

## **PRE-SHOW NOTES FOR - Tuesdays with Morrie**

Welcome to this introduction to Tuesdays with Morrie. The play was co-written by Mitch Albom and Jeffrey Hatcher and is presented by The Singapore Repertory Theatre.

The Audio Described Performance is on Saturday 21st November 2020 at 6pm, and the Touch Tour begins an hour and a half earlier at 4.30pm. The show lasts about 90 minutes with no interval. It will be described by Seren Chen and Roger Jenkins.

This play was adapted from author Mitch Albom's bestselling memoir, Tuesdays with Morrie. Sixteen years after his graduation, career-obsessed journalist Mitch reunites with his former college professor and mentor, Morrie, who has been diagnosed with Lou-Gehrigs Disease, a neuro-degenerative disease also known as ALS. What starts as a simple visit turns into a life-changing weekly pilgrimage - always on Tuesdays - that enables Morrie to teach his final and most important lesson: how to live.

### **Production Credits**

This play is directed by Samantha Scott-Blackhall.  
The playwrights are Mitch Albom and Jeffrey Hatcher.  
The Set and Lighting Designer, Petrina Dawn Tan.  
The Sound Designer, Daniel Wong.  
The Technical Manager, Peter Chi.  
The Stage Manager, Justina Khoo.  
And the Production Assistant, Chantel Goh.

### **Characters and Costumes**

There are six characters whose names we know, but we only see two of them in person - Mitch and Morrie. Every other character is only heard or mentioned, not seen.

**Mitchell Albom**, who is the first character introduced to us, is played by **Benjamin Chow**. He recounts the story of when he, as a middle-aged, career-obsessed sports journalist, reunites with his old college professor. His wife, Janine, is a singer, whose voice we hear only through a recording. Mitch is pale and fairly tall, with short dark hair, wearing a medium grey blazer thrown on over a burgundy polo. He wears navy slacks and brown loafers with no socks. A watch with black leather straps peeks out from below his left sleeve when he raises his arms, but he more often has his shoulders

hunched and hands tucked into his pockets. He usually takes the spotlight on the right, lit in pale blue.

**Morrie Schwartz**, with whom Mitch comes to spend a number of Tuesdays, is played by **Remesh Panicker**. An old sociology professor who has been passionately teaching for decades, he has been diagnosed with a degenerative disease that slowly takes away his muscular control. He lives with his wife, Charlotte, and caretaker, Connie. Morrie's balding head of grey hair, paired with a bushy moustache and beard, are pale against his brown skin, and he has kind eyes, a lively face, and expressive hands. He wears a pale blue button-down, whose collar peeks out from under a navy cardigan vest and peanut-butter-brown jacket. Its sleeves are a little too long, loose up to his knuckles. His off-white slacks are worn over a pair of comfortable-looking black shoes. A pair of glasses hang from a string round his neck. His spotlight on the left is often lit in a soft pink.

At the beginning of the play, when Mitch and Morrie stand at opposite sides of the stage recounting their story, they often speak out towards us as if we were the other, gesturing towards us, stepping up for a hug, even planting a kiss forwards. As the play progresses, they step into the story they tell, and the distance between them gradually shrinks.

### **Set and Setting**

The play takes place in Professor Morrie Schwartz's house. The set is totally realistic in its design and evokes the professor's living-room cum study. The house probably dates from the 1970's and looks very comfortable, though somewhat cluttered: the furniture is well made, and there is nothing modern and pre-fabricated.

The long back wall of the set, which stretches almost the entire width of the stage, is angled, so that its left end is much closer to us than the right, which ends with an L-shaped return wall. However, the set actually resembles a 3-D letter F, as there is a short dividing wall (containing a beautiful built-in bookcase) slightly off-centre, and this separates the living area (on the left), from Morrie's study on our right.

I'm going to describe the set from the right, as that is where the front door is, set back, almost off-stage and behind a short wall which, when Mitch stands in front of it, helps create the illusion that he is in fact outside the house (literally or figuratively) during many of his direct addresses to the audience.

When Mitch enters the house, immediately on his right is Morrie's cosy study, with a tall bookcase flush against the L-shaped return and a narrow desk placed parallel in front of

it. There is a straight-backed chair behind the desk, and a tall window at the end of it provides ample light for work. A short table lamp on a beautifully turned wooden stand is on the window sill beside the desk and often provides a warm soft illumination to this less-used corner of the set.

The study is separated from the living area by the towering bookcase built into a dividing wall. In earlier days, Morrie, who is a tall man, could only have reached the top shelf by stretching his hand above his head. The divider juts into the room at right-angles to the rear wall, and its 5 book shelves run the divider's entire length, creating 5 rectangular windows in the end wall facing us. The shelves are full of books and more books and yet more books of all sorts and sizes.

Taking pride of place in the living area is a large, padded, cream-coloured recliner chair. There is a small, portable Tv from the 1970's on a side table mounted on castors, backed against the room's side wall on the left. Running virtually the entire length of the living area's back wall is a spectacular window that stretches from its broad knee-high sill right up to the (imagined) ceiling. We glimpse realistic bushes and shrubs outside – shrubs which wave most realistically during a storm late in the play. On the window-sill, which is wide enough to form a ledge to store yet more books, there is a bright red bakelite phone of the rotary-dial style, which was still common in the 1990's when the play takes place. There is also a record-player on the ledge, which plays Morrie's beloved opera occasionally.

There is one more chair in the set. It is a straight-backed dining-table type of chair and it is placed at the end of the bookcase, but during the play Mitch will move it to wherever he needs to sit - either besides the desk or the recliner, in order to talk with Morrie.

A corridor on the extreme left leads back to the rest of the house, particularly the kitchen (which is unseen) and a back door (also unseen).

Finally, in front of the set are two spotlight areas extreme left and right which Mitch, who narrates this memory play, uses when introducing a scene or segueing from one time to another.

### **Access Information**

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 will be in the stalls. As the stall and circle audiences are required to 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 front door will guide you on the two minute short-cut through the adjacent building. You will need to 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. Please inform the staff at the front door that you are there 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 loos.

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](mailto: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!

**END**