

A Jody O'Neill and Abbey Theatre co-production



ABBey THEATRE
AMHARCLANN NA MAINISTREACH

WHAT I (DON'T) KNOW ABOUT AUTISM

WRITTEN BY
JODY O'NEILL

DIRECTED BY
DÓNAL GALLAGHER

IN-PERSON: 26 OCTOBER – 6 NOVEMBER

LIVE-STREAM: 3 NOVEMBER

ON-DEMAND: 8 – 20 NOVEMBER

abbeytheatre.ie
#WhatIDontKnowAboutAutism

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Principal Partner
BANK OF AMERICA



**Arts & Disability
Ireland**

COMPANY

Cast

Shay Croke
Paula McGlinchey
Jayson Dockrell-Murray
Jody O'Neill
Matthew Ralli
Eleanor Walsh

Writer

Jody O'Neill

Producer

Melissa Nolan

Director

Dónal Gallagher

Choreographer

Cindy Cummings

Set and Costume Design

Medb Lambert

Lighting Design

Eoin Winning

Associate Lighting Design

Bill Woodland

Composer and Sound Design

Carl Kennedy

Dramaturg

Louise Stephens

Voice Director

Andrea Ainsworth

Production Manager

Anthony Hanley

Stage Manager

Cian Mulhall

Assistant Stage Manager

Shannon Cowan

Cast Welfare Officer

Georgina McKeivitt

Cast Support Worker

Sean O'Neill

Film Production

Tiny Ark

Graphic Design

BLAM
Frank Prendergast

Post-show Talkback Facilitator

Lisa Farrelly

Set Construction

Andrew Clancy

Captions

Medb Lambert

Supertitle Operator

Al Bellamy

Live Irish Sign Language

Interpreters

Caoimhe Coburn Gray
Vanessa O'Connell

Online Irish Sign Language

Interpreters

Alvean Jones
Lianne Quigley

Online British Sign Language

Interpreters

Taz Hockaday

Online American Sign

Language Interpreters

Sharon Ploeger
Brian Andrew Cheslik
(Ploeger ASL Interpreting)

Online Captioning

MyClearText
AccessLOOP

Audio Description

Mairin Harte

WHAT I (DON'T) KNOW ABOUT AUTISM is part of Graham McLaren and Neil Murray's final season of programming at the Abbey Theatre.

FOR THE ABBEY THEATRE

Producer

Jen Coppinger

Producing Assistant

Clara Purcell

Community and Education

Phil Kingston
Grace McKiernan

Production Manager

Cliff Barragry

Company Manager

Danny Erskine

Stage Manager

Tara Furlong

Stage Technician

Dave McChrystal

Lighting Technician

Laura Honan

Sound Technician

Conall Coleman

Sound Technician

Morgan Dunne

Stage Technician

Shane Kenny

Lighting Technician

Eoin Byrne

Marketing

Heather Maher
Jack O'Dea
Sharon Sorohan

Press

Graphic Design

Maeve Keane

RUNNING TIME

80 minutes. No interval. There will be a 20-minute post-show talk-back after each performance, you can stay if you like.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funded by the Arts Council. Supported by Arts & Disability Ireland and AslAm. Originally produced in association with Mermaid County Wicklow Arts Centre and The Everyman. The choir recording marks the initial collaboration between More House School Frensham (UK) and The Autistic Adult Choir (UK).

THANK YOU

Mermaid Arts Centre, The Everyman, Irish Theatre Institute, Arts & Disability Ireland, Project Arts Centre, AslAm, KCAT, Middletown Centre for Autism, Common Purpose, Rough Magic, Triple A Wicklow, Joan McDonald, Jill Bradford, Rosita Boland, Elyse Clark, Davida Hartman, Kevin Mitchell, Hannah Croke, Niamh O'Donnell, Alan King, Peter Daly, Viktor Cibulka, K-Lou Murray and the many friends and family members who have made this production possible.



ISL interpreted performances feature a professional interpreter that translates the production into Irish Sign Language.



Captioning is similar to television subtitling and gives deaf and hard of hearing audiences access to live performance.

Audio-described programme notes available on abbeytheatre.ie

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

The play is 67 pages long. That means it will last about 80 minutes. It's broken into 26 scenes.

There are six actors in the play, who each play a number of characters.

The performance will be a relaxed performance. If you need to leave the theatre during the performance, that's okay. And if you'd like to come back in again, that's fine too.

If you need to make noise or move around during the performance, that is okay.

If the person beside you is making noise or moving during the performance, please don't feel like you need to shush them.

If you have a mobile phone, please don't have the volume on or use the phone during the performance unless you really need to.

There are some loud noises during the performance. If you are sensitive to loud noises, please feel free to wear your ear plugs during that part. The actors will let you know in advance if there's a loud bit coming up so that you have time to put them on.

