



ROYAL BALLET & OPERA

A SINGLE MAN

A VISUAL STORY FOR THE RELAXED PERFORMANCE



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Visual Stories are intended to be used by everyone to help with their enjoyment and understanding of a Relaxed Performance.

You can use this information for all performances of A Single Man at The Royal Opera House, but some of the information will be more relevant to the Relaxed Performance.

Relaxed Performances can help to support neurodiverse audiences, those living with dementia, have learning disabilities or experience anxiety. These types of performances are also helpful if you are anxious about sitting in one place for a long time or need to access the bathrooms and exits quickly. Our usual House rules don't apply to Relaxed Performances, but this can mean they are noisy and busy.

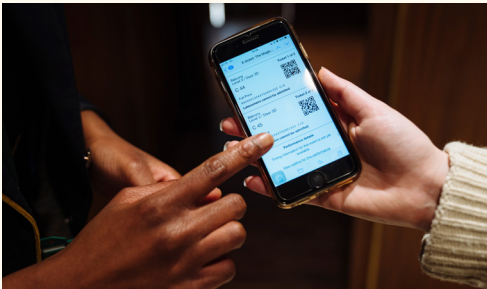
Arriving at the theatre



You may have to wait in a queue to get into the theatre. Someone from the security team may ask to check inside your bags.



There will be members of Front of House staff or volunteers who can assist you with directions to all our spaces, step free routes and any other questions you may have. Some wear red lanyards and t-shirts, some wear green lanyards and smart suits.



You will need to download your digital ticket onto your phone before you arrive and show this to Front of House staff when going into the theatre.



The accessible toilets are located on the ground floor by the café, in the Linbury Foyer on Level -1 and by the bar on Level 5. There are accessible toilets opposite the Clore Studio on Level 6. Our accessible toilets are gender neutral and have an alarm pull cord for emergencies.

Information about the performance

A Single Man

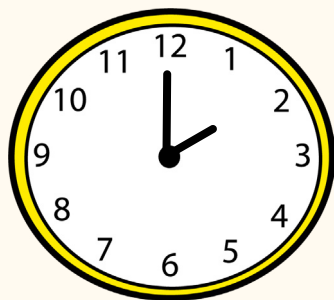
The story of A Single Man is told through dance, singing, music and acting. Sometimes some of the characters in the story are in an accident or are very upset but this has all been rehearsed. It is safe for the cast and is part of the performance.

Guidance: This production has references to death, grief and depression, as well as a stylised depiction of a car accident. It contains some sexual scenes and there is strong language throughout.

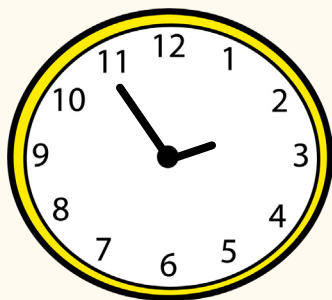
Running times: The performance lasts approximately 1 hour and 55 minutes. Act 1 is 55 minutes. There will be a 20 minute interval. Act 2 is 40 minutes.

The Relaxed Performance will take place Saturday 13 September 2025 at 2pm.

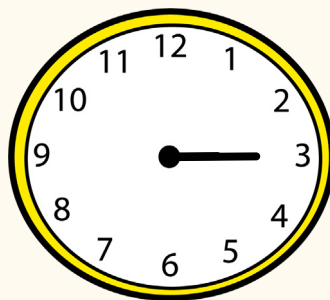
Interval: At approximately 2.55pm there will be a 20 minute interval. The lights will go on and you are welcome to leave the theatre to go to the bathroom or get refreshments from the Linbury bar. Act 2 begins at 3.15pm.



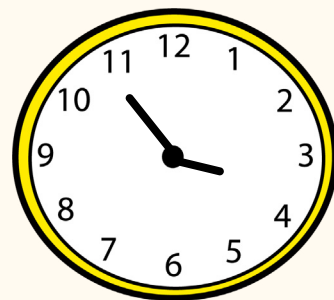
**Act 1 begins at
2pm**



**There will be
an interval at
2.55pm**



**Act 2 begins at
3.15pm**



**The end at
3.55pm**

Information about the stage



At the beginning of the performance, the lights over the seats will be dimmed.

