

Somewhere Out There You by Nancy Harris

Audio Description Programme Notes for the matinee performance in the Abbey Theatre Saturday 28th October 2023, at 2pm

Welcome to the audio description introduction to **Somewhere Out There You**, by Nancy Harris, and directed by Wayne Jordan. Set Design is by Maree Kearns, with Costume Design by Catherine Fay, and Lighting Design by Sinéad McKenna. The Composer, Sound Designer and Musical Director is Sinéad Diskin. The Movement Director is Paula O'Reilly.

The performance runs for approximately two hours and forty-five minutes, including one fifteen minute interval. Please note this performance contains shimmering flashing lights from a curtain onstage, which will affect people with photo sensitive epilepsy in the same way as strobe or flashing lights.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Casey's new boyfriend Brett is handsome, romantic and devoted. For once in her life Casey is in a relationship with a man who attends to her every whim and desire. But far from celebrating this new love, Casey's family is concerned. When her suspicious sister Cynthia starts digging into Brett's past, she threatens to take away the one good thing that's ever happened to Casey.

Somewhere Out There You, Nancy Harris's dazzling world premiere, is a romantic comedy with a twist, playfully unravelling the love stories we weave for ourselves and inviting us to question what compels us to tell them in the first place.

Somewhere Out There You premiered as part of Dublin Theatre Festival.

ABOUT THE SET

When we enter the auditorium, the stage before us is completely bare. No black curtains at the side – no backdrop. Just exposed brick walls, and a piano right at the back, painted pale blue, with a standard lamp alongside it – without a lampshade.

The floor of the stage is covered in wide wooden boards, painted a dusty blue. In the centre, there is a circular disk set into the floor, made of the same blue floorboards, which can revolve.

The wings – the dark spaces on either side of the stage – are full of props tables and furniture and bits of set, all of which are on castors, and can be wheeled on- and off-stage in the blink of an eye. Throughout the performance, the ensemble, the main cast, and the stage management team who are dressed in black, work together to create a brand new location. It is as though the play is being invented in front of us as they go along, grabbing whatever is needed for the next scene.

In Casey's flat, a large pinkish red corner sofa, with a matching footstool, is wheeled in, as well as a low coffee table. Later, a sleek pink kitchen is wheeled in, with pink cupboards, a marble top, sink and a set of bookshelves with cookery books and house plants. We also go to the garden outside her flat where a washing line is lowered down from the roof, as Casey hangs out some clothes.

There is an office, a bit like a therapist's office. There are two armchairs facing each other, but placed far apart, on opposite sides of the stage. They are in the 1950s style. The armchair on the left has a matching side table next to it, with files on it, and a potted plant.

Two of the characters in the play, Brett and Casey, take romantic strolls together, first through Dublin and later Paris. These locations are conjured up in a comical, and slightly musical-style way, by the ensemble wheeling in cardboard cut-outs of the Spire, or the Poolbeg striped chimneys, and swirling them around the stage. In Paris, the Arc du Triomphe is wheeled in, along with the Eiffel Tower, and little wooden carts selling patisseries, baguettes and macarons.

Sometimes, the stage is simply a location for phone calls, where actors stand in individual spotlights, talking to each other on smartphones.

All of these locations are framed by a magnificent sparkling foil ribbon curtain which is lowered onto the stage after the first scene, hanging at the back wall and on the sides. Each foil ribbon is a different colour of the rainbow, and they shimmer as they sway gently in the breeze. They give the sense of the whole performance being a bit like a gameshow, while giving a comic lift in serious moments when characters storm off in a rage. Instead of slamming doors, the foil ribbons gently billow around them and rustle quietly for a moment or two.

ABOUT THE CAST AND COSTUMES

Casey, a woman in her early thirties, is played by **Eimear Keating**. She is smiley and positive, and has blonde shoulder-length straight hair with a short, neat fringe. Casey is a little timid, and nervous. She doesn't wear much make-up, and likes to wear colourful, more bohemian-style clothing.

Casey wears an array of light, floral dresses over the performance – an orange summer dress, then later, a pink one with print of large roses. Later still, a peach long pleated skirt, with a mustard yellow jacket and floral blouse. She mostly wears pinkish red high heels, but sometimes a pair of flat brown leather loafers as well.

Cynthia, her sister, is played by **Danielle Galligan**. A little taller than Casey, with long, blonde, blow-dried hair, Cynthia wears eye make-up and lipstick, stands taller and more self-assured than her sister. Cynthia's clothes are a little more tailored – a teal fitted dress, with a black belt cinching in her waist, or a bright red business suit, always paired with very high heels. Even when dressing casually, she appears to be styled impeccably, with a purple shirt open at the neck, rolled up sleeves, and pale lilac wide-leg chinos with cream high heels.

