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# HELENA AND THE JOURNEY OF THE HELLO

by Finegan Kruckemeyer

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## Original Production

The first performance of *Helena and the Journey of the Hello* took place at the Peacock Theatre, Hobart, in September 2008 in a production by Terrapin Puppet Theatre. The cast was as follows:

WOLFY	Ryk Goddard
FOXY	Mel King
HAREY	Sam McMahon

The play was directed by Frank Newman, composed by Mikelangelo and Fred Showell, and designed by Kate Davis and Frank Newman, with lighting design by Danny Pettingill, and dramaturgy by Peter Matheson and Frank Newman. All artists were involved in the initial creative development, inspired by a study of mobile phones as suggested by Frank Newman.

## Productions Since

- 2009 Tasmanian statewide tour
- 2010 Australian Performing Arts Market, Adelaide, Australia
  - Sydney Opera House, Sydney, Australia
  - Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, Australia

## Prologue

*Three animal narrators present the story as it shall play out.*

WOLFY: Senors e Senioritas... A play wishes to begin itself now, and I feel it is my duty, to make this be so. My name: is Wolfey! And my teeth are for eating human bones! ...but my mouth is for telling stories. I shall be helped.

FOXY: My name, dear children shrunk and children grown, is Foxy. And this lugubrious so and so to my left shall assist me...

HAREY: Indeed I shall. For I am Harey!

*They stack themselves.*

WOLFY: I am Wolfy on the top!

FOXY: I am Foxy in the middle!

HAREY: I am Harey on the bottom!

*The other two laugh.*

WOLFY: The story we shall be telling is about a family, made up of three human persons. I shall be playing the great opera singer Alvarez Bugosi, a man with a wise stare, much like yours sir, and a giant heart as big as... yours, ma'am.

FOXY: Whereas I will perform as Madeline Bugosi, who owns an orchard but seems to grow only... *[She reaches for an apple but stops]* ...sad.

HAREY: And the main character, the one that is the hardest to play, the most lovable girl called Helena Bugosi, shall be played by...

A puppet.

WOLFY: And what will these stories be? Well, it is something like dominoes falling, one thing leading to another – a man goes to the woods, so a woman is sad, the woman she leaves, so the man he is sad, the man he then leaves, the girl is alone, and she sings and she sings and she sings.

HAREY: But it's funny too!

WOLFY: There will be three stories – a girl's one, a father's one, a mother's one. And even though their journeys all seem very different, still they are important to each other. Because there is a fourth thing that we will come to know, that connects them all. It is the Journey of a Hello.

Hellooooooooooooo!

FOXY: The word Hello shoots across the world, just like all the words in all the phone calls happening right now – all the 'good mornings' and 'I love yous' and/

HAREY: /Your call is important to us and has been placed in a queue [*hold music*].

WOLFY: So all there is for us to do, to begin this play, is to catch the first one. A first word – it shall be:

...red.

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## Scene Two – a short explanation of what red is

*Black out. A red light appears.*

WOLFY: When I say this is red, you know it is red.  
But this, is not really red. It is only red, in your head.  
It is red, only because you learnt that was the word for it.  
So when my eyes see –

HAREY: red –

WOLFY: and my mouth says –

FOXHEY: red...

WOLFY: That was not as easy as it looked.

My eyes saw – red – and then they sent a picture of it to my brain – red – and my brain sent a search back through its memory – for red. It remembered red cherries, and red sunsets, red beaches and red boats: red. And then it tried to find the right word for all these things.

And it went right back to when I was a baby and when my mother told me – red.

Then my memory says – yes, red – and it sends a message to my brain, and my brain sends a message to my mouth, and...

Red.

See how hard that was.

Now look.

*Wolfy speaks into a mobile phone, which calls another that stands alone.*

*His voice can be heard twice: firstly as he whispers into one, and secondly as the received call is played out on loudspeaker.*

WOLFY: All I am doing, is talking into this phone – hello – and... there! Hearing it come out of this phone – hello. That’s not very far.

But it is.

Because this phone can’t talk to this phone – no hello.

This phone, has to send my word – hello – out into space. Out to a satellite thousands of kilometres away in space. Which hears my word – hello.

And then it finds the phone I want to send it to. That one, over there.

Hello.

So that little gap, between one person saying hello in here, and another person hearing hello over there...

That is the word – hello – tumbling right around the world and out to space. Past the clouds. Past the buildings. Past the girl Helena who watches it fly and recognizes the voice, and smiles. Rolling on and on... like the beads of a necklace that has snapped. And those beads... are red.

Red.

*[Heard in the second phone a second later]* Red.

Hello.