



A Level

# Drama and theatre

*Home, I'm Darling* (Laura Wade)

## Original performance

- Theatr Clwyd, Emlyn Williams Studio, North Wales
- Original production dates: 25/06/18 – 14/07/18
- End-on staging
- Realistic, two-storey set design by Anna Fleischle, showing all rooms in the house
- Realistic 1950s and contemporary costumes, clearly distinguishing characters through style and colour
- Many realistic props and household items, including food
- Naturalistic lighting and sound; 50's hits played for danced transitions

## Context

- Set in 2018, in a semi-detached house in Welwyn Garden City, UK
- Protagonists live according to 1950s aesthetic and values
- Legacy of Women's Liberation Movement, commune living and The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
- Social media trends (2024): Tradwives and Softgirls
- Legacy of the coronavirus pandemic and realignment of work/life balance
- Contemporary feminism, gender roles and stereotypes and the #MeToo Movement

## Style

- Realism
- Comedy
- Two acts spread out over approximately a month
- Act 2 begins with a flashback scene set three years earlier
- Realistic acting style
- Uses slightly formal language to suggest a 1950s aesthetic, contrasted with more contemporary language
- Use of music and jive dancing as transitions
- Clear stage directions

## Directing

- Will your *Home, I'm Darling* be a faithful interpretation or a reinterpretation?
- What staging and style are you using?
- How are you interpreting the text, and what do you want to communicate through your production?
- Which themes will your work emphasise?
- How do you imagine the characters and their relationships?
- How will you direct your actors to communicate relationships and motivation?
- How will you use character positioning and proxemics to convey meaning?
- How can you link the play to contemporary contexts to make it relevant?
- What rehearsal techniques might you use with your actors, and why?

## Key characters

**Judy:** 38. Willowfield commune teenager. Degree and career in finance; chose redundancy for a life as a 1950s housewife. Intelligent, insecure, complex; losing self-esteem, slightly paranoid, few friends. Likes dancing, order and structure; avoids the modern world. Loves Johnny. Mental health issues.

**Johnny:** 37. Estate agent; waiting for promotion. Loving, caring, intelligent; feels stifled. Sociable; torn between the 1950s and the present. Unhappiness draws him to Alex. Wants the old Judy back.

**Fran:** 35. Film stylist; idolises Judy. Uncertain whether to give up work to pursue a 1950s lifestyle. Finds Marcus annoying. Loyal, honest.

**Marcus:** 43. Successful businessman; likes 1950s vibe. Wants Fran to give up work. Flirts with Judy; often crass. Good dancer. Accused of sexual harassment by PA; inappropriate behaviour with Judy.

**Sylvia:** 67. Judy's mum. Lived on a commune; feminist and activist. Honest, direct, outspoken. Cares for Judy, but there is tension. Thinks Judy is wasting her life and skills. Presents the reality of the 1950s. Husband was an adulterer.

**Alex:** 30. Johnny's boss. Successful, career-driven. Fascinated by Johnny's home life. Tactful. Helps Johnny get a promotion in another office.

## Design

Are you creating a faithful interpretation or a reinterpretation? Use live theatre examples to inspire you and influence your ideas. How will actors interact with the design elements? **Decisions must be consistent with your chosen style.**

**Set and props – location, setting, period, themes, atmosphere, symbols**

Stage type; style; layout of space; size of space; entrances and exits; colours; materials; textures; shapes; symbols; levels; projection surfaces; floor, backdrop/cyclorama; furniture and props (style, size, colour, material, condition, location, use) above the stage; suspended from above.

**Costume, Hair, Make-up – status, age, context, personality, circumstances, location**

Garment: colour; size; condition; texture; material; time period. Hair: style; colour; condition; accessories. Make-up: face; hands; feet; body; special effects.

**Lighting – mood, atmosphere, location, time of day, emphasis, emotion**

Naturalistic or non-naturalistic; colour; intensity; angle; positioning; type of lantern; birdie; special; practical; wash; gel; gobo; moving head; strobe; torches; phones.

**Sound – location, atmosphere, emotion, tension, pace, amplification**

Music; atmospheric; ambient; special effect; diegetic; non-diegetic; volume; fade; layering; soundscape; microphones; reverb; echo; delay; effects and treatment; speaker positioning.

## Acting

- Underpinned by **research** and off-text work to establish status, social class, motivation, objective/intent, super-objective, function, relationships, backstory and character arc.
- Use live theatre performances to inspire you and influence your acting choices. Consider: What happened? How? Why? What did I like? How could I adapt the idea for my own interpretation?
- Experiment and **explore practically**. Focus on ensuring your performance decisions clearly communicate your intentions and chosen style. Be prepared to explain: **What am I doing? How am I doing it? Why am I doing it?**

## Vocal skills

- Used to communicate meaning through tone, volume, tempo, pause, pitch, intonation, musicality and accent.
- Also consider vocal sounds: breath, sigh, cry, sing, hum, chant, whisper, hesitation, stutter.
- Consider vocal skills for more stylised approaches.

## Physical skills

- Used to communicate meaning through posture, gait, body language, facial expression and gesture.
- Also consider tempo, rhythm, pace, energy, dynamics, direction, weight, speed, and flow.
- Consider physical skills for more stylised approaches, e.g. dance sequences, physical theatre, or stylised naturalism: unison; canon; repetition; motif; slow motion; exaggeration.

## Interaction

- Used to communicate meaning through character positioning, spatial relationships, proxemics, vocal choices and physical choices, driven by motivation and reaction.
- Should effectively communicate the relationship between characters – whether between two or more characters, with the audience or even in interaction with the space/set.