

Background on play: I don't belong here. By Joelle Rabu, Writer

Why a play about Dementia?

Despite my personal intrigue and foundational knowledge from studies in social psychology, I found that delving into the creation of a play about dementia released a new realm of understanding, empathy and curiosity.

Drawing from a tapestry of personal encounters with dementia, I embarked on the journey of shaping a play that delves deep into the complexities of this debilitating disease. I wanted to communicate, through the tempered cadence of music and the poetry of song, a testament to the human spirits who are navigating through the shadows of forgetfulness and to present it from all perspectives: the patient, the family, the caregivers.

Inspired by the onset of dementia in my father, the poignant conversations with my oldest friend afflicted by Alzheimer's and the profound experiences of my son working at a residence for seniors with dementia, during the pandemic, I sought to weave together a musical narrative that captures the essence of loss, resilience, humour, courage, confusion and strength. At times, these conditions can make you laugh, at times they can make you weep. Dementia doesn't discriminate in its companions; much like deep sorrow and overwhelming joy, it envelops everyone, inviting them to join its intricate dance and prompting introspection that challenges preconceptions about oneself and others.

The choice for the title was based on the most heard sentence in dementia residences "*I don't belong here*".

Data shows global dementia cases are set to triple, with 153 million living with dementia by 2050.

"We do not remember days, we remember moments." Italian poet Cesare Pavese

Joelle Rabu