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# SMALL THINGS THEATRE

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## **ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE**

### **IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT HARD ENOUGH**

**BY CORDELIA O'NEILL**

Proposal to stage the play in The Little at the Southwark Playhouse for four weeks from week beginning **28th October 2019 to Saturday 23rd November 2019** give or take a week here or there.

#### **THE PLAY**

***Anything Is Possible If You Think About It Hard Enough*** is the fourth play from Cordelia O'Neill. Her first play ***The Stolen Inches*** was a sell out at Edinburgh Festival 2015 to 4/5\* star reviews. Her second play ***No Place For a Woman*** premiered at Theatre 503 and starred Ruth Gemmell and Emma Paetz also receiving 4\* reviews across the board. Her third was ***The Vote*** a play marking 100 years since women's suffrage for HighTide Festival. ***Anything is Possible*** has gone through two stages of development, first appearing as a three hander at Vault Festival 2018, then after an R&D it was re-written as a two hander and given a rehearsed reading at the Pleasance Theatre in July 2018.

The play is about still birth. It is narrated by the father (Rupert) who we eventually find out is talking to his deceased son (Teddy), recounting the story of how he and his mother (Alex) met, created him and how they are still dealing with losing him. It is a play of two distinct halves: the excitement, anticipation, charm, humour, angst, hope and dysfunction of a burgeoning relationship;

followed by a window into how humans deal with a very very private unspoken grief.

As well as being a devastatingly funny and heartbreaking piece of drama the play brings the conversation about baby loss to the stage and as a result a wider audience. There have been a few television documentaries made on the subject but very few plays and yet all charities, politicians and those affected by such tragedies are screaming for more exposure.

## **THE PLAY IN PRODUCTION**

### **Director, Kate Budgen's Vision**

For me, it is a love story, rather than a play about a dead baby. It is a play about the survival of a relationship. The strength of two people making a decision to be together, no matter what. Can they get through all of this and remain together?

Storytelling is swift, sharp, dynamic, jump cutting through the life of these two people as they navigate themselves through the many phases of a relationship.

I love the momentum, rhythm, energy and drive of the developing relationship-inviting the audience to run alongside, rather than get ahead - we think we know where this is going - an engaging, bitey, middle class rom com - then everything shifts when their baby dies. I'm interested in how we can explore that shift in tone/energy with light/sound/space. Turning the world on its head. Pulling the audience in a completely unexpected direction.

We need the audience to get inside this relationship - to focus completely and utterly on these two and their journey together - if we share their joy/fun, we also share in their pain. We have to fall in love with them as they fall in love with each other.

The writing is painfully accurate and honest - and isn't afraid of going to the dark places as well as the ridiculous, so I want to ensure the performances find the full blood and guts of this relationship, as well as its silliness and playfulness. And at the end, the worst thing that can possibly happen to a couple, has happened, but there is hope.

It isn't naturalism, though the relationship needs to be completely, painfully, hilariously, real. Working with movement director Lucy Cullingford I'd want to explore a physical language which can act in counterpoint to their reality from moment to moment, punctuating shifts from snapshot to snapshot and also heighten what is happening emotionally for them-distance, space, connection, isolation; exploring what grief does to the body and the soul. Finding playful ways of using the space-the blank canvas on which these two people build their lives.

### **Design**

We do not currently have a designer attached but have worked with Camilla Clark on **No Place For A Woman** who worked brilliantly with Kate, Cordelia and Lucy. However I am sure Kate will hold interviews to find the right person for the job.

As far as Kate is concerned we can go one of two ways:

1. Set-simple, allows these two people a space in which to explore each other and where the focus is on each other. Keeping it symbolic/gestural rather than naturalistic.
2. OR-there is a version where the space goes on a gradual transformation, from empty space to fully fledged nursery, appearing so gradually, we barely realise the space is changing. I think there is probably some interesting stuff we can do with the space - secrets that reveal themselves as these people reveal themselves to each other - how can the space reflect/hold/enhance what they are going through?

