

Scenes From the Big Picture - by Owen McCafferty , directed by Dámaso Rodriguez
[The Balcony Theatre at the Pasadena Playhouse](#)

Runs 10/22-11/21/04

A virtual tour de force, this gifted, 21-member ensemble tirelessly and brilliantly weaves the sad and poignant fabric of living in a small Irish town. Loosely revolving around the town's main employer - the meat factory - old couples, young couples, drunks and punks go about their self-destructive ways, unknowingly affecting each other as they frequent the same places: the pub, the general store, the river. This non-linear story is told in bold and profound flashes, jumping from one place to another, from one relationship to another, from hatred to love, from despair to hope, from blindness to revelation, all stitched together by lighting fast set changes executed by what appears to be a swarm of hyper-animated specters.

During the 24-hours of this imaginary Belfast neighborhood, the main employer is in danger of going out business. With that as the problem at the top of the heap, the rest of the day is clouded by the insidious shadow this casts, and how it affects the personal struggles of the denizens of this sorry corner of the world. Their stories flash before us in flicks of light and dark, like slowly swirling dust mites in a ray of sun. And even though they all slosh through the muck they make of their lives, there are glimmers of hope, and more than enough wry humor. While this is truly an ensemble piece, Jenifer Parker, Richard Hilton, and Dana Kelly Jr. bring a breathtaking depth to their performances.

Director Dámaso Rodriguez keeps Owen McCafferty's larger than life script on a tight yet articulated rein, and the performances more than fill the practically empty stage. Christie Wright's lighting is at once haunting and illuminating, and Kelly Wyse's costumes design captures each character's inner life. While Eric Pargac's sound is powerful and well-suited to the tone of the piece, it proves to be rather repetitive over the course of this three-act play. Likewise, Doug Newell's props, while serviceable and extraordinarily portable, seem rather out of place as too detailed in an otherwise starkly designed set.