The front of house staff have some spare sets of ear plugs if anyone needs them.

If you would like to stay after the performance, there will be a post-show talkback in which you can participate.



**THESE ARE THE ACTORS YOU
WILL SEE IN THE SHOW**

Pictured left to right are Shay Croke, Jayson Dockrell-Murray, Matthew Ralli, Paula McGlinchey, Eleanor Walsh, and Jody O'Neill. This photograph was taken by Emily Quinn.

ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES



Pictured left to right are Eleanor Walsh, Jayson Dockrell-Murray, Matthew Ralli, Shay Croke, and Jody O'Neill.
This photograph was taken by Ros Kavanagh.

IN-PERSON PERFORMANCES

All live performances are relaxed and captioned.

IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETED

30 Oct, 8pm
5 Nov, 8pm
6 Nov, 2.30pm

AUDIO-DESCRIBED

5 Nov, 8pm
6 Nov, 2.30pm

LIVE-STREAM PERFORMANCES

CAPTIONED: 3 Nov, 8pm

ON-DEMAND PERFORMANCES

CAPTIONED: 8 – 20 Nov

IRISH, AMERICAN AND BRITISH
SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETED: 9 – 20 Nov

AUDIO DESCRIBED: 12 – 20 Nov

DIGITAL TOURING PARTNERS

Town Hall Theatre, Galway
The Everyman, Cork
The Hawk's Well Theatre, Sligo
Droichead Arts Centre, Louth
Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray
Siamsa Tíre, Kerry



There are more than 7.7 billion people in the world. If all these people lined up side-by-side, each one would be different. Each one would be unique. Even identical twins... even their DNA isn't 100% the same.

Of the more than 7.7 billion people in the world, it is estimated that more than 1% of them are autistic. That's over 77 million people in the world who are autistic.

This is a story about how people who are not autistic might begin to understand more and make more accommodations for the many citizens of the world, both children and adults, who are autistic.

Over the past number of years, there has been great progress worldwide in something called Autism Awareness. This is a wonderful step forward. The next step is understanding. Here are some things that non-autistic people might like to understand about autistic people:

- Being autistic can mean that the brain develops differently to the typical brain. How the different parts of the autistic brain talk to each other and work together may be different too.
- Autism is pervasive. Pervasive means that it affects basically everything about a person - their personality, memories, thoughts, how they grow up, how they communicate, how they think and move.

All autistic people are different to each other, but there are a few things most autistic people have in common, to varying degrees.

01 **Information**

Autistic people can process information atypically to their non-autistic peers. The way someone with autism looks at the world, perceives it, processes what they're experiencing, and then thinks about what they're experiencing is different to how non-autistic people experience the world around them.

02 **Language**

Autistic people have different abilities or capacities for language. Some autistic people don't naturally think in language, perhaps perceiving and thinking using visuals or abstract feelings instead. Using words, in spoken or written language, isn't first nature to many autistic people. Therefore, many autistic people spend a lot of time trying to translate the world around them.

03 **Sensory**

Autistic people have atypical sensory experiences. Some autistic people are over-sensitive to sensory input, some are under-sensitive to sensory input, and some autistic people are both!

The information above may help non-autistic people to understand more about why autistic people may behave and communicate atypically.



Autistic children are often sent to social skills classes in order to learn about how to interact with non-autistic people in everyday situations.

Carol Gray introduced Social Stories in 1991 as a tool to help autistic people to prepare for everyday situations. But here's the thing...recent research showed that typical brains are already programmed to identify and reject difference, so autistic people can learn all the social skills they're expected to have, but they may still struggle to be accepted. So, that leads to the third step: Autism Acceptance. And that's why this story has been written.

It's likely that non-autistic people regularly meet people with autism, even if they don't always realise it. When meeting someone who is autistic, a non-autistic person can try to remember these things:

- Presume intelligence and competence. Even if someone doesn't speak or communicate in a typical way, they may still have a lot of interesting and valid things to say.
- Anxiety is a big part of autism. Non-autistic people can try to be gentle and kind, without being patronising. Using a softer tone of voice can be a big help here.
- Autistic people often have sensory differences that mean they can be sensitive to particular noises, lights, textures, touch and more. Even if these sensitivities aren't shared by non-autistic people, it will usually help autistic people if their sensitivities are accepted as valid, and accommodated rather than being dismissed.



- Autistic people can sometimes take longer to process information. When asking a question, a non-autistic person can wait eight seconds for an answer. If they don't receive an answer, they can then repeat the question, using the same words in the same order. It may help to say the autistic person's name before asking them a question.
- Some autistic people enjoy hugs. Some don't. A non-autistic person can check if the autistic person would like a hug before hugging them.
- Autistic people don't need to be changed or fixed. Just because someone is different doesn't make them less.