It is a two hander, intimate story so perfect for the Little at the Southwark.

## **THE TEAM**

### **Kate Budgen - Director**

The play will be directed by Kate Budgen. Kate directed **No Place For A Woman** at Theatre 503 and has been at the helm for the development of **Anything Is Possible** from the beginning, working closely with writer Cordelia O'Neill. As writer and director team, they work extremely well together.

Kate trained at Birkbeck College and on the NT Studio Directors course. She was Associate Director at Shropshire based Pentabus Theatre from 2008-2011 and Creative Associate at the Bush Theatre from 2010-2011. She came runner up in the JMK Directors Award in 2010 with **The Hairy Ape**. In 2019 she will direct **The Importance of Being Earnest** at the Watermill and she is the Associate Director on **The Girl From The North Country** for its run in Toronto.

Directing credits include: **Anything is possible if you think about it hard enough** (Vaults Festival), **No Place for a Woman** (Theatre 503), **Punk Rock** (Guildford School of Acting), **Anne Boleyn** (RWCMD), **Strong Arm** (Underbelly/Old Vic New Voices), *b* (Southwark Playhouse), *b* (Papatango/Finborough), **Crossed Keys** (Eastern Angles), **Bedbound** (Lion and Unicorn). She regularly works at Arts Educational Schools, directing **Astronauts, How to Disappear Completely and Never be Found, There is A War, Machinal, The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning** and **Love and Money**. She has been a Connections Director for the National Theatre Connections Festival since 2011. She has been a visiting tutor at the Actors Centre and worked extensively for the Almeida Theatre Participation Department from 2007-2016. She has worked as an Assistant Director for The Gate Theatre, The Almeida, The Opera Group, Pentabus Theatre, the Bush Theatre and for Opera North. She was the Associate Director on **The Cripple of Inishmaan** for the Michael Grandage Company in 2013.

### **Cordelia O'Neill - Writer**

Cordelia is a writer, actress and co-founder of Small Things Theatre. She trained at Oxford School of Drama. She wrote sell-out show **The Stolen Inches** Edinburgh 2015:

'manages to find the sweet spot that a good deal of theatre is often seeking - we leave the auditorium full of thoughts and questions' - Broadway Baby \*\*\*\*

'Playwright and director Cordelia O'Neill's first full length play is a must-see domestic drama, beautifully put together' - A Younger Theatre \*\*\*\*

'Subversive and intriguing piece of social satire' - The Scotsman \*\*\*

Her production **No Place For A Woman** ran at Theatre 503 last year and has been optioned by Cannibal Films. She is currently writing the screenplay:

'Gripping' - The Reviews Hub \*\*\*\*\*

'Both intricate and understated, No Place for a Woman is a subtle and compelling character piece' - The Stage \*\*\*\*

Her play **The Vote** about women's suffrage with E17 Puppet Theatre Company toured Summer 2018 and finished at HighTide's Walthamstow Festival. Her next piece of writing is included in **The Apologists** at the Vaults 2019.

### **Lucy Cullingford - Movement Director**

Lucy has an MA in Movement Studies from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Lucy collaborates regularly with the RSC and productions in the role of Movement Director include: **Coriolanus**, **Snow In Midsummer**; Greg Doran's groundbreaking production of **The Tempest**; **Don Quixote** and **The Jew of Malta**. Lucy was movement practitioner in the Movement Department at the RSC working on David Farr's **The Winter's Tale**, Greg Doran's **Hamlet**, **Loves Labors Lost** and **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (Courtyard Theatre). Lucy is currently Dance Repetiteur for the RSC's production of **Matilda The Musical**.

West End productions include: **Don Quixote** (Garrick Theatre); **King Lear** (Duke of York's Theatre); **Constellations** (Duke of York's Theatre).

