



## A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings

Relaxed Performance Sun 21 May, 2pm

This visual story is to help you prepare for your visit to see A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings which takes place at the Sallis Benney Theatre



Cultúr Éireann  
Culture Ireland



## Visiting the Sallis Benney Theatre

This picture is of the outside of the Sallis Benney Theatre taken from Kingswood Street.



This is the entrance that will take you into the foyer. The entrance has a ramp and is accessible for wheelchair users.



Here are some pictures of the foyer areas.



It is a large, bright space with stairs in the middle.



There is also space behind the stairs, which leads onto the café.





If you would like to buy a drink or a snack, you can get these from the café area before the show.

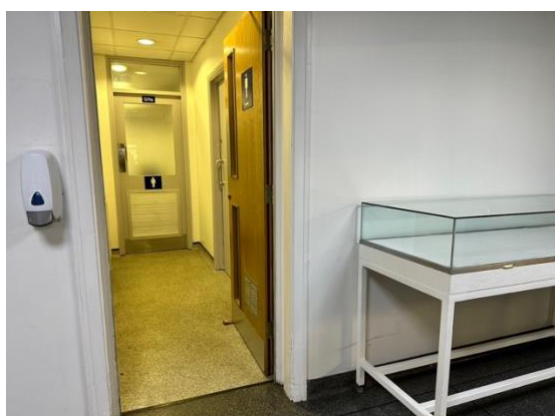
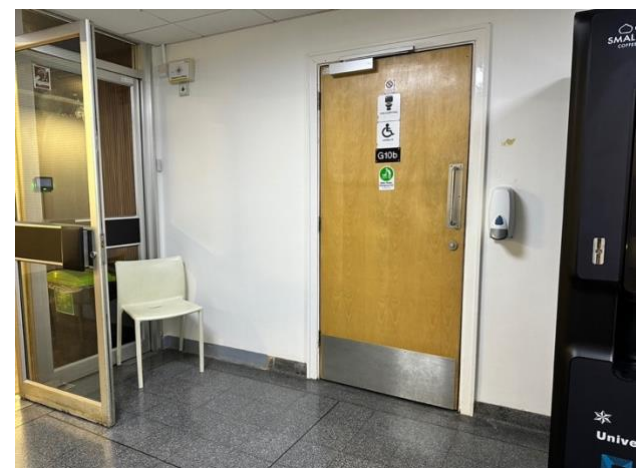
This is the cafe.



There is also a quiet space that you can use during the show if you want to exit the auditorium, which is next to the cafe. This is the quiet space.



Toilets are located near to the entrance to the theatre, including an accessible toilet.



This is the entrance to the Sallis Benney Theatre from the foyer area.



When you go through the doors, you will be guided left or right into the Theatre.



Once you go past the entrance, the way into the Theatre is a bit narrow. There are black curtains on either side, but it's not very far.



This is what it looks like when you need to exit the Theatre.



These pictures show what the Theatre looks like from the stage and the back of the auditorium.



There are some seats which step up so that you can get a good view of what's happening on stage. The first few rows are close to the stage and are on a flat floor.





## A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings

The show begins with two performers on stage - one male and one female. It is a domestic space like a kitchen but it's also a theatre space. There is a table and a chair in the centre of the stage. There is a microphone on a stand downstage right. There is a shelf upstage left. On the shelf is a lot of rubbish like cardboard, magazines, electric wire, DIY equipment and small handmade figurines of the characters. Upstage centre is a blind suggesting that there's a window behind it.

As the audience comes in, the performers are onstage preparing their props (objects) for the show and looking at the audience. When the show starts the female performer sits in the chair behind the table and faces the audience and the male performer stands beside her. She says, loudly and suddenly, "WELCOME TO OUR STORY!" She then realises she's speaking too loudly and adjusts her volume. She tells the audience that the story they are about to hear has a lot in it but no lessons and warns the audience not to go looking for any.

The female performer then narrates a story about a man and a woman called Pelayo and Elisenda whose little house beside the sea is being overrun by crabs, as a result of a big storm. They have a sick baby and think that it's the smell of the crabs that's making their baby sick. Outside their house, Pelayo and Elisenda come across a strange sight, a very old man with enormous wings. He speaks in a language they cannot understand. They ask the wise neighbour woman about him, and she says he's an angel who was coming to take their baby away but was battered by the wind. They lock him in the chicken coop.

