Programme Notes – Waitress

The Audio-described performance will take place in the **Grand Opera House** on Thursday 3 March. The show lasts 2 hours and 35 minutes.

Please take your seats ten minutes before the show begins to hear these programme notes read out together with information on the opening scene. These programme notes were prepared by nisightlines. The audio describers today are Marie Abbott and Amy Stewart.

**Waitress** is a smash hit musical by the Grammy award-winning Sara Bareilles, from a book by acclaimed screenwriter Jessie Nelson and directed by Tony Award-winner Diane Paulus. It’s based on the 2007 film of the same name.

We first meet Jenna, a waitress and expert pie-maker who dreams of some happiness in her life. When a hot new doctor arrives in town, life gets complicated. With the support of her workmates Becky and Dawn, Jenna overcomes the challenges she faces and finds that laughter, love and friendship can provide the perfect recipe for happiness.

## Set

Most of the action takes place in Joe’s Pie Diner. The name is emblazoned on a large sign hanging above the stage with the words in neon lights and an arrow pointing to the entrance.

Through the diner windows there is a road and car park outside and higher up is a backdrop painted like the sky outside. The diner floor is yellow and grey tiles laid in a check pattern.

On the left is a counter for diners to sit at, with four steel bar stools that spin. Behind this is a broad serving hatch where Cal serves food out from the kitchen. There are pots and pans and a swinging door that he comes and goes through.

Above the counter is a menu board listing lots of pies and there’s a blackboard with the day’s specials.

There are booths along the back wall where diners can sit and a number of small wooden tables with Formica tops. On the left, there is a glass display cabinet with pies inside for customers to choose from.

There is a band on the stage. They are on a raised platform on the right, at the rear of the diner. There are four band members – two on guitar, one on drums and a grand piano in takes up most of the space on the band’s dais. Screens are used to hide the band and parts of the set when action moves to other locations outside the diner.

Sometimes we are in the back of the diner, where Jenna prepares pies. The lighting is different, dimmer than the bright lights of the diner. Here there are two large racks on wheels, filled with baking bowls and jars full of various ingredients. Jenna stands at a polished metal table on wheels. Pies can be stacked up and brought into the front of the diner on another wheeled rack.

Jenna and Earl’s house has wooden walls with pictures and an old barometer. There is a dresser and an old yellow and green three-seater sofa with tatty cushions and clothes discarded across the back.

Dr Pomatter’s office has a wooden door in a wall with certificates and posters. There’s a small examination table, raised quite high off the ground, so when Jenna perches on the end her feet dangle. It has a beige leatherette top and can be spun around. There are some storage cupboards and a vase of flowers.

The hospital room has one bed, two sets of screens on wheels and a trolley is wheeled on with a little crib for a baby.

**Cast**

Several of the actors play more than one role, as part of the ensemble. Most of the actors have a background in Musical Theatre, and have extensive experience of theatre, film and television work, as actors, singers and dancers.

**Jenna** is played by **Chelsea Halfpenny.** She is a lead character, one of the three waitresses in the diner. She first appears in the blue buttoned up dress, with short sleeves worn by each of the three waitress staff. The outfit has a white trim on the collar and down the edges of the dress and

 around the sleeves. Each of the waitresses wears a large name-badge, for the benefit of the customers. Jenna also wears a short white apron over her dress. Her thick, wavy dark brown hair is tied back behind her neck. Jenna wears white trainers in work.

**Dawn** another waitress, is slim and petite. The role is played by **Evelyn Hoskins**. Her light auburn hair is caught up in a pony-tail, and she wears large pink- framed glasses.Dawn also wears white trainers.

The role of **Becky,** the third waitress**,** is played by **Sandra Marvin**. She is a confident, curvaceous woman, who wears bright red lipstick and large silver hoop earrings with a narrow scarf tied round her neck.Her hair is held back off her face with a black bandana.

**Earl,** the husband of Jenna, is played by **Tamlyn Henderson.** He is tall and well built, with thick dark wavy hair, and a neat reddish beard. He wears casual clothes, blue denim shirt and brown cotton trousers.

The role of **Ogie,** a customer at the diner is played by **George Crawford.** He is young, fresh-faced, with thick neatly cut hair and with a wide smile. He is of slight build and wears a short sleeved check shirt and dark trousers.

**Dr. Pomatter,** is played by **Matt Jay-Willis.** He wears a doctor’s white coat over every day clothes- white shirt, tie and casual dark trousers.He is tall, with neatly cut dark hair.

**Cal** is manager of the diner. This role is played by **Christopher D.Hunt.**

Tall and heavily built, his short dark hair is neatly cut and swept back from a high forehead. He wears a white t-shirt top and long white apron over brown cotton trousers.

**Old Joe** is a loyal, long time customer at the diner, and this role is played by **Michael Starke**. He wears a white shirt and grey cotton suit, with a neat straw hat.

**Scarlet Gabriel** plays the part of **Nurse Norma**, who works in the surgery with Dr. Pomatter. She is tall and dressed in a cotton medical outfit of white 3/4 length jacket and dark blue trousers.

The large **Ensemble** and the **Swing** dance team are very versatile and play numerous parts, - as customers in the diner, as friends, as patients in the surgery, wedding guests and passers by.

**Ensemble**

**Monique Ashe- Palmer, Aimee Fisher, Amelia Atherton, Ben Morris, Nathaniel Landskroner, Brian Roland.**

**Dance**

**Charlie Martin** ( Dance Captain/ Swing), **Olivia Mitchell, Liam McHugh, Donal Brennan**

There is also a band of 5 musicians who play live music throughout the show.

**Music and Lyrics:** Sara Bareilles

**Director:** Diane Paulus

**Choreographer:** Lorin Latarro

Finally, the show is only made possible by the numerous other technicians and staff members who work at the Grand Opera House.