

# **Grania** **by Augusta Gregory**

## **Audio Description Programme Notes for the performance in the Abbey Theatre Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2024, at 2pm**

Welcome to the audio description introduction to **Grania**, written by Augusta Gregory.

This production is directed by Caitríona McLaughlin. Set Design is by Colin Richmond, with Costume Design by Catherine Fay, and Lighting Design by Sinéad Wallace. Sound and Composition is by Carl Kennedy. The Movement Director is Eoin Mac Donncha.

The performance runs for approximately two hours including a twenty minute interval.

### **ABOUT THE PLAY**

We all live in a network of complex relationships, with families, friends, partners and our communities. However, as Finn declares 'Love is the disturber' and it can upset this delicate balance, as friends turn on friends and insiders become outsiders, upending the order of our worlds.

In Lady Gregory's groundbreaking 1912 play, **Grania**, these age-old dynamics come to life, through the story of three legendary Irish figures, Gráinne, Diarmuid and Fionn.

Reimagined for 2024 by director Caitríona McLaughlin, for its first ever production at the Abbey Theatre, **Grania** connects us to our past and illuminate our present. Speaking about the play, the director commented 'Diarmuid and Gráinne is considered one of the greatest love stories of all time. In Grania, Lady Gregory's version certainly is that, but not in the way you might think. I've wanted to direct it for a long time'.

## **ABOUT THE SET**

The set is made up of four raised horizontal walkways, these walkways gradually get bigger as they move up towards the back of the stage. There are three platformed performance spaces in the centre of the walkways on the central performance space is a large pool hidden beneath a hinged door. There is a pond lower down on the front of the stage surrounded by small rocks and sand. There's also water in amongst the reeds further up to our right of the highest platform. The walkways and platforms are made of wooden decking with a dark burnt finish.

In between and beyond these areas are rows and rows of reeds that represent a marshy Irish landscape. There are three tall leafless branches placed amongst the reeds that represent trees.

The landscape is surrounded by darkness. There's an unlit fire pit to our left in the central platform as the show begins, along with a carved wooden cup, a copper jug and a bowl of bread and pears. On the upper platform to our right a lime green two person tent. One of the singers sits in the tent reading. When the tent is moved it is evident there are a few sheepskins laying on the floor.

Sometimes against the back drop seasons transition from rain to autumn leaves falling, then snow.

Characters meet each other on the platforms, and leave to wander the pathways in and around the reeds until they disappear out of sight.

There's a lot of side lighting in this show that bounce off the reeds making them appear golden, sometimes with a reddish hue.

## **ABOUT THE CAST AND COSTUMES**

**Grania** played by **Ella Lily Hyland** is a woman in her twenties, when we first meet her she has long blonde hair in a plait and is wearing a long golden silk dress with a golden crocheted sleeveless tunic over the top of it. On her feet low heeled court shoes. Later she changes into a long purple wrap around dress with gold trim at the neck line. Later still she puts on a

comfortable loose fitting outfit that is well worn in, cotton three quarter length grey trousers with a long khaki coloured loose fitting short sleeved top.

**Finn** played by **Lorcan Cranitch** and **Diarmuid** played by **Niall Wright** wear clothes ready for battle at any time but also warm and comfortable. Their clothes give nod to ancient times but could also be worn nowadays. **Finn** the older of the two, in his late forties perhaps, has greying hair and a moustache. He wears loose brown trousers tucked into black boots with a brown tunic top and a warm maroon waistcoat with a heavy coat emboldened by hand with sunbeam motif, an emblem of his people.

**Diarmuid** a younger warrior in his twenties with brown hair and a beard wears a similar type of trouser tucked into black boots with grey tunic top and long hooded coat.

There a two wandering singers in the show, played by **Seán Boylan** and **Laura Sheeran**. Unlike the other characters they wear modern but not good quality clothes, tracksuits, runners, hoodies and beanie hats, all could have been purchased in a budget clothes store.

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That concludes the audio description introduction for **Grania**. It was prepared by myself, Mo Harte, who will also provide audio description for the performance. Audio description at the Abbey Theatre is provided by Arts & Disability Ireland with support from The Arts Council.

For updates about audio described and captioned performances, text **ACCESSARTS** to **51444** or head to **www.adiarts.ie** for more information.

Thank you. Go raibh maith agaibh.