

## Clubs & Associations



*MIAS actors from a John Millington Synge performance*

### All those Irish words: not just blarney

When Dublin was made European Capital of Culture some time back it was noticeable that almost all the offerings in the areas of the visual arts and music had to be imported. But there was a rich feast on offer of drama, poetry and general literary creation. So we might expect that the Irish here would have a unique contribution to make to the cultural life of the anglophone community, as they have indeed been doing for some 25 years.

Explains Virginia Disney who, with Paul Connell and Nick O'Connor, has been a driving force in this activity: "A small group of us started back in 1984 with play readings and poetry recitals. Ten years later we set up formally the **Monaco-Ireland Arts Society** – or MIAS. One thing I'd like to stress. We're not some exclusive Monaco coterie. Our title could suggest that but wrongly. We adopted it

because we got a lot of support from Michael Smurfit, the Honorary Irish Consul in the Principality, and so that's where the association was officially established. In fact, we want to welcome all Irish people and friends of Ireland along the Coast. That's helped by our collaboration with the new Irish Association and Ann Kelly's Riviera Memories which is very aware of relevant literary connections – from James Joyce to Frank Harris."

What does the association offer? "Quite a range ... from a presentation of the life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan through an evening of Irish ballads to a reading of Beckett's *Endgame*. That's just a quick glance at old menus. We have regular events across the year and we're always glad to welcome new people. And needless to say the atmosphere is very convivial."