ALAN AYCKBOURN

**PRIVATE FEARS  
IN PUBLIC PLACES**

*A dramatic comedy by Alan Ayckbourn, written and first performed in 2004. It’s a fairly serious poignant play about a group of five thirty-somethings, in a tightly connected series of stories across over 50 short scenes, with themes are of loneliness, missed opportunities,  
and people’s inability to communicate.*

**Director**

Robert Gairey

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| **Performance Dates** | Tuesday 6 – Saturday 10 February 2024  N.B. There will be a matinee on the Saturday |
| **Performance Venue** | Seligman Theatre, Chapter |
| **Rehearsal Dates** | From November   * Tuesdays & Thursdays 19:30 – 22:00 * Sundays 14:30 – 18:00   Tech rehearsal: Sunday 4 February  Dress rehearsal: Monday 5 February |
| **Auditions** | Everyman Club Room, Chapter  Saturday 23 September   * 10:00 – 10:45 * 11:00 – 11:45 * 12:00 – 12:45   RECALLS  Friday 29 September, evening |
| **Book your audition:** | Email your form to: robert.gairey1967@btinternet.com  Please state which slots you are *unable* to attend. If you cannot attend at all but would still like to audition, please get in touch. |
| **Preparation:** | Please include as much information as possible on the accompanying form and send it **when booking your audition**. Pieces to read will be provided at the audition or in advance.  Before auditioning, please take a moment to consider the necessary level of commitment. Take careful note of the rehearsal period and be honest about your availability within it. Although the rehearsal process takes place over a number of weeks, consistent and punctual attendance is essential; a high level of unavailability and/or no-show will regrettably result in your being asked to leave the production.  Please read the rest of this pack carefully for additional audition information. |

**ABOUT THE SHOW**

There are a series of stories throughout this play, each of which involve the six characters interconnecting in different ways.

Dan, an ex-army officer, spends his time drinking in a bar and pouring out his philosophy to barman Ambrose, and letting his relationship with Nicola slide; he has a chance of future happiness when he meets Imogen, but things don’t go as planned.

Imogen’s brother, Estate agent Stewart, who has been trying to sell a flat to Nicola, is lent an inspirational tape by co-worker Charlotte, but sitting at home, he finds that there is more on the tape than he bargained for.

As an evening job, Charlotte starts working as a new carer for Ambrose's bed-ridden father, Arthur. She has an unconventional way of dealing with Arthur’s rudeness – but a way that has consequences.

**DIRECTOR’S NOTES**

“Private Fears in Public Places” is a dramatic comedy by Alan Ayckbourn, written and first performed in 2004. It’s a fairly serious poignant play about a group of five thirty-somethings, in a tightly connected series of stories across over 50 short scenes. The themes are those of loneliness, missed opportunities, and people’s inability to communicate – and comprise effective character studies, giving some lovely opportunities for the cast to get underneath their characters.

There are no small roles in this play – the size of roles for each of the six characters is roughly equal. It is a very thoughtful piece, with an air of melancholy, though there are elements of comedy.

I’m looking for a talented team of six actors who can bring this excellent play to life. Each of the actors are subtly drawn, sensitive and sympathetic, though each with very real flaws that lead to their inability to relate, or make lasting connections outside their isolated existences.

As there are a large number of scene changes in the play, over a variety of locations – living rooms, kitchens, offices, restaurants – in that sense it is a very “filmic” piece. I’ll therefore be looking for each of the actors to be involved in transforming scenes – this is a play where slickness is absolute, the scene changes needing to move as efficiently as the scenes themselves, with smooth transitions.

**CASTING BREAKDOWN**

**DAN Male  
Playing age 30s**Ex-army, embittered, shattered, very much at a loss with his life and relationships, having been cashiered from the army for failing to prevent atrocities carried out by the men under his command. Although initially in a relationship with Nicola, he is unable properly to connect with her, and spends most of his time at a hotel bar, bemoaning his lot to barman Ambrose. Then he has the chance to connect with Imogen, and a very funny and tender restaurant scene follows. Once again, however, fate intervenes.

**STEWART Male  
Playing age 30s**A fairly go-ahead estate agent, good at his job but fairly lazy and indolent at home. His main story involves a video tape he is lent by Christian co-worker Charlotte, having recorded a self-help, spiritual programme to help him figure things out. Unfortunately, this has been recorded only partially over a very raunchy sex tape, and he ends up seeing Charlotte in a whole new light. A lot of comedy is derived from his reaction to the video playing in front of him… but there is a serious side too when his clumsy attempts to come on to Rachel are rebuffed in no uncertain terms, leaving him guilty and embarrassed.

**AMBROSE Male  
Playing age 50s**An older character, a barman and good listener, who spends his working time listening to Dan’s woes, but also has a difficult home life caring for his bedridden, unpleasant father. He makes a new friend in Christian relief carer Charlotte, and unburdens his own sad life on to her. Eventually, when his father eventually dies, he is left more lonely than ever, and at a complete loss as to where to go from here.

**NICOLA Female  
Playing age 30s**Upwardly mobile, and initially anxious to make a go of things with Dan, seeking out a new place for them to live, and trudging to a series of house viewings, never satisfied though for various reasons. Eventually she tires of Dan’s behaviour and in a very emotional scene ends the relationship. However, her feelings are still very much present, as demonstrated by a scene where she unexpectedly meets Dan in a restaurant, given the impression that they may reconnect after all.

**CHARLOTTE Female  
Playing age 30s**A devoutly Christian co-worker of Stuart at the estate agency, she is determined to do good work, by taking on a temporary caring job for Ambrose’s father, as well as offering the self-help inspirational tape recording to Stuart. She bears the insults and violence of Ambrose’s father calmly and patiently, with Bible in hand. Though, as Stuart discovers, she has a very different past in “blue movies”, and as a result is mortified when Stuart makes a very unsubtle pass at her, reacting in a very real, understandable way. She also has a very drastic way of dealing with Ambrose’s father, but this has unfortunate consequences.

**NOTE:** I should warn that this character will need to record the audio of the “sex tape” in question, as the audio plays out to Stuart as he is in his sitting room!

**IMOGEN Female  
Playing age 30s**Stuart’s sister, who cares for her brother but has a very lonely existence otherwise, spending her time in various restaurants waiting for a blind date to arrive, which he never does. Through sheer mischance she has the opportunity to connect with Dan, and there is a very tender but funny scene in a restaurant which sees her getting steady more and more drunk. Then fate takes a turn, and she finds herself alone again, with only her brother to turn to, and comfort after a very unsettling few days.