Their mother, **Pauline**, is played by **Lise-Ann McLaughlin**. Pauline's style aligns more with Cynthia than with Casey. Pauline is in her late fifties, with blonde blow-dried shoulder-length hair, pinned with a bump at the front. She tends to wear fitted dresses to just below the knee, with formal jackets over them, She first appears wearing a cobalt blue fitted dress very similar to Cynthia's, and in general tends to wear clothes in blues and silvers.

Their father, **Alan**, is played by **Enda Oates**. A quiet, unfussy man, also in his later fifties, Alan is trim, with grey, receding hair and a silver goatee beard. He mostly dresses casually in chinos with a variety of neatly ironed polo shirts. At one point, he takes a call at work, where he wears a hard hat, hi-viz jacket, and brown steel-capped boots.

Casey's new love interest, **Brett**, is played by **Cameron Cuffe**. Brett is tall, and slightly tanned, with thick dark brown hair, with a side parting, and always neatly combed. He is fresh-faced, with sparkling brown eyes. He speaks with an American accent.

Brett tends to wear the same kind of clothes throughout the show – blue jeans turned up at the hem, an array of knitted polo shirts with a vaguely 1950s style to them, and a brown suede jacket. There is something of James Dean in the way he carries himself: a gentle swagger, a self-confidence.

Cynthia's husband, **Eric**, is played by **Paul Reid**. A very tall man, with fair hair and a slight goatee beard, Eric has little of the self-confidence shown by Brett. He tends to stoop a little, nodding or bowing his head, and smiling very broadly, as if he were a little too eager to please. Eric wears chinos, or dark jeans, with plain casual shirts, or check shirts, and brown leather shoes.

Gareth, a school principal, is played by **Donncha O'Dea**. He has neat fair hair in a side parting, and has gold-rimmed reading glasses. Gareth wears a brown tweed jacket, cream patterned shirt, striped tie, and brown trousers and shoes. He is friendly, but firm.

Marcus, a schoolboy, is about 10 years old. He has dark brown hair, and wears his school uniform – blue wool jumper, white shirt, striped tie, grey trousers and black shoes. He is a bit sullen, and is mostly frowning or looking at the floor. The role of Marcus is shared by **Oscar Clancy** and **Harley Cullen-Walsh** on alternate shows.

Karen, Marcus's mother, is played by **Kate Stanley Brennan**. She has long brown hair and wears a lilac fluffy jumper over a pink leather skirt and patterned tights, with black heeled ankle boots and a blue cotton jacket. She carries an oversized red handbag.

The same actor also plays **Tess**. As Tess she has short, brown curly hair, and wears round glasses with a green frame.

Tess tends to wear brightly coloured outfits, like her mint green jacket and short skirt suit, or a salmon pink woollen dress, always accessorised with a flouncy scarf tied in a bow, and high heels in lilac. She walks with her feet taking small, hurried steps.

Sebastien, a man in his late sixties, is played by **Stephen Brennan**. He has white hair in a side parting, and likes to dress in pastel shades. He first appears wearing a pale pink shirt, untucked, and pale pink cotton trousers, with cream and brown leather brogues. Later, he adds a salmon pink suit jacket with a colourful silk handkerchief tucked into the breast pocket. He is confident and debonair, and moves his hands with theatrical flourish.

An ensemble cast, including **Donncha O’Dea**, **Aisling O’Mara**, **Teddy Moore** and **Jess Kavanagh** play a variety of roles throughout the evening, including the crowds in Brett and Casey’s walks through Dublin and Paris, and waiters. Throughout the performance, members of the ensemble head to the microphone at the back of the stage to perform sound effects, like phones ringing, and doorbells. A singer, Jess Kavanagh, often appears at this mic too, to provide atmospheric music, and romantic songs. The ensemble all wear colourful outfits that help conjure up a given scene, like people out for a jog on the streets of Dublin, or dressing like mimes, or bakers, or wearing stripy tops, for the Paris scene.

That concludes the audio description introduction for **Somewhere Out There You**. It was prepared by me, Bríd Ní Ghruagáin, who will also provide audio description for this performance. A Touch Tour will also be held before the performance, gathering Front of House at Twelve Fifteen.

Audio description at the Abbey Theatre is provided in association with Arts & Disability Ireland, with support from The Arts Council. For updates about audio described and captioned performances, text **ACCESSARTS** to **51444** or head to **www.adiarts.ie** for more information.

Thank you. Go raibh maith agaibh.