The next day the rain has stopped and the baby is well again. A crowd of people have gathered at the chicken coop to look at the man. A priest comes to see him and says that he probably isn't an angel but just a very old man with enormous wings. More and more people come to see the old man and the queue stretches out of sight. A carnival comes to entertain the waiting crowds. Pelayo and Elisenda charge money for people to see him. They get rich and build a bigger house. But the old man seems not to notice or care, even when people pluck out his feathers or throw stones at him.

When a more popular circus attraction comes to town, people lose interest in the old man and everyone leaves. Pelayo and Elisenda's child grows up. The old man becomes a nuisance to the family, as he wanders about their house. At one point, they notice he has a temperature and think he's going to die, but instead he gets his strength up and flies away.

In this production, the female performer speaks all of the text, and the male performer is silent, except for when he speaks the language of the old man that we can't understand. They tell the story using narration, music, puppets of the characters, small painted backdrops, and live video projected onto the window blind.



These are the two performers. Male (left) and Female (right)





These are the puppets of the characters: Pelayo, Elisenda and the Priest.



Male performer (holding the light) with the puppet of the Very Old Man.



Male performer playing the Very Old Man, holding the camera up to his face, which is projected onto the window blind.



Male performer (left) playing the Old Man, a puppet (Centre) as the Child, and the female performer (right) operating the puppet.



## What will happen?

*Please note the female performer is different in the following images. It is from an earlier version of the show.*



This is what the stage looks like at the beginning of the play.



6 minutes into the show, the lighting gets dark. The performers turn on the lamps on the table and they show the small puppet characters for the



first time. Pelayo, Elisenda, the Very Old Man, and the Neighbour Woman



7 minutes in and the male performer speaks as the Very Old Man for the first time. It is a strange and unintelligible language.



10 minutes in. They pretend to be chickens. The male performer gets a bit carried away and makes a much louder chicken sound at the audience. The female performer stops him and calms him down.



14 minutes in and the cameras come on for the first time. They project live video of the small puppets onto the window blind.





18 minutes in and it gets dark as the Priest inspects the old man. The female performer sings into the microphone *"Is he an angel?"* three times, getting louder each time.

She pushes a button with her foot and suddenly the music stops, the lights get bright, and the cameras turn off.



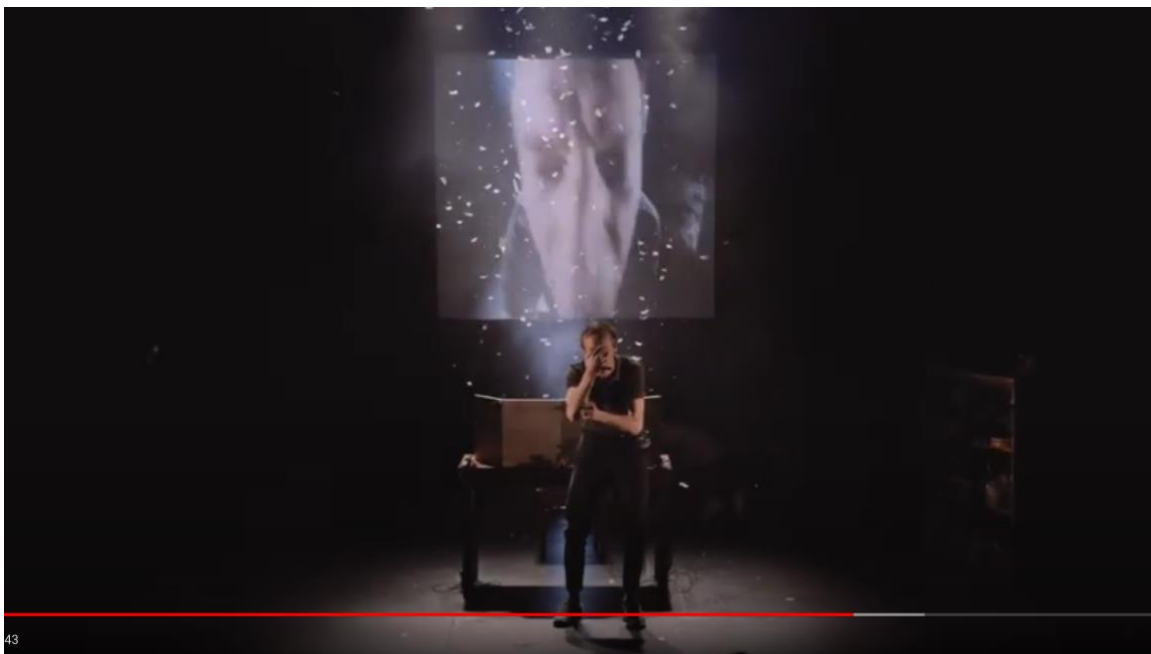
29 minutes in, the lighting gets dark and they shine a torch light on the puppet of the Very Old Man as the female performer describes the way that people are cruel to him.

