**Programme Notes for Abigail’s Party**

The Set

The set immediately transports us back to the seventies. We’re in the room of our youth or an era we have only heard about. Every detail is completely correct. This is the seventies.

There is a white furry, plush-pile carpet covering the entire stage area. The wallpaper is bold cream lozenge shapes in stripes on an orange background and three lights with globular shades hang from the ceiling in the centre of the set. On the far left is a low sideboard on four short legs, with a set of drawers and two cupboards. The top of the sideboard displays a fibre-optic lamp which changes colour, several ash trays and an aspidistra in a large blue pot. Just beyond the sideboard is a brown wooden door which leads out into the hall, the front door and the lavatory. None of these rooms is visible. Beyond the door, hanging on the highly patterned wall papered wall, is a Lowry print, with lots of matchstick men and an industrial setting. In the corner of the room, behind this picture is a standard lamp with orange spots on the shade. The back wall houses a large picture window and just in front of this is a round table and four chairs with faux leather seats and backs. A silver candelabra with three upright candles stands on the table. In front of the table and chairs, dominating the centre of the stage, is the main sitting area. The seats are carefully grouped to form an intimate area for talking. To the left there’s a pouffe in dark brown leather and just behind it and slightly to the right is a tanny/orange leather curved armchair with buttoned back and crocheted cushion in brown and orange. To the right of this, centre stage, is a medium brown leather, low sofa with wooden legs and arms. The sofa has four cushions on it, two are boldly patterned in brown, orange and white, two in plain orange and brown. In front of the sofa is a gold painted coffee table with two ceramic bowls and an ornate wooden cigarette box sitting on it. Another identical curved armchair, slightly in front of the sofa, is on the far right with, a star burst metallic clock on the wall behind it and just in front and to the right of the chair is a magazine rack, complete with a copy of Cosmopolitan. Behind this set-piece of sitting room furniture, is a huge room divider, so placed that actors can pass behind it, by the passage way it forms, into the kitchen and thence to the back door. There is a large window into the kitchen displaying avocado units through the glass. The window dominates the back wall behind the room divider and has a painting of Van Gogh’s yellow chair hanging on the wall alongside it. In the nook of the back wall, at the start of the passage-way is a large, healthy rubber plant. The room divider is almost a set in itself. It is an iconic piece of seventies furniture, reaching almost to the ceiling. It has open shelves with no backs so that people passing behind it can be glimpsed as they come and go. It’s made of wood with black metallic legs and struts. Built into it is a flapped cupboard which pulls down to reveal a huge variety of liquor, including gin, vodka and brandy together with glasses. The flap then becomes a counter on which glasses and bottles can stand. To the right of this drinks cupboard is a music centre, with a turntable above and LPs in their sleeves slotted into a shelf below. Two speakers are on various shelves of the room divider which also houses a telephone in two shades of green, various pots, vases and decorative glasses as well as a small plant in a square ceramic pot. Above the shelf which holds the phone is one containing two sets of leather bound books.

**CAST and COSTUMES.**

BEVERLY is played by ROISIN GALLAGHER.

Tall and slim, with wavy brown hair, which hangs over her shoulders, she has a long oval face, with fine dark eyebrows, blue eyes, emphasised with blue eye shadow, well shaped nose, rouged cheeks and red, perfectly defined, lips. She has gold hoop earrings.

She wears a long flowing chiffon dress, patterned with large orange, brown and peach flowers, lined in peach, with long bat’s wing sleeves, open from her shoulders. Its plunging neck line and tight bodice show off her ample bust, and silver leaf necklace. Chunky silver bracelelets jangle on her arms and her nails are painted silver. She wears wedge-heeled peep-toe sandals through which her painted ping toe-nails can be seen.

Liberal with drinks, continually replenishing her own glass as well as her guests, whether they want one or not, she lights innumerable cigarettes.

She dominates her living room, perpetually on the move, her arms gesticulating in the air.

Her husband LAURENCE is played by WILL IRVINE.

A slight figure of a man, he is dressed in a grey three-piece business suit, with flared trousers, pale green shirt, brown patterned tie and brown shoes. Aged in his mid forties, he has a bald head, with sideburns and gingery hair at sides and back. His grey eyes are small, his nose is broad, and he has a neat ginger moustache.

He arrives carrying a brown, leather brief case, and moves quickly and unobtrusively.

BRIGID SHINE plays the part of ANGELA. Younger than Beverly, she has a small oval face with long dark brown hair, worn in a centre parting, and drawn back at the sides by hair slides. She has dark eyebrows and eyes, concealed by pink framed glasses, a wide mouth, with bright pink lipstick and a pointed chin.

Her knee length, A line, blue and green patterned summer dress, has a high ruched neck, with narrow vertical pink ribbon trim on the bodice, with white bobbled trim around the waist and above the frilled hem, and on the edges of the short, bell-shaped sleeves. She carries a brown and tan leather bag and wears pale brown low heeled shoes. She first appears wearing a brown suede jacket over her dress.

ANGELA’S husband, TONY, is played by CRAIG MILLER.

He is young -looking, tall and broad shouldered, with thick brown hair, parted at the side, and a neatly trimmed brown beard and moustache. His long tanned face has very dark eyebrows and eyes, a long straight nose, and full lips. His three-piece suit is a light tan colour, the jacket has wide lapels, and the trousers are flared. His shirt has a small grey and blue pattern, and his tie is blue. His socks are turquoise blue, and he wears tan loafer shoes. A man of few words, he often remains seated in an armchair with his long legs outstretched.

Played by IMOGEN SLAUGHTER, SUE, the mother of Abigail who is having a party next door, comes on her own to join the two couples. She is dressed in a grey knee length, very plain, short sleeved A-line dress, with a crochet effect pattern, and matching jacket. Her necklace is of red and brown beads, and her bracelet is also red. She holds a neat tan handbag, and wears matching tan shoes with a small heel and tan tights. She is slim, with a pale oval face, high cheek bones, blue eyes, neat nose and small mouth, and thick shoulder length red hair with a deep fringe. Sitting quietly with her knees tight together, she looks ill at ease

Abigail’s Party is written by Mike Leigh, directed by Richard Croxford, produced by the MAC and Diana Ennis is the designer.