Fringe with the Production, at a new venue this year, The Space at Surgeons Hall, with an extended run of nine performances. I hope that the play will entertain, amuse and educate a new audience seeking a 50 minute encounter with one of the most important and intriguing figures in recent architectural and Church history.

Thank you for supporting this production by attending the performance.
We are grateful.

THE SAGRADA FAMILIA

A DREAM 140 YEARS IN THE MAKING

"We remember of course the man who was the soul and the artisan of this project, Antoni Gaudí, a creative architect and a practising Christian who kept the torch of his faith alight to the end of his life, a life lived in dignity and absolute austerity,"

Pope Benedict XVI

Gaudi on the Path to Sainthood

16 years after Pope Benedict XVI visited the church of the Sagrada Familia, elevating it to the status of 'basilica', Pope Leo XIV will celebrate Mass on 10th June 2026 and bless the Tower of Jesus Christ, which completes the construction of Gaudi's architectural masterpiece which he began working on in 1883 after the original architect, Francisco de Paula del Villar, resigned.

On 14th April 2025, his predecessor, Pope Francis declared Antoni Gaudi as Venerable. This progressed the cause of Gaudi's canonisation as a Saint to the next level, from Servant of God. The late Pope Francis described Gaudi as "a great mystic".

The Church's process of recognising someone as a Saint requires the scrutiny of the person's life and the verification of miracles (normally two) attrributed to the intercession of the person.

"Saint Joseph will finish this church."

Antoni Gaudi

Some Points to Consider as you watch the play

- What do you think of Gaudi's life journey? Can you identify with any part of it?
- What part does illness (mental and physical) play in the life of Antoni Gaudi? Has illness made a difference in your story?
- Which character(s) do you most identify with?
- What is the role of art in society? Can it make a difference?
- What is the relationship between art and spirituality?
- Gaudi feels "called" to do his work. What are you passionate about? Do you have a particular "calling" in life?
- What makes someone a "Saint"? Someone once said, "a saint is a sinner who tries". What do you think?
- What do you think of the sudden nature of the tram accident that ended Gaudi's life? If you knew that this was going to be your last day, what would you do?
- The play suggests that each of us face our own kind of 'tram car' - what circumstances can effect an awareness of our mortality and/or a shift in perspective.

Acknowledgements

Josie Dillon for waistcoats. Anne, John-Paul and Gloria Callaghan. AGAP Volunteers, especially Lynn Wright, Mary Friel, Theresa Bentley, Angela Evans, Jean Byrne and Mary Wheeler.
The preview host parishes. St Mary, Star of the Sea, Leith. The Space. Edinburgh Festival Fringe.
The Dicastery for Culture and Education, The Vatican.

The following sources, in particular: Michael Eude, *Antoni Gaudi (Critical Lives)* (2024); Gij Van Hensbergen, *Gaudi* (2001); Charles River Editors, *Antoni Gaudi* (2017).
Original poster design and technical input by Zach O'Neill.

Have Faith in the Arts AGAP Archdiocese of Glasgow Arts Project www.agap.org.uk

AGAP

Have Faith in the Arts

AGAP is part of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, a charity registered in Scotland. No SC018140

Scan to Donate