Theatre credits include: **Swallows and Amazons** (Storyhouse Theatre); **Table** (New Vic Theatre); *Mountains* (Manchester Royal Exchange); **The Winter's Tale** (National Theatre & tour); **The Shadow Factory** (Nuffield Theatres); **The 101 Dalmatians** (Birmingham Rep); **King Lear** (Chichester Festival Theatre); **Jenufa** (Grange Park Opera); **No Place for a Woman** (Small Things Theatre); **East is East** (Northern Stage and Nottingham Playhouse); **Abigail's Party** (Theatre Royal Bath); **The Wakefield Mystery Plays**, (Wakefield); **Of Mice And Men** (Birmingham Rep); **My Mother Said I Never Should**, (St James's Theatre); **The BFG** (Octagon Theatre); **The Night Before Christmas**, (West Yorkshire Playhouse); **And Now: The World** (Openworks Theatre); **Flare Path**, (The Original Theatre Co); **Talking Heads**, (Theatre Royal Bath); **The Mother** (Ustinov Studio); **Constellations** (Trafalgar Studios, UK national tour, Manhattan Theatre Club, Broadway and Royal Court); **Abigail's Party**, (Curve Theatre); **Intimate Apparel** and **The Double** (Ustinov Theatre, Bath); **The Spanish Golden Age Season**, (Ustinov, Arcola and Belgrade Theatres); **The Scottsboro Boys** and **A Season in the Congo**, (Parallel Projects Young Vic); **The Revenger's Tragedy** (Hoxton Hall); **20 Tiny Plays About Sheffield** (The Crucible, Sheffield); **Yerma**, (Hull Truck and The Gate Theatre); **A Tender Thing**, (RSC/Northern Stage).

Lucy was the RSC/Warwick University Creative Fellow in Residence where she directed *The Renaissance Body*. The piece was staged to mark the reopening of the Swan Theatre, Stratford and performed at the University of Warwick and as a live installation at the British Museum as part of the *Shakespeare: Staging The World Exhibition* for the World Shakespeare Festival in 2012.

As Choreographer productions include **The Last Mermaid** with Charlotte Church, (Wales Millennium Centre); **Alice In Wonderland** (CBBC) and **The Secret Adversary** (Watermill Theatre).

Future productions include: **The Taming of the Shrew** (RSC).

### **Phil Scott-Wallace - Producer**

Phil trained as an actor at LAMDA and is a co-founder of Small Things Theatre. Since the company's formation in 2015, Phil has produced six plays: ***The Stolen Inches, No Place For A Woman, A Gym Thing, Leaves, Boots*** and ***Anything is Possible If You Think About It Hard Enough***. He has also produced seven ***Night of Small Things***, the theatre company's variety night showcasing the best in music, theatre, comedy and poetry that the capital has to offer. In addition to this Phil pioneered a collaboration between **UN Women** and the **Vault Festival** in 2018 for their **HeForShe ArtsWeek**. This included a special ***Night of Small Things*** including work from **Tony Award winner Simon Stephens** and **West End playwright Tamsin Oglesby**. Alongside this he curated an evening on gender equality with a discussion featuring **BAFTA winner and writer Robert Webb, Chi Onwurah MP, Sophie Walker leader of Women's Equality Party, Matthew Ryder Deputy Mayor of London and David Brockway of the Great Men Initiative**.

### **SMALL THINGS THEATRE - Production Company**

Small Things Theatre have produced six productions since forming in 2015 including Cordelia's *No Place For A Woman* at Theatre 503, *A Gym Thing* by Tom Vallen, which transferred from Edinburgh and sold out at The Pleasance this year, *Leaves* by David Mildon, *Boots* by Jessica Butcher & Sacha Voit, *The Stolen Inches* by Cordelia O'Neill. We've also curated several successful variety nights featuring music, theatre, poetry and comedy talent called *Night Of Small Things* both at the Pleasance and Old Red Lion, as well as a special evening in aid of UN Women's HeForShe arts week in March 2018, working with writers such as Simon Stephens, Tamsin Oglesby and hosting a discussion about gender equality with Robert Webb and leading politicians.