At the end of the performance all of the lights will come back on, and people will begin to leave the theatre. It might feel busy but please take your time, there is no rush.

Information about the music

A Single Man is a ballet with music which will be performed by the singer John Grant and an ensemble of instrumentalists who perform from the side of the stage.

You might not be able to see all the musicians from your seat but you will hear the music play. The music can be loud at points, with overlapping sounds. For this Relaxed Performance, the sound will be adapted so it is not as loud at other performances. Sometimes you will hear sounds like a telephone ring or a tennis ball bouncing, which are part of the story but you won't see a phone or tennis ball.

The audience may cheer or clap throughout and this can be unpredictable. In Relaxed Performances, there are no rules around being completely quiet so you might hear other people moving or talking around you.

You can wear ear defenders and Front of House staff can lend you some if you require them. They are sterilised between performances.

Before A Single Man starts

A member of the cast or crew will come onto the stage to introduce themselves and tell you about the performance. They might talk about the different characters, any adaptations we have made to sound or lighting for this Relaxed Performance or information about the set.



About A Single Man

A Single Man is about a day in the life of George, who is experiencing grief after his partner, whom he loves, dies.

A Single Man is performed through ballet and dance. It is choreographed by Jonathan Watkins with music and song composed by Jasmin Kent Rodgman. The artist John Grant sings the songs on stage.

The songs and music conveys George's thoughts and feelings while the dance movements show George experiencing the events of daily life. This is to suggest how people can be experiencing intense emotions and mental health challenges as they go about their days.

A Single Man also explores themes of sexuality, death, depression and grief. It is set in 1960s America where the political landscape was hostile towards people from marginalised backgrounds, such as gay people like the two main characters in A Single Man – George and Jim.

The main characters in A Single Man

A Single Man is performed by several dancers. They all perform as characters, in the background, in groups or on their own. These characters might change their costumes in different scenes to suggest alternative humans and feelings.

Sometimes a different performer will play the role if the original performer is ill or injured, but the characters will always be in the same costumes. You can check this on the cast sheet.

The performers in the photographs of this visual story will be different to the ones on stage during the Relaxed Performance, but their costumes will be the same.

This is what the characters will look like:



George

George is a middle-aged English professor living in LA in the 1960s. He is experiencing many intense emotions and feelings throughout the performance including grief, sadness about ageing, desire and joy.

Sometimes he appears to be extremely sad or in pain, but this is part of the performance.



Jim

Jim was George's partner who died a few months earlier in a car crash. He appears on the stage many times in the performance. This is to convey George's memories from the past. Sometimes he leaves the stage when George returns from his memories to the present day. This also shows the many ways Jim and George's romantic life together was full of little moments of joy.



Charley

Charley is George's friend. She is experiencing her own issues with grief, sadness after separation and about ageing. She has a lot of love for George and also misses Jim. This is shown through the way she dances. Sometimes she also joins in remembering Jim.



Kenny

Kenny is a young college student of George's who is full of vibrancy and curiosity. He and George are attracted to one another and have an intense connection – he notices that George is going through big emotions and encourages George to enjoy himself.



John Grant and other performers

A Single Man is performed by several dancers, musicians and the singer John Grant. They perform as characters, in the background, in groups or on their own. These characters might change their costumes in different scenes. John Grant sings from a raised platform.

The story of A single man

For the entire performance, the stage is set with a metal gridded wall which holds items from George's everyday life – a typewriter, bookcase, toilet, sink, school room chairs, files, lamps, a desk, note paper and other things that show how ordinary items make up our lives.

Within the grid, there is an outline of a body which is sometimes lit. John Grant performs at different points from a raised platform in the centre of the grid. His songs are the thoughts in George's mind. The platform is bordered by a shape of a human head which is also sometimes lit up, usually when John Grant is singing.

The lighting changes throughout the performance – sometimes it is dim and warm, sometimes it is bright with blue hues, sometimes the lighting will be used to describe emotions or real things, such as car lights. On several occasions, a thin black translucent curtain is lowered onto the stage, but you will still be able to see performers and set behind it.