She says "the only time they got anything from him, was when the farmer's boy burned him with a branding iron"





The male actor heats the branding iron held by the farmer's boy puppet. The male performer pushes the farmer's boy puppet towards the very old man puppet. It gets dark and then....



...we represent the Old Man's burning pain from the branding iron and the force of his suffering.

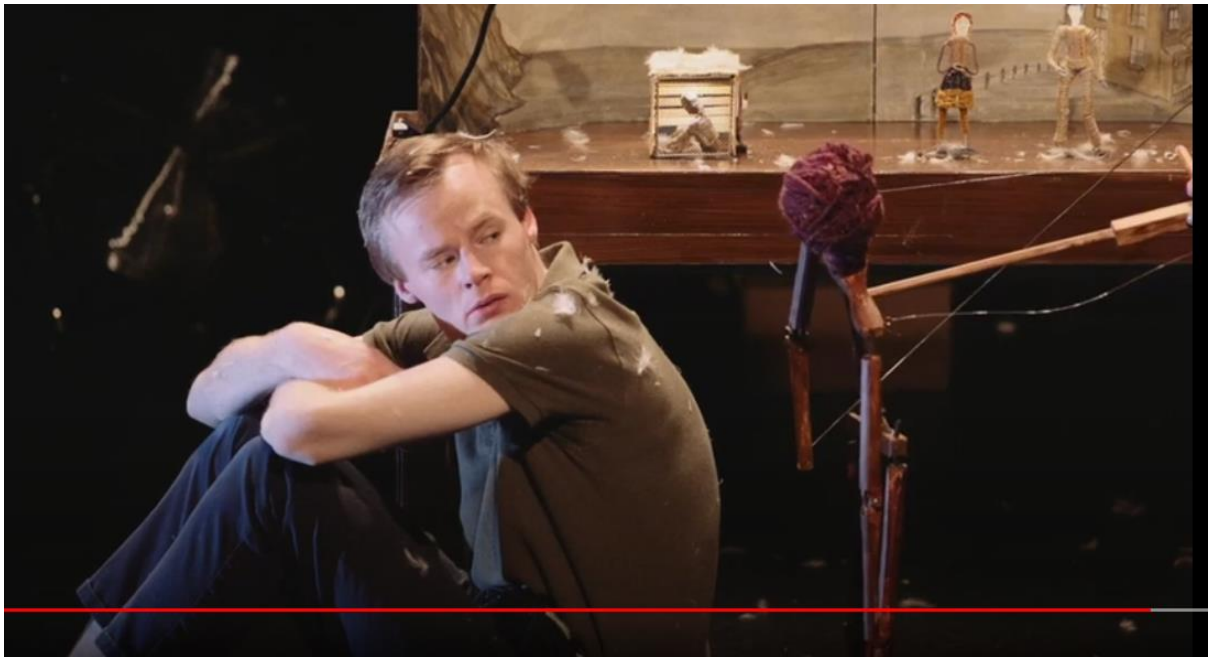
There is a chime sound in the speakers

- A blue light shines behind the male performer towards the audience
- Video of the male performer's face is projected onto the blind
- A fan blows feathers upwards and towards the audience.
- The male performer makes a pained sound in the Old Man's voice.

This moment lasts approximately 15 seconds before it gets bright again and the female performer comforts the male performer. No one is hurt during the scene; it is just a representation.



36 minutes in and the female performer brings out a puppet to represent Pelayo and Elisenda's child.



The puppet and the Old Man (represented by the male performer) share a tense but intimate look.



42 minutes in and the Old Man's wings appear for the first time. A pleasant piece of music starts to play. It gets louder and more forceful over the next 3 minutes as the Old Man regains his strength and flies away.





The male performer lifts the wings up to represent the Old Man flying.



The lighting goes dark and the female performer lights the wings with a torch.



A light comes on the blind and, at the same time, feathers blow gently upwards through the blind and the music comes to its climax.



Gradually the stage gets bright again, and the performers take their applause while in character.

This is a picture of the performers taking a bow at the end of the play.



This is the end of the play. You can show your appreciation by clapping if you like. Once the lights are turned on in the room you can leave safely.