

Dizzying and delirious but it all makes sense

EVEN the very best mates wouldn't want to spend eternity together in one room.

That's the predicament Cillian Murphy and Mikel Murfi are thrust into in this new drama, written and directed by Enda Walsh.

A crazy, wildly colourful collision of angst, poetry and slapstick, it asks how we find meaning in our lives, knowing they can only end in death.

It's a play with a heart of deep darkness but it's also touching and hysterically funny, performed with virtuosic skill and mesmeric intensity by Murphy (pictured) Murfi and Stephen Rea as a chain-smoking, long-coated stranger, surely the Grim Reaper himself.

Trapped between diseased-looking walls, among ugly brown furniture and a scattering of red balloons, the two



REVIEW

**Ballyturk,
National Theatre, Lyttelton**

★★★★☆

by **SAM MARLOWE**

nameless friends eke out their days.

They dance to 80s tunes – there's a breakfast-and-shower routine to ABC's Look Of Love – and they tell stories. Most of these are both absurd and distinctly unsettling; others are about the everyday affairs of Ballyturk, the town they imagine outside.

Rea offers both doom and salvation – freedom from the queasy unreality that the pair have created. There are echoes of Sartre and Beckett and the action is as acrobatic as the language is lyrical.

It is dizzying but, in its own delirious, humane way, it makes perfect sense.