

Arcade gambler stole €14k from Dublin Bus

A SLOT machines addict who stole more than €14,000 from his former employer, Dublin Bus, by logging bogus customer refunds has received a suspended two-year sentence.

Rory Mullally, 26, committed the fraud to fund his gambling addiction at Dr Quirkey's Good Time Emporium arcade, next to his place of work, Dublin Circuit Criminal Court was told.

He was responsible for giving rebates to customers with Tax-Saver Leap Cards following a six-day Dublin Bus strike in 2016, his trial heard.

Mullally, whose father, uncles and grandfather had long careers at Dublin Bus, later told his employers and gardai that

By Aoife Nic Ardghail

he had stolen the money to feed his gambling addiction.

The court heard he resigned from his post and has since raised the full amount owed to his former employer.

Mullally, of Seskin View Road, Tallaght, Dublin, pleaded guilty to dishonestly appropriating amounts belonging to his employer at Dublin Bus Offices, Upper O'Connell Street, on dates between October 14, 2016, and February 20, 2017. He has no previous convictions.

Detective Garda John Saunderson said managers at Dublin Bus were looking at how the customer tax rebates were

being processed online when they noticed 353 anomalies under Mullally's logs.

The detective told Fiona McGowan BL, prosecuting, that Mullally had logged rebates to Leap Card numbers that didn't exist or match customer names. He also had made duplicate rebates. At a meeting with managers in March 2017, Mullally admitted he had been processing these false rebates and taking the cash for himself to feed his gambling problem.

Judge Martin Nolan handed Mullally a suspended two-year sentence and ordered that the balance of the owed money be handed to gardai to pass on to Dublin Bus.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

On stage, you can see what we all treasure

HE stood in the centre of the stage, a single spotlight shining above his head. The packed theatre was silent and still, the children mesmerised by the enchanting music. And then, in his best West End voice, our eldest began to sing:

*'I was the one who had it all,
I was the master of my fate,
I never needed anybody in my
life,
I learned the truth too late'*

We were at Arclight Drama Studio's production of *Beauty And The Beast* in the Pavilion Theatre in Dún Laoghaire. I have previously written about Paul Cullen and Ciara Phelan, both of whom run the studio in Dublin. As with so many children, it was they who first gave our boys a passion for stage performance.

Beauty And The Beast ran for eight shows and was a sell-out success. Each night, a new batch of children joined the cast to show off their acting skills before a live audience. Our eldest sang the heartrendingly beautiful *Evermore* at four of the shows.

In our digital age, the theatre testifies to the enduring power of the arts to shape our moral perspective. The lights go down, we suspend reality and enter a world of possibility. There, before us, stand real people inviting us to share their pain, savour their joy and look at the world through their eyes.

Serious acting is, in many ways, a moral vocation. The good actor asks us to go with him on a journey and to be changed in the process.

That is why, each summer, Paul and Ciara travel with a troop of young actors to Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon. In performing the Bard's plays on that hallowed soil, they each learn why it is that acting is much more than a profession.

As I sat through *Beauty And The Beast*, I began to realise that this is no less true of pantomime. Its primary purpose is to provide an evening of comic relief. Look deeper, however, and you will see that it, too, can convey a crucial message:

*'I was the one who had it all,
I was the master of my fate'*

How many of us have stood on

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—

the heights oblivious to the sad plight of others? How many of us have taken life for granted, forgetting that things can change in an instant? And then, when we least expect it, the ground gives way beneath our feet.

I have heard my son sing *Evermore* a thousand times. However, I never really understood it until his emotional rendition the other night. As he sang, I began to see that this great story of personal redemption is also our story.

At a certain stage in life, we believe that we are self-sufficient, that we don't need others to make it through the years. So many of us don't realise what we have until it is too late. It is only when the ground gives way that, like the *Beast*, we finally see the true *Beauty* that was ours.

*'Wasting in my lonely tower,
Waiting by an open door,
I'll fool myself, she'll walk right
in,
And as the long, long nights
begin,
I'll think of all that might have
been,
Waiting here forevermore'*

He left the stage to thunderous applause and the immense pride of his parents.

But something else happened in that moment: if people were teary-eyed, it was because our son helped us to identify with the *Beast's* loneliness, his pain and torment.

His loss was our loss, his longing something that we all fear to feel.

Paul and his fine cast soon moved into that space and had us laughing again.

But isn't that the essence of true acting: the ability to put people in touch with all their emotions so that, when they return to the world, they can see it with fresh eyes?

When tears of joy flow with those of pain, life is somehow cleansed of its regrets and made ready for a new start.

When the *Beast* complained of a terrible pain inside, our middle son told him he either had a broken heart or was suffering from gastroenteritis. It was one of many classic moments in a show where all the children performed at their peak.

Thanks to Paul and Ciara, they now have memories which will last a lifetime.

We walked into a cold night. The world outside hadn't changed, but something inside us had.

We finally saw why we should treasure what we have... forevermore.

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