**Pre-show notes for Heather**

Welcome to these pre-show notes for Heather, By Thomas Ecclestone, directed by Valentina Ceschi, in a production by Dancing Brick and Paul Jellis, in association with Tobacco Factory Theatres and the Bush Theatre.

The audio described performance takes place next Saturday, November 18th. There will be a touch tour at 1.45, to allow us to visit the stage, handle any props and hopefully meet some of the actors, then these notes will be read live through the headsets at 2.40, with any changes, to allow you to refresh your memory and check that your headset’s working. The play itself begins at 2.45 and runs for an hour, with no interval.

It is a pared-down production with a minimal set. When we enter the intimate Studio theatre we find the acting area at the far end from the entrance, faced by rows of tiered seating. It is small, only about 3 metres wide and two metre deep, and defined by a rectangular pale grey carpet, which matches the walls of the theatre.

A plain rectangular table stands against the back wall, end on to us. It’s the same pale grey as the walls and carpet. On it are three stacks of A4 paper. Two chairs stand one each side of the table, facing us, with their backs against the back wall. They are painted a silvery grey.

At the front of the area are two microphones on white stands, one to the left and one to the right.

This simple set is used for all three scenes in the play – first, as two actors read emails at the microphones, second, as they face each other across the table, and finally, as the effects of a fast moving film are created, with a complicated sequence of sound effects, lighting, and acrobatics from the two actors, who leap on and off the table, use the microphones as props as well as sound devices, and cower on the floor. The only additions for this third scene are two fluorescent light tubes, which are waved, attached to a microphone stand, or hoisted overhead as the scene progresses.

There are two actors, a man and a woman. **Harry** is a publisher in his thirties. He is smooth and confident, with an easy twinkle in his brown eyes. Harry is medium height and balding, with pale brown skin. His head is shaved and he has a neat black beard and moustache. He’s casually dressed in a blue-grey polo shirt, grey chinos and lightweight grey trainers.

**Heather** is one of his authors. She is about the same height as Harry, and slim, her brown hair scraped back and wound into a no-nonsense knot at the back of her head. She has intense blue eyes, and initially her lips seem constantly on the edge of curving into a smile. Her pale face is free of make up, and she wears old clothes - jeans, dark grey soft shirt, and a light grey sweatshirt over the top. Like Harry, she wears simple grey trainers.

There is very little need for audio description in the course of this show. The first scene is static, as the actors read typed emails, throwing away the script as they finish each one.

The second scene has some very long pauses, and the silent interplay between the actors needs description up to a point, but the third scene is so aurally rich and tightly constructed that not only is there very little room for description, it would get in the way, so if you like, you can feel free to take off your headsets once this last scene begins and let your imagination rule.

To end these notes, here are the details of the cast and creative team.

Harry is played by Ashley Gerlach, and Heather by Charlotte Melia.

The designer is Lily Arnold, and the director is Valentina Ceschi.

 ***(CHESS-ki).***

Heather was written by Thomas Ecclestone.

And that’s the end of these pre-show notes.