These are some things that might help to build a world where autistic people are fully accepted. But here is something very important: just like how each of the 7.7 billion people on this planet is unique, each autistic person is also unique. In the words of Dr Stephen Shore: "If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism." Each autistic person is different and has different needs. When a non-autistic person meets an autistic person, they can try not to make any assumptions about that person or their unique needs. They can try to listen and be curious instead. Listening, curiosity and taking time may enable an autistic person to share more about themselves.

There are over 7.7 billion people on the planet. Each one is different. Each one is unique.

Together, autistic and non-autistic people can work to build a world where each one of those citizens is accepted.



ABBNEY THEATRE STAFF

Andrea Ainsworth
Donal Ayton
Cliff Barragry
Roxzan Bowes
Aoife Brady
Maeve Brennan
Maeubh Brennan
Susan Bryan
Nicola Burke
Orla Burke
Simon Burke
Eoin Byrne
Maura Campbell
David Carpenter
Daire Cavanagh
Owen Vincent Clarke
Conall Coleman
Derek Conaghy
Lilly Conlon
Evan Connolly
Jeff Conway
Jen Coppinger
Karl Corr
Shannon Cowan
Fiona Cradock
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Richard Curwood
Mairéad Delaney
Karima Dillon
Pat Dillon
Debbie Doak
Bronagh Doherty
Colin Doran
Con Doyle
Laura Doyle
Ken Dunne
Morgan Dunne
Danny Erskine
Breege Fahy
Dylan Farrell
Eimear Farrell
Lisa Farrelly
Kate Finn
John Finnegan
Craig Flaherty
Neasa Flannery
Ellen Fleming
Robert Flynn
Veronica Foo

Tara Furlong
Sophie Furlong Tighe
Derek Garland
Donna Geraghty
Catherine Griffin
John Gunning
Fergus Hannigan
Grace Healy
Brenda Herbert
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Dermot Hicks
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Davy McChrystal
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Dan McDermott

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Aidan McGillan
Ciaran McGlynn
Terence McGoff
Grace McKiernan
Caitríona McLaughlin
Gus McNamara
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Adrian Moylan
Cian Mulhall
Conor Mullan
Kevin Mullaney
Kevin Mullery
Tara Mulvihill
Aoife Murphy
Donna Murphy
Eimer Murphy
Kath Yann Murphy
Orlagh Murphy
Agnieszka Myszka
Marykerin Naughton
Emily Ní Bhroin
Síofra Ní Chiardha
Pawel Nieworaj
Mark O'Brien
Adam O'Connell
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Leanne Vaughey
Sean Walsh
Jesse Weaver
Sarah-Jane Williams
Sally Withnell
Monika Wlodarczyk
Bill Woodland
Damien Woods
Diarmuid Woods

BOARD

Mairéad Delaney
Peter Lowry
Máire O'Higgins
Michael Owens
Dr. Frances Ruane (Chair)
Michael West

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PRINCIPAL PARTNER



PROGRAMME PARTNERS



CORPORATE GUARDIANS



ARTHUR COX



GOLD AMBASSADORS

Behaviour and Attitudes

SILVER AMBASSADORS

Trocadero

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The Kathleen Murphy Foundation

You can find out more about *What I (Don't) Know About Autism* on **aboutautism.ie**

Further Resources

Here are some organisations you can contact if you are looking for further support, education or information.

AsIAm

Ireland's National Autism Charity and Advocacy Organisation

Middletown Centre for Autism

Designs and delivers training programmes cognisant of the needs of Parents, Education Professionals and those who traverse these groupings.

KCAT Arts Centre

A multi-disciplinary Arts Centre in Callan Co. Kilkenny, Ireland; dedicated to the fostering and nurturing of creative ambition and professional development in the arts.

Leap

A family-led, non-profit organisation that works on behalf of children and adults with disabilities and their families.

PosAutive

Advises and trains autistic and non-autistic people about autism.

Autistic Ireland Social Group

A private Facebook group for autistic people to socialise online and to organise events, outings and meet-ups.

Triple A Wicklow

A family support group that runs talks, activities and events.

If you'd like to get in touch, you can email
whatidontknowaboutautism@gmail.com

If you'd like to learn more about autism, the writer of *What I (Don't) Know About Autism* recommends the following:

Neurotribes, Steve Silberman

Loud Hands: autistic people speaking, Julia Bascom

The Reason I Jump, Naoki Higashida

Fall down 7 Times, Get Up 8, Naoki Higashida

The Little Book of Autism FAQs: How to Talk with Your Child about their Diagnosis and Other Conversations, Davida Hartman

Uniquely Human, Dr Barry M. Prizant

Ask an Autistic, Amythest Schaber (YouTube)



abbeytheatre.ie

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