



**PEOPLE,
PLACES
& THINGS**

BY **DUNCAN
MACMILLAN**



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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for my sisters

PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS was first produced by Headlong Theatre Company (Jeremy Herrin, Artistic Director; Alan Stacey, Executive Director) and the National Theatre (Rufus Norris, Artistic Director; Lisa Burger, Executive Director) at the Dorfman Theatre on September 1, 2015, after which it transferred to Wyndham's Theatre in the West End of London on March 15, 2016. It was directed by Jeremy Herrin, the scenic design was by Bunny Christie, the lighting design was by James Farncombe, the sound design was by Tom Gibbons, the costume design was by Christina Cunningham, the video design was by Andrzej Goulding, the movement director was Polly Bennett, and the composer was Matthew Herbert. The cast was as follows:

EMMA Denise Gough
 PAUL/DAD Kevin McMonagle
 FOSTER Alistair Cope
 DOCTOR/MUM Barbara Marten
 MARK Nathaniel Martello-White
 MEREDITH Sally George
 T Jacob James Beswick
 JODI Jacqui Dubois
 SHAUN Nari Blair-Mangat
 LAURA Laura Woodward

The American premiere of PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS was produced by St. Ann's Warehouse, in collaboration with the National Theatre and Headlong Theatre Company, in October 2017, with the same creative team. The cast was as follows:

EMMA Denise Gough
 PAUL/DAD Kevin McMonagle
 FOSTER Alistair Cope
 DOCTOR/MUM Barbara Marten
 MARK Nathaniel Martello-White
 CHARLOTTE Charlotte Gascoyne
 T Jacob James Beswick
 JODI Jacqui Dubois
 SHAUN Himesh Patel
 LAURA Laura Woodward

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

EMMA

KONSTANTIN

STAGE MANAGER

CREW MEMBERS

CAST MEMBERS

UNDERSTUDY

DRESSERS

MEN

PAUL

FOSTER

NURSES

DOCTOR

THERAPIST

MARK

CHARLOTTE

T

JODI

SHAUN

LAURA

EMMAS

CLUBBERS

YOUNG WOMAN

DRESSERS
WOMAN
PARAMEDICS
DOCTORS
NURSE
MEDICAL STAFF
DAD
MUM
VOICE
ACTRESSES
ACTRESS

The Group are ethnically diverse, of different classes and ages.

A forward slash (/) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue.

An ellipsis (...) on a separate line denotes a brief active silence, the length of which is to be determined by context.

PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

ACT ONE

As the lights fade, the sounds of a theatre auditorium increase. Mobile phones, coughing, chattering and general sounds of anticipation. It builds to a cacophony.

Darkness. Chaos.

Suddenly the lights snap up and the sounds cease. We are in the same theatre, but at a different time. A play is in progress, the final act of Chekhov's The Seagull. A Naturalistic, period set of a study which was once a drawing-room. Doors left and right. A French door opens onto a terrace. It is raining.

Evening. It is dark. One shaded lamp is alight. Trees rustle outside and wind howls softly in the chimneys.

Emma is playing Nina Zarechnaya. Her hair is wet. She has been crying. She sits on an ottoman in the centre of the stage next to Konstantin Gavrilovich Treplev. The lights have snapped up mid-sentence.

KONSTANTIN. for ninety years on this earth. My youth robbed from me.

Emma looks around the stage and out into the auditorium. It is as if she's just come to and is trying to establish where she is.

I've cursed you Nina. Ripped up your photographs and letters. But it's no use. I see your face everywhere. I say your name. I kiss the ground you walk on. I'm bound to you forever. And now you're here.

He waits for Emma to speak. After a while he decides that

she's not going to say her line, so continues.

I'm sad. Lonely. Utterly alone and cold as if I've been imprisoned underground. And everything I write is so bleak.

Konstantin takes Emma's hand.

Nina. Stay here. I beg you. Stay here or let me go with you.

For a moment, Emma looks into Konstantin's eyes. She looks down at their interlocked hands.

...

Nina?

Suddenly, Emma stands and quickly prepares to leave, grabbing her coat and putting it on.

Nina, for God's sake, Nina.

EMMA. My carriage is waiting. Don't walk me out. Can I have some water?

KONSTANTIN. Where will you go?

He pours some water.

EMMA. Is Irina Arkadin here?

KONSTANTIN. Yes. Uncle was taken ill and we telegraphed / for her.

Emma advances to Konstantin angrily, interrupting him.

EMMA. Why did you say you worship the ground I walk on?

Death. Death is what I deserve.

Emma doubles over. Konstantin doesn't know what to do. He stands still, holding the water. He looks off into the wings.

I'm so tired. I need to sleep. I'm a seagull. No that's not right. I'm an actress.

Laughter in the wings. Emma looks up.

He's here too isn't he?

Emma laughs.

Of course. It doesn't matter.

She walks to Konstantin and takes the water from him.

He didn't believe in the stage. He laughed at me. I don't believe in it either. Not now.

As Emma talks her acting becomes more genuine. She is talking less in character and more as herself. She is sincere, vivid, compelling. She doesn't slur her words.

