

Pre-Show Notes

The Sound Inside

Audio Description

Welcome to this introduction of *The Sound Inside* presented by The Singapore Repertory Theatre.

The audio described performance is on Saturday, 3rd April 2020 at 6pm and the Touch Tour begins an hour and a half earlier at 430pm. The show lasts about 90 minutes with no interval. It will be described by Wiggie and Roger Jenkins. Roger will tell you about the characters and costumes shortly, but first, let me preview the play and describe the set.

Synopsis

Bella Bird is an accomplished professor at an Ivy League university who prizes her solitude. But when she faces a challenge, she cannot tackle alone, she allies herself with a brilliant and mysterious student. Intensely intimate and deeply moving, this haunting play probes the question of what one person can do for another.

Hailed by *The New York Times* as “an astonishing new play”, this scintillating two-hander looks at how two brilliant social misfits connect and bond with each other. Written by award-winning writer Adam Rapp, the beauty of this gripping drama *The Sound Inside* is that it’s never what you expect.

It is, in the opinion of your audio describers, Wiggie and Roger Jenkins, an **excellent** choice for vision-impaired audiences to attend, as the play is an aural delight - with a strong spoken script and a wonderfully layered soundscape. The play would work well as a radio play, though there is one stunning visual scene - which we will do our best to describe for you!

Featuring **Serene Chen** as Bella Bird and **Krish Natarajan** as Christopher John.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

The Director of The Sound Inside is Cherilyn Woo

The Set Designer, Petrina Dawn Tan

Costume Designer, Tan Jia Hui

Lighting Designer, Genevieve Peck

Sound Design, Daniel Wong

SET and SETTING

Let me begin by describing the SET AND SETTING

Black, velvet curtains span the entire height and width of the stage to form the backdrop throughout the play.

What immediately catches our attention is a modern chandelier that hangs about 4 metres above stage centre with some 20 to 30 sheets of A4-sized paper suspended in concentric circles around a cylindrical white light as its centre.

The rest of the set is very white, very abstract - and very low - nothing is above waist height. The set is comprised of what looks like packets of white paper - a mix of A3 and A4 packs - across the stage forming three main blocks. There are 3 1-metre tall 2-metre-wide configurations placed equidistantly across the stage. The blocks are arranged both vertically and horizontally in a seemingly haphazard fashion. 2 smaller piles flank the sides and the front of the space.

The first pile from the left will be the Professor's office, and her desk doubles as a table at a steak restaurant,

On the right another stack represents a sofa in the living room in the faculty housing where Bella lives on Campus.

In other scenes the sofa stack is deftly rearranged to be a medical couch and a bed for a sexual encounter.

However, these blocks aren't just there for the actors to sit or stand on, or walk around - and we will reveal the surprises as they happen!

Now let me hand you over to Roger Jenkins who will tell you about the CHARACTERS and their COSTUME before providing you the latest access information.

Cast, Character and Costume

There are only two actors and two characters

BELLA LEE BIRD is - as she describes herself - a middle-aged professor of undergraduate Creative Writing at a prestigious Ivy League University. Bella, who has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, narrates much of the play's action, almost as if she were writing a story. She is self-aware, and in fact does such a good job of describing herself In a long and fascinating monologue which opens the play (so please - do not be late!) that my services are not really required in this regard!

For example, Bella says -- when talking about herself as 'our Narrator,' in the third person – that when it comes to the Looks Department “if she’s being brutally honest with herself, she’d say she’s perhaps four or five degrees beyond mediocre - also known as “sneakily attractive.” Hmmm, as a male of somewhat similar age, I agree - and I couldn't phrase it better myself!

Bella's wry and witty and comfortable talking to her audience and while her manner is teacherly, she never talks down to her

students - or to us. She certainly has a way with words - which is not surprising as she has published a novel, though quite a long time before the play begins (which is around 2015)

She is smartly yet conservatively dressed throughout in a white collared shirt, dark brown pants and chic light-brown bootees. She switches between a maroon cardigan or a light casual jacket in soft pink when indoors but dons a knee length pastel-orange overcoat and scarf when out walking in the park. Her black hair is cut very straight - in a fringe above the eyes, while both sides hang straight and end in a line cut flush with her jaw.

CHRISTOPHER JOHN is one of Professor Baird's students in her course on *Reading Fiction for Craft*, which is a requirement for aspiring Creative Writing majors. And Christopher is working on a story. Or perhaps it's a novel? It's a work in progress during the play. He's intense but funny, unpredictable and somewhat disturbing - there are a lot of passing references to the novel which the Professor's class is studying, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, with its ambivalent antihero - and Christopher is likable but dot dot dot?

Christopher is short, slim, boyish. He often wears a blue, petrol station attendant's canvas jacket... worn thin at the elbows, with a loud green chequered shirt underneath. Light blue jeans, slim cut. He often totes a backpack over his shoulder. A student from virtually any campus in the western world - except Christopher has a neat haircut, with a short mop of curly hair on top, and by the looks of him, most Mums would be quite happy if their daughters brought him home for a visit!

SRT aims to provide an excellent experience and service for all patrons who may require additional support to access our venue and enjoy our events. For accessible booking options please contact us at 6733 8166 from 10am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

Nearest parking options are Robertson Quay Hotel, located at 15 Merbau Road, Singapore 239032 opposite the theatre's front door or in Robertson Walk Carpark at 11 Unity Street, Singapore 237995.

For Public Transport options, the nearest Bus Stop is B13211. The nearest MRT stations are Clarke Quay (NE5), on the Northeast Line and Fort Canning (DT20) on the Downtown Line.

Due to current covid restrictions, the theatre seating has been drastically reduced to only 92 seats in total. Seats for vision-impaired audiences and their friends and family are in the stalls. As the stall and circle audiences must be kept separate, entry to the stalls will be via the theatre's rear entrance, inside Robertson Quay.

Don't worry - the helpful staff at the theatre's front door will guide you personally on the two-minute short-cut through the adjacent building. Do bring a QR scanner on your phone to be able to check in and your temperature will be taken. The touch tour will commence 1 hour and 30 minutes before the show at 4.30pm and is recommended given the abstract nature of this play's set design.

Please inform the staff at the front door that you have come for the Touch Tour and they will bring you to the assembly point. Please have your mobile device and headset with you. The Box Office will have headphones and devices on standby if needed.

Note that the performance runs 90 minutes without interval and, as part of the measures to keep the stalls and circle audiences separate, patrons in the stalls must use the toilets in the adjacent Robertson Quay building. Go before the show! The staff are on hand to guide you to the washrooms.

KC Arts Centre, the home of SRT, is assistance dog friendly.

KC Arts Centre is accessible for wheelchair use from both the front and rear entrances. There is currently 1 wheelchair space on row Q in the theatre stalls. If you require a wheelchair space, or would like to understand more about transferring options, please contact our venue team at boxoffice@srt.com.sg or call 6733 8166.

SRT is delighted to be reopening the theatre after such a long period of darkness due to the covid crisis. We look forward to welcoming you and hope you have a wonderful time with us!