

Switzerland Pre-show Audio Introduction

Welcome to this audio introduction to Switzerland by State Theatre Company of South Australia.

The Audio described performance will be at 2.00pm on Saturday 28th October with a touch tour lasting 30 minutes starting at 1.00pm. The second audio described performance will be at 6.30pm on Tuesday 31st October with a touch tour starting at 5.30pm. The performance lasts 1hour and 30minutes without an interval. The audio description will be given by Carol Wellman Kelly and Meg Lloyd from Access 2 Arts.

Switzerland a play in three Acts, steps inside the mind of Thriller/Crime writer, Patricia Highsmith who famously penned "The Talented Mr Ripley". In this play she is a semi recluse in the Swiss alps, visited by a young man from her publishing house. A man with a mission.

There now follows descriptions of the set, characters and costumes, and a list of cast and production credits.

Stage/Set

The stage is transformed into the large living room of luxury alpine lodge generously housing collections of furniture and personal items.

The wide open plan u-shaped space is framed by two wooden beams across the top with a doorway off to the left and two doorways off to the right. The floor is covered in a surface painted to look like terracotta coloured tiles and divided into three different levels by furniture: study on the left, lounge room in the middle and dining area on the right. The actors move between levels which coincides with shifts in power dynamics.

The Grey walls decorated with a marbled stone pattern, create a heavy austere effect. Despite this, the place is intimate and comfortably furnished, including several rugs on the floor.

The lounge room is on the lowest level and dominated by an imposing grey stone fireplace in the centre of the stage. The actors can pass behind the fire place on the upper level which is alight at various times during the play. On the stone front surface hangs a pair of antique crossed duelling swords. Below this is a wide wooden mantle piece holding two short barrelled pistols on wooden plinths.

A chesterfield couch with one hand-stitched cushion on it, is in front of the fireplace to the right in the lounge room. To the left of the fireplace is an armchair with a cushion, a cream fleecy throw and a square stool covered in green velvet. A contemporary round coffee table sits between the seats and has two large volumes placed upon it.

Along the back wall behind the fireplace are book shelves made of planks

and bricks filled with books and a set of encyclopaedias. A large painted portrait of a woman dressed in red, sits on a wooden cabinet next to a record player. In this back wall on either side of the fireplace are four square windows, too high for us to see out of, but through which changing shadows and light indicate the time of day.

On our right, the dining area with a 1960s designer wooden dining table and four matching chairs, is one step higher up than the lounge area. A glass plunger coffee pot and two cups sit at one end.

On our left, the study area, also one step higher up than the lounge area, has a writing desk with an old classic black typewriter, a lamp and piles of papers on top. A high back swivel chair is tucked under the desk and a cat bowl sits by the left side of the desk on the floor.

Three prints hang on the study wall, two of women and one of a cat. Next to the desk a trestle table has numerous office items on top, including an old-fashioned dial telephone on a cradle.

Lighting is used to great effect in this play, especially an eerie blue light heralding a moonlit night and shadows of the two characters thrown onto the walls.

Switzerland contains strong language and smoking.

Characters

Patricia Highsmith, played by Sandy Gore, is a reclusive writer. She is a stocky, older woman in dark blue jeans and a white button-up shirt. Her hair is a short bob, brown and greying. She stands tall and proud, often with her hands in her pockets or gesturing emphatically to make a point. Her shoes are dark brown leather loafers. On her wrist is a simple watch and a plain silver bracelet. She peers intensely through her dark framed glasses.

In the second act, over her existing outfit she wears a small silk scarf around her neck, and a black vest over her shirt. The black vest has panels over the chest, with yellow, red and black stripes.

In the third act, she wears a red vest over her white shirt, and a long silver pendant necklace.

Edward Ridgeway, played by Matt Crook, is a tall, skinny man in a brown trench-coat. Sent from the publishing company to appeal to Patricia Highsmith, Edward appears harried and unconfident. His hair is light brown and lank, parted in the middle. He wears a white, collared shirt under a blue-grey knitted jumper. His pants are beige and ironed with a crease, his shoes light brown leather brogues. He wears steel-rimmed

glasses, which he fidgets with, and a brown leather satchel hangs from his shoulder.

In the second act, he dons a grey suit, with a red tie and red pocket kerchief. He no longer wears glasses, and stands with more confidence.

In the third act, he is simply wears his white collared shirt, with the top buttons undone and the sleeves rolled up, and his beige slacks. A silk cravat adorns his neck. No longer lank, his hair is slicked straight back.

Production Credits

Cast

Sandy Gore - Patricia Highsmith

Matt Crook - Edward Ridgeway

Production

Playwright - Joanna Murray-Smith

Director - Nescha Jelk

Set & Costume designer - Alsia Patterson

Lighting Designer - Nigel Levings

Composer - Jason Sweeney

Access Information

Switzerland is performed in the Dunstan Playhouse in the Adelaide Festival Centre. Access is through the Dunstan Playhouse foyer via the riverbank concourse.

If you would like to use the audio description service, please make sure you request it when booking tickets through Bass. Please inform the Bass operator if you have any specific access requirements.

The Dunstan Playhouse is guide dog friendly and there are accessible toilets in the venue. One is close to the Space foyer and another is between Door 1 and the stairs to the Art space.

When planning your trip to the venue, please note that the Adelaide Festival Centre is under construction. The recommended Dunstan Playhouse and Space Theatre drop off zone is at the Northern end of Riverbank Footbridge on War Memorial Drive. Walk across the footbridge to Dunstan Playhouse. There is also a drop off area and two accessible car spaces on lower Festival Drive, accessible from the west via Montefiore road. For all other disability access enquiries please contact Patron Services: access@adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au or call 08 8216 8600

This completes this audio introduction for *Switzerland*. It has been produced by Carol Wellman Kelly, Meg Lloyd and Jackie Wurm. For more information on audio described performances please contact Jody at

Access2Arts using the email address audio.describer@access2arts.org.au
or speak to the audio describer at the theatre.