

never closer



BY GRACE CHAPPLE
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never closer

Northern Ireland, 1987.

Deirdre hasn't moved an inch since high school. She still wears the same clothes, listens to the same music, and hangs out with the same friends, each of them trapped on the precipice of living the life they want by the love that they had.

When the group get together for one more Christmas Eve their growing differences push irrepressibly to the surface, a powder-keg waiting for the smallest spark. And then someone turns up with their new English fiancé.

Set against the backdrop of The Troubles, this multi-award nominated new play (Griffin, Rodney Seaborn & Theatre503 International Playwriting, Shane and Cathryn Brennan Prize) is a tender exploration of love, forgiveness, and whether we fight or flee.

writers note

by **grace chapple**

My mum grew up in Northern Ireland, in a tiny little town with too many pubs and many more bombings. It's not my home, though I did spend a lot of sunless summers and snowless christmases there visiting our grandparents. I could never understand why they didn't leave, like my mum did as soon as she got the chance. Then I reached my 20s, and I started going back there as often as I could.

When I left home for the first time I thought more about my mum and her siblings; those who chose to stay through The Troubles and those who left. So I started writing this play. It's been the most creatively rewarding experience of my life, the pinnacle of which has undoubtedly been working with Hannah and this extraordinary team.

I hope you enjoy your time in our wee home. Kettle's just boiled.

directors note

by hannah goodwin

When I read *Never Closer* I was floored, it was one of those reads that made time stop. The play ached in the way that you ache after a crush. It made me feel how I feel when I miss someone. I wanted the same from the production.

The setting is the 70s and 80s in Northern Ireland. You meet these friends inside the glorious, glowing possibility of what it is to be eighteen years old and then again, at the Saturn's return nightmare of twenty eight. Those thresholds are the other side of this work. Those rare moments in life when you're hovering at the edge of an impossible decision, the reverberations of which could be felt for generations. Scared to take the next step but fated to, not knowing that it is more dangerous to hesitate at the fork. Do I stay or do I go?

Ultimately though it's a story about love and friendship, about time and timing, about missed opportunities and miscommunication, and how whiskey makes a lot of stuff possible. I love it because it manages to capture the extremities, contradictions, and messiness of what it is to be human.

Early on in rehearsal we made a rule, that when the characters say 'I love you' they really mean it, so I take this seriously. To the cast and creatives - I'm mad about you. It's been the greatest joy to make this show with you. To Grace - thank you, thank you, thank you.

Director: Hannah Goodwin
Writer: Grace Chapple
Producer: Zoë Hollyoak
Set Designer: Grace Deacon
Lighting Designer: Phoebe Pilcher
Costume Designer: Keerthi Subramanyam
Sound Designer + Composer: Alyx Dennison
Vocal Coach: Laura Farrell
Fight + Intimacy Coach: Nigel Poulton
Stage Manager: Darcy Catto-Pitkin

Starring:
Emma Diaz as Deirdre
Raj Labade as Jimmy
Mabel Li as Niamh
Philip Lynch as Harry
Ariadne Sgouros as Mary
Adam Sollis as Conor

WORLD PREMIERE

4 - 16 October

Tickets ONLY \$25

belvoir.com.au/productions/never-closer/
25 Belvoir Street, Surry Hills 2010

Special Thanks:

Tech Wizard & emotional support from Solomon Thomas, Carpentry from Angus Callander, Set construction from Luke D'Alessandro, Sewing skills from Rebecca Warrant, Dramaturgy support from Dom Mercer, Design Assistance from Blake Hedley.

Special thanks to: Belvoir Technical and Production Team, Marketing, FOH, Bar & Box Office, and you, our very special audience member.

Love essential workers, x