Not now that I've had real problems. Real things have happened. My heart is broken. I don't know what to do with my hands when I'm onstage. I'm not real. I'm a seagull. No, that's wrong.

The lamp flickers. Emma notices it. Konstantin doesn't.

You shot a seagull. Do you remember? Earlier in the play?

Emma laughs.

I mean the *story*, I mean long ago you shot a

that's wrong too. Not you. What was I saying? I was talking about the *theatre*. I love acting. I'm a real actress. I was a real actress. Will you come and see me when I'm a real actress? I'm different now. And I feel better and better every day. You don't need to worry about me anymore. I have

faith.

Emma hears something. She is twitchy.

KONSTANTIN. Nina,

EMMA. things don't hurt me so much anymore. I'm not afraid. I'm

The lights fade around her slightly. The Naturalistic sounds fade too and for a moment there's something more ominous and subjective. A low rumble. A whine of tinnitus.

...

I'm a

Emma looks up as if she's been daydreaming and just coming to. The sounds have returned to normal.

...

She looks around, seemingly unaware of where she is.

KONSTANTIN. Nina?

Emma's physicality changes. She drops the water without realising it.

Nina?

Er...

Emma looks into the auditorium. She walks towards the edge of the stage and peers into the darkness at the audience. She moves out of her light. She pulls her wig off. She has very different hair underneath.

Nina?

The lights flicker. Her nose starts bleeding, heavily. She touches the blood and looks at it, fascinated.

Emma?

Emma?

*Emma is about to step off the edge of the stage. A stage manager hurries on from the wings and takes Emma by the arm. Sounds offstage. The scenery starts moving, revealing crew members, props tables, cables and the back wall of the theatre. Costumed cast members of *The Seagull* watch what's happening, including an understudy dressed exactly like Emma. Emma looks at her, not sure what she's seeing. A dresser wipes the blood from Emma's face. Another helps her into a jacket. Emma is uncooperative. The furniture is taken off into the wings. The lights scroll through various colours. Naturalistic sounds, including a gunshot, play, then begin to repeat rhythmically. Emma can see a man in the distance, dancing under a flashing light. She thinks she's in a nightclub, but knows that isn't possible. Men suddenly surround her. A pill is put onto her tongue. She takes someone's drink and downs it. She snatches a phone from someone. She takes someone's cigarette. She pushes the men away, violently. They leave. She is alone, holding the phone to her ear and trying to light the cigarette. She is in the reception of a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. The dance music continues faintly, coming from a radio on the reception desk. There's a row of plastic chairs in front of a window next to which sit Emma's bags.*

EMMA. Just this one thing can you please do this one thing for me please I'm just asking for

Emma looks around at her new surroundings, a little surprised to find herself there. She listens to the voice on the phone and remembers what she's doing.

listen to me listen to me okay alright please this is important to me I'm trying to do something for once in my life do something for myself and

don't be like that why do you have to be like that no, listen please for a second because right now you're being a complete cunt.

Well I'm sorry you hate that word, that's really unfortunate because in one syllable it so perfectly describes your entire personality.

She throws the lighter down and searches in her bag for another.

Look, obviously I called the wrong person. Obviously you're unable to help me, you can't give me half an hour to do something that could save my life.

She stops searching.

Yes it *is* that serious.

I'm not being dramatic. That's such a cunt thing to say.

I'll stop calling you a cunt when you stop being a cunt.

Listen,

...

Mum.

...

Mum, please, listen to me for a second.

You're already in my flat, just

She starts searching again.

there's a large, clear-plastic box in the hallway on the

like a big, plastic

box

it's see-through, it's

I don't know how else to describe it.

PEOPLE, PLACES & THINGS

by Duncan Macmillan

5M, 5W (doubling, flexible casting)

Emma was having the time of her life. Now she's in rehab. Her first step is to admit that she has a problem. But the problem isn't with Emma, it's with everything else. She needs to tell the truth. But she's smart enough to know that there's no such thing. When intoxication feels like the only way to survive the modern world, how can she ever sober up?

"...a glittering paean to booze and drugs delivered as a visceral, mournful howl to the skies. The play's most audacious trick is that it does not pretend that there aren't some serious upsides to hedonism." —**The Daily Telegraph (UK)**

"Besides being a portrait of addiction and recovery, [PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS] is perceptive about trauma and its consequences, as well as the roles so many of us adopt in order to deflect the truth." —**Evening Standard (London)**

"...a vibrant play that draws parallels between theatre and rehab... Macmillan also offers a critique of a society in which addiction is partly a response to the surrounding chaos, and where the generic uplift of marketing-speak pervades everything from politics to religion." —**The Guardian (UK)**

"Generous-spirited, with a strong streak of irreverent, darkly humane humour, the play...has a thoughtful, shifting ambivalence that suits a problem where the solutions can only ever be provisional and the amends inadequate." —**The Independent (London)**

Also by Duncan Macmillan
1984 (Icke)
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LUNGS

ISBN 978-0-8222-3735-8



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