

A person is seen from the back, wearing a large, white, feathered costume that resembles angel wings. The wings are made of many long, white feathers and are spread out to the sides. The person is wearing a white top and a dark belt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Saturday March 13, 2010

5.15pm

# Angels above Hadrian's Wall

## The Legend of The Winged Boy

A theatrical installation by Theater Anu and Bartel Meyer

Saturday March 13, 2010 at 5.15pm Angels will appear round the ruins of the fort Segedunum as the skies grow dark.

Duration: ca. 20 minutes.

#### Venue

Segedunum Roman Fort Baths  
Viewing tower (museum)

Buddle Street  
Wallsend  
North Tyneside  
Tyne and Wear  
NE28 6HR

<http://www.illuminatinghadrianswall.com>

#### Description of the performance “The Legend of The Winged Boy”

5:15pm: An actor stands on the balcony of the Segedunum Tower, beside him a guitar-player. The musician starts to play some Celtic music. The actor becomes a narrator who will tell The Legend of The Winged Boy – a fictional, legendary figure of the north.

The narrator begins to tell how it was in the time when the Hadrian's Wall was built and separated the Romans from the rest of the Britons: the tribes of the north. He tells of the fights between the Roman soldiers and the people of the north, and he tells of a particular encounter; one day, a woman of the north encounters a man with wings – and falls in love with him. She doesn't realise that he is an angel because she has never heard of such a thing.

One thing leads to another: their love results in a baby, a boy with tiny wings. He is both adored and derided by the people of the north. He grows up and eventually learns to fly. Although his mother warns him not to fly across the wall, one day the young boy feels the urge to rebel. He shows off to the Roman soldiers, begins to tease and banter with them. The Romans are alarmed; they tried to catch the “Winged Boy” – as they now call him – but stand no chance; they cannot fly. Every time the Romans see the Winged Boy they send light-signals over the Wall. For the soldiers a sign, the Britons should watch out; for the people of the north a reason to be proud. They hope that the time will come when they can tear down the wall. But the Romans are clever; they have the idea of dressing up a soldier as an angel.

As soon as the Winged Boy sees the fake Roman angel, he walks straight into the trap. He is caught and the people of the north hear nothing from him for a long time. But one night, they see the “Roman lights” along the Wall again and a lot of people think they have seen the Winged Boy flying...

Today, on 13 March 2010, the “Roman lights” will be lit again. Will it draw the Winged Boy out again too?

The people of Newcastle will be able to see if the Winged Boy and perhaps a few other angels come to take part in the “Illumination of Hadrian's Wall”.



# The Legend of The Winged Boy

When the last bard falls silent  
And every storyteller buried,  
When all the writings have withered to dust  
The Roman rulers' names forgotten  
They will still remember you, young man.

Even at their final hour  
People speak your name.  
And the wind will carry it  
Over land and time.  
With awe in their voices,  
They tell of your deeds  
And can no longer say  
Who first told them of you.

They gather in your honour  
Build monuments of untold height  
And shine the light across the wall  
To signal your return.

In those times the Romans ruled.  
Only the north of the isle was free.  
There the brave still threw their spears,  
Battering the conquerors' shields.  
No weapons would ever break their will  
No coin could purchase their consent.  
And so the Romans unleashed the stony snake of Hadrian.  
Over hills and valleys it wound,  
From one coast to another,  
Dividing farms and pastures,  
People and animals,  
Cutting the north off from the rest.

Many folk defied the wall,  
Tried every plan they could  
To breach the stony curse,  
But all these reckless heroes perished  
Murdered by the enemy's lances,  
Their lost lives lay unsung and wasted.  
The fishermen's nets stayed empty then  
The farmers' seeds remained unsown.  
And only the birds up high in the sky  
Lived without fear of the stony snake.

And yet these times of suffering  
Were also times of wonder.  
First a single feather was found,  
Then over the roofs of the huts  
Was seen a shadow,  
And with a flourish of white  
A daughter of the north saw  
A man preparing to fly:  
A fine figure he had, and wings.  
She gained his trust  
And her smile soon took on  
A glint of knowledge.  
She had just a few brief days of happiness  
Then he vanished again.  
But afterwards the glint still shone  
The glow would never leave her lips  
Ever again.

