

Introductory Notes for *Waves* for Blind or Low Vision Patrons

Waves is a one woman play created by Alice Mary Cooper. It tells the story of young Aussie Elizabeth Moncello, daughter of immigrants, and unofficial inventor of the famous Butterfly stroke.

Programme notes

Elizabeth has a watertight reason for learning to swim and a school of fish, penguins and other amphibian friends to teach her how. Her determination, wit and courage help her defy the tide of expectation and discover her hidden strengths.

An intimate theatrical event, *Waves* is set in present day Edinburgh and 1930s Australia. It was directed by Gill Robertson and produced by Louise Gilmour Wills.

The play is recommended for ages 8+ and is presented in association with Catherine Wheels Theatre Company and Imagine Festival

The show lasts for 50 minutes without an interval.

Descriptive notes

These notes have been provided by Audio Described Aotearoa Ltd based on a recording of a previous performance. They are intended to be read by blind and low vision patrons prior to the show to enhance understanding of the visual elements of the performance. They introduce the performer, costume, set, props and lighting and describe how the use of music indicates the nature of the action where this is not apparent from the script.

Description

The entire show is performed by a young woman with shoulder length straight brown hair tied back in a ponytail. She wears a demure navy round-necked calf-length dress with fitted elbow-length sleeves and a narrow brown belt around her slim waist. On her feet she wears flat ballet shoes in cream.

The action all takes place in a narrow strip of stage in front of the curtain and is lit in a white light. It uses the whole width of the stage at times, although for the majority of the piece the action is focused in the centre close to a plain wooden chair, and a small round table that is covered in a floor length white cloth. These are the only pieces of set. As the audience faces it, the chair sits to the left of the table at a slight angle.

There are props on the table that are picked up as they are mentioned or used: a tabloid size newspaper; a pair of scissors; a white cup and saucer; a cricket ball that is held aloft to indicate the island and later her baby brother; a small wooden box with fabric lining that she uses as a casket; and a hardback book.

The play starts with the young woman entering the stage area, stepping towards the table and perching on the edge of the wooden chair. She glances at the newspaper lying on the table, then picks it up and begins to read aloud. She stops, picks up the scissors and cuts out the article from the newspaper. She lays the paper and scissors down on the table then stands and stares out, holding the article aloft, addressing the audience directly.

The narrator acts out the things she describes: for example turning away and glancing back when the women are swimming. The comic timing of her head movements backwards and forwards as she turns reluctantly may cause the audience to laugh. She imitates the way each character walks and moves. The nature of her movements is intimated by her voice or the music that accompanies the action. For example: in the 'Rocky montage', Elizabeth's slow torturous attempt at a stretch backed by music is followed by the narrator's energetic high speed stretches, lunges, and star jumps with the same music repeated at speed. Later, a fluid violin tune echoes her mellifluous swimming of the butterfly stroke as she raises both hands above her head and brings them down together.