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## **Reviews**

'Delightfully complex in theme and message, and manages to find the sweet spot that a good deal of theatre is often seeking' - Broadway Baby \*\*\*\* on The Stolen Inches

'Gripping' - The Reviews Hub \*\*\*\*\* on No Place For A Woman  
'Both intricate and understated, No Place for a Woman is a subtle and compelling character piece' - The Stage \*\*\*\* on No Place For A Woman'

'Tom Vallen's superb playing of his own script...director Philip Scott-Wallace knits everything together into a tight, very watchable drama' - The Scotsman \*\*\*\* on A Gym Thing

'Eroticism, poetry and mystery in Paris with Small Things Theatre production of Leaves at Caravanserail. Beautifully performed by David Mildon and directed by Simon Evans. A play in a bookshop!' - Catherine Taylor, Financial Times on Leaves.

"Something brilliant...curated with such range and force" - Simon Stephens on A Night of Small Things, variety night hosted for HeForShe Arts Week 2018.



## CASTING



**Emily Beecham**

We have worked with some extremely talented actors in the process of developing the script but are also aware of the need to have a cast that has pulling power in the press.

We would like to approach a number of high profile actors. Ones we think we might have potential at casting are Emily Beecham and Nathaniel Martello-White.



**Nathaniel Martello-White**

We have contacted Emily Beecham's agent who wants to know what venue we are programmed at before beginning the conversation and her co-star in indie flick **Daphne**, Nathaniel Martello-White (**People Places and Things, BBC's Collateral**) is a previous collaborator in **Night Of Small Things** we could call on.

We are very happy to discuss this with you and also intend to go through a thorough casting process to get the right talent.

## **FINANCE / PRESS / MARKETING**

Budget at a glance:

PHYSICAL	Cost
Set	£2050
Lighting (extras)	£300
Marketing / PR	£6150
Rehearsals etc	£1825
Creative Team	£8000
Cast / ASM	£8237
Production Manager	£1500
Rental	£9000
Total	£37062

Income sources:

- Private Donations - target £15,000.
- Crowdfunding - estimated £10,000 with help from SANDS.
- Capital Investment - £5,000 provided by company.
- Ticket Sales - at 60% return - potential of £39,000.

Our marketing and fundraising plan will be combined as we will be running a huge targeted crowdfunding campaign to publicise and fund the play by connecting with those who have suffered a still birth, pregnancy complication or baby loss of some form. We plan to bring those that wish to share their stories on board as ambassadors of the play, contributing to a publication presenting their struggle with grief as well as celebrating the lives of the children they lost.

We have the backing of **SANDS, the baby loss charity**, who have read the script, love it and are very happy to help us promote and fundraise for the production. On top of this I am well connected to the team who made a recent **Channel 4 documentary, 'Child of Mine'**, and can use their reach and contacts to publicise and promote the play further.

We will also contact and work with high profile individuals who have suffered baby loss such as Amanda Holden, Lily Allen, Kelly Brook, Keanu Reeves and his now deceased partner Jennifer Syme, Dawn Andrews and Gary Barlow, and Annie Lennox. In the process we hope we can use their help to raise funds via private donations as well as fundraising activities such as auctions and charity nights, as well as publicising the play.

When producing **A Gym Thing** we worked with Chloe Nelkin PR who were fantastic, landing us slots with the **BBC, ITV, Sky News** and various print media. We are also good friends with the outgoing **Head of PR at the Young Vic** who intends to start building her portfolio as a freelancer so we have options when it comes to press. The aim is to get slots on news programmes and lifestyle programmes to discuss the issue culminating in a huge amount of tv, radio, digital and printed press coming out during Baby Loss Awareness week in October 2019 prior to the play opening.

As well as this we will have a targeted facebook, instagram, twitter, email and print campaign to publicise the play and work with your team at the Southwark to optimise our reach through all your detailed and effective in house marketing approaches.