Act 1



George is at home thinking about his long-term partner Jim, who died a few months before. Jim appears on stage to convey memories of their lives together. At points, they notice one another and dance together either in an embrace or in a synchronised way. They kiss. Other dancers appear on stage, dragging Jim backwards, lifting him in the air and twitching and twisting around him. This is to explore his death and George's intense feelings of mourning.



John Grant appears on stage in the lit raised platform and sings while the dancers perform around George and Jim.



Charley joins them on stage and George smiles and seems happy and comfortable in her company because they have been friends for a long time. She is a fun and lively person but sometimes her movements slow down, giving a sense that she is also experiencing strong, sad emotions.



Two dancers wearing white clothes come onto the stage and enact playing a game of tennis as George observes with interest. Shortly afterwards, several dancers including Kenny come in and sit in the college chairs and George stands in front of them as he is their lecturer. He's noticing moments around him that are joyful, fun and exciting even though he's feeling many things about Jim's death. He engages in different ways with his students, including Kenny, who intrigues him, and they dance together.



George remembers Jim and he appears, embracing him from behind and they dance together. They kiss but suddenly a loud, piercing noise separates them. Two bright white lights depicting car headlights shine on Jim as George remembers his death in a motor accident. While George is dealing with this intensely painful memory, the stage fills with dancers who are going about their day.



John Grant appears on stage once more singing while many dancers perform a series of sensual dances exploring themes of sex and sensuality. This includes George and Jim who perform intimate moments between them as one of George's memories. The lighting changes to a dramatic red hue.



Afterwards, as the memory fades and he leaves the stage, George finds himself alone again in the supermarket shopping for dinner. He calls Charley and asks if he can join her later on.

20 minute interval

Act 2



Charley enters the stage. To begin with, George is still sobbing, but then he joins her at her house. She makes him laugh and they drink and dance joyfully together. She kisses him passionately, but he gently moves her head away and holds her tenderly. They love each other, but in different ways. Jim comes onto the stage and they enter a memory of the three of them together. George and Charley are reminded of their lives together and how they are complicated as they both feel grief at not only the loss of Jim, but at ageing and feeling lonely.



Later in the evening George is at the bar where he met Jim. Lost in a memory again, George and Jim perform intimate moments between them. The memory fades and George spots Kenny in the bar. They drink together and it's clear there is an attraction between them as their dance movements are sensual and in sync.



They go to the beach and take their clothes off and jump into the sea. Many dancers perform the role of the sea, holding Kenny high into the air while George glides around them as though they are waves. They get out of the sea, put their clothes back on and return to George's living room. They have a drink and a laugh. Kenny goes for a shower and George falls asleep on the sofa. When he wakes Kenny has gone but has left a note which is read out by John Grant. George seems to have more clarity and control over his pain, realising life is full of beautiful moments.



The dancers return to the stage and lift John Grant down from the platform, where he walks over to George. They hug suggesting the coming together of body and mind and the way George is coming to terms with his feelings of loss and living his life again.

Sensory Highlights

The information below aims to highlight moments of sound, lighting and action that may be surprising. Sound and lighting can be used to help evoke emotions and is part of the performance.

Sound:

The music varies throughout the performance with loud, overlapping notes and sounds. There will be the sound of a telephone on two occasions and tennis balls being hit. Sometimes the music is upbeat and jolly, other times it is slow and sombre and sometimes it is sensual. The songs are sung by the singer John Grant. The words to the songs can be read on the screen on stage. For Relaxed Performances, we may adapt the music and sounds to ensure everyone's enjoyment – this means we reduce the volume for certain instruments.

Lighting:

Different types of lighting are used throughout the performance to help build emotions and feelings – blue lighting helps to give a sense of sadness, while red lighting can help highlight passion. Lighting is also used to tell the story, with two bright white lights being used to convey a motorcar before a crash.

As part of the set there are several lamps that are lit dimly. The shape of a body and a head are outlined in neon lights.

Action:

In Act 1, George and Jim enact a car crash through dance. You don't see or hear a car but it is alluded to through the use of two lights and Jim and George being parted.

In Act 2, several performers enact sex acts through dance. There is no nudity or real sex.

Image Credits for A Single Man

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