



Trick of the Light

The Bookbinder

THE MICK LALLY THEATRE,
DRUID LANE, GALWAY

21-26 JULY

GALWAY INTERNATIONAL
ARTS FESTIVAL 2026



Trick of the Light

The Bookbinder

They say you can get lost in a good book, but it's far worse to get lost in a bad one.

An old man sits down to read the tale of a once- promising bookbinding apprentice. As he speaks, the story starts to spill from the pages into the bindery around him. *The Bookbinder* shifts seamlessly from pop-up book to puppetry, storytelling and live action, weaving a dark and captivating fairytale.

The Bookbinder is a darkly magical, inventive production for adults and older children. The production has been the recipient of multiple awards, including Best Theatre and Best in the Fringe at NZ Fringe and the International Excellence Award at Sydney Fringe.

An epic adventure in miniature awaits.



A Note | Trick Of The Light

This is a little show that has surpassed all our expectations. It premiered in a back room of Arty Bees Bookshop, Te Whanganui-a-Tara [Wellington], during New Zealand Fringe 2014, and as the season went on we had to increase our capacity from fifteen to fire hazard.

Since then it's taken us around Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, China, the UK, and North America. We wanted to make something that was intimate and immediate, engaging and surprising – kind of like reading a book.

We wanted to tell a story about the way stories are constructed, and we wanted to spin a good yarn. Hope you like it.





CREATIVE TEAM

Writer | Performer

Ralph McCubbin Howell

Director

Hannah Smith

Composition
and Sound Design

Tane Upjohn-Beatson

Pop-up Book

Hannah Smith

Production Design

Hannah Smith and Ralph McCubbin Howell

Graphic Design

Edward Watson

Video Trailer

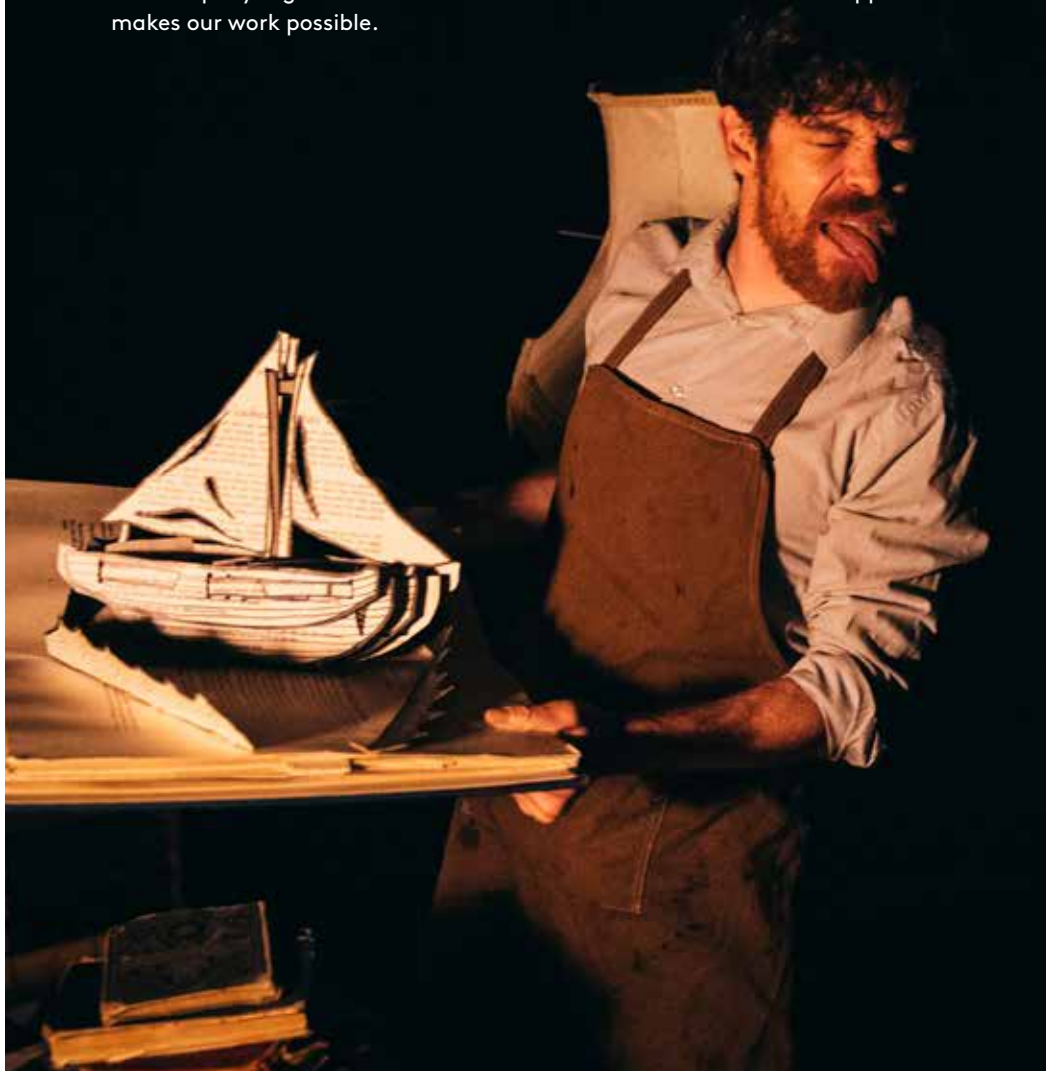
Tane Upjohn Beatson

Trick of the Light

Trick of the Light is an award-winning theatre company from Te Whanganui-A-Tara [Wellington] in Aotearoa/New Zealand, founded by Hannah Smith and Ralph McCubbin Howell. They like to make theatre that is playful, inventive, thought-provoking, and that speaks to the here and now.

Their shows range from dark cross-over works for adults and older children to biting political satire, but are unified by their engaging, nuanced stories, inventive design, and belief that theatre should resonate with the wider world. Trick of the Light recognise the rightful place of Māori as tangata whenua in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the nation's founding document.

The company is grateful to Creative New Zealand whose continued support makes our work possible.





Hannah Smith | Co-director

Hannah is a Wellington based director, designer and producer who grew up in Ōtepoti [Dunedin]. She has an honours degree in English and Theatre from Victoria University of Wellington. She was awarded Most Promising Director at the 2013 Wellington Theatre Awards for *The Road That Wasn't There*, and Director of the Year for *The Griegol* in 2022. In 2023 she received a FAME Trust Mid-Career Award. She has a background in puppetry and paper-art, and her work with *Trick of the Light* has been performed around Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, the UK, USA, Canada and South Africa.

Ralph McCubbin Howell | Co-director

Ralph is a Wellington based theatre maker who grew up in Waikari in Te Waipounamu. He completed a BA [Hons] in Theatre & English at Victoria University of Wellington before training at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in the UK. He was awarded Outstanding New Playwright at the 2011 Wellington Theatre Awards, and Outstanding New NZ Play for *The Road That Wasn't There* in 2013. He won the Bruce Mason Playwriting Award in 2014 and received a Masters in Scriptwriting at the International Institute of Modern Letters at Victoria University.