As these days became just memory  
She bore the son of her love  
And word went round the land  
It was a wondrous being,  
Druids came to view the offspring  
And warriors to praise.  
His wings still small  
They clung to the hope  
One day they would be  
A people of the skies.

Sheltered from the Romans' gaze  
He grew to be a man.  
Teased and ridiculed by some  
His love was for the birds, the clouds,  
And for his mother,  
Who he begged, time and again,  
To tell of his father, the foreigner.  
Soon came the time  
Of the fledgling flights,  
Trying to lift, to leap,  
To raise himself above  
The hills of the north.  
His mother had to be there too  
To watch as he beat his frenzied wings  
But fell back down to earth,  
Down to the fields and meadows.  
For doubt still won  
And held him to the ground.

# The Legend of The Winged Boy

But soon the runs were longer  
And his wing-strokes  
Grew in strength.  
His feet now barely touched the ground  
At last the air swept him up and away.

So the boy became a child of the sky.  
And the folk of the north  
Raised their eyes to follow him  
And found their hope and pride again.  
Only his mother was still afraid,  
Forbade him to fly across the wall  
Into the occupied land.

But what are words of warning, when  
The wind sings over from afar.  
And how easy it is to forget  
Every word you have heard  
When you see the endless expanses  
And so his child's curiosity won  
And swept the lad over the wall  
Into enemy land.

He took the risk much more than once.  
No, time and again he flew across.  
And carefree cockiness  
Went with him all the way.  
He showed the Romans how he flew  
Teased them even, called them fools.  
Too reckless not one day  
To be caught by the Roman guards.

While the northern tribes gathered to hear  
The bards' hymns of praise  
The Romans shone lights across the wall  
As a sign the youth had been seen  
Who so brazenly flaunted

The law of the stony snake.

Before dawn soldiers broke down  
The doors of their huts  
Tore the shirts from young men's backs  
And demanded of mothers to tell  
Where the winged youth could be found.  
But neither threats nor torture  
Could force the secret from them.

And so it went, night after night,  
But fortune refused to favour  
The Roman troops  
And the shining lights  
Signalled to the people in the north:  
The winged youth is still at large!

Then one day the boy saw a man,  
Tall, with wings, on a hilltop.  
His heart beat faster;  
How long had he waited  
To meet one of his kind.  
Could it even be his father?  
And as he approached with a cautious greeting,  
The winged man beckoned him silently over.  
Too late he saw the false feathers fixed to the winged jacket  
And now the costume fell away.  
Two Roman hands grasped him  
And held him captive.  
It no longer helped to beat his wings,  
Nor could biting loosen the grip.  
The youth was under Roman power.  
Pushed into a cage, he was swallowed up  
By a fortress' walls.

That day his mother waited for her son  
In vain.  
And when in the following nights no lights  
Appeared from the wall  
Her fears turned to certainty;  
The boy would not return.  
And with the mother the whole folk mourned  
North of the wall.

But one night  
They saw again the signalling lights  
Along the length of the wall.  
And two farmers swore  
They had seen the boy  
Flying high above in the sky.  
Again and again came reports of him  
Not just over Hadrian's wall  
In other places too his face was seen.  
There, where walls are built between people.  
There where hope has gone.  
There flies the youth  
Over land and time.

When the last bard falls silent  
And every storyteller buried,  
When all the writings have withered to dust  
The Roman rulers' names forgotten  
They will still remember you, young man.

They gather in your honour  
Build monuments of untold height  
And shine the light across the wall  
To signal your return.  
O angel of the north.



## Artistic team

**N**arrator: Steve Ellery

**M**other/woman: Sybille Behr

**T**he Winged Boy: Johanna Malchow

**A**ngels: Bartel Meyer, Eckhard Euen,  
John Eicke, Susanne Kolbe

**R**oman: Jacek Klinke

**M**usician: Brian Acton

**A**uthor: Stefan Behr

**D**irected by: Sybille Behr and Stefan Behr/sTheater Anu

**T**ranslator: Steph Morris

**T**echnical director: Bartel Meyer

**D**esign of the wings: Elissa Bier

**D**esign structures of the wings: Zander Jobs

**A**dministration: Ute Classen

**F**otographer: Alfred Mauve

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