



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

"I Don't Belong Here – *Stories and Songs at the Edge of Forgetting*" is a poignant and powerfully human stage production that explores life inside a dementia care facility through a minimalist theatrical lens, adaptable to both small and larger stages. Told through a carefully composed sequence of 15 vignettes and supported by song, the production brings to life 22 distinct characters: memory-care residents navigating shifting realities and blurred recollections; visiting family members grappling with guilt, grief, and the complex emotions of anticipated loss; and compassionate care aides who bear daily witness to the slow unraveling of memory, working to preserve dignity, spark laughter, and nurture connection.

This intimate three-person ensemble piece balances emotional gravity with flashes of absurdity and unexpected levity, illuminating the often surreal and surprisingly tender moments that surface at the edge of forgetting.

But don't let the subject matter fool you - this is not a bleak tale. The script deftly weaves vulnerability with humor, sorrow with song, and reflection with resilience, ultimately offering a deeply affirming meditation on love, loss, and the enduring power of human connection.

Written by and featuring Joëlle Rabu and Kelly Wyatt

Directed by Kymme Patrick

Music Director/Arranger - Nico Rhodes

The Music: The bold and aching melodies of the late Harry Nilsson provide a haunting backdrop for this performance exposé which delves into the lonely existence of fading memories, puzzling uncertainty, and at times, droll perceptions of people whose lives once reflected brilliance, talent, and vitality. Harry Nilsson is still considered the most underrated singer-songwriter of the post-war era. His knowledge of the form and structure of almost every genre of popular music was encyclopaedic as were his intense observations on the absurdities, fragilities, and wonders of life. The choice to feature his beautiful, uncluttered music was clear: it transcends generations and styles and candidly resonates with everyday life.

- *Inside the Making of the Play* <https://youtu.be/LLqe69n3Y6k?feature=shared>
- *Scenes from the play – in progress* - <https://youtu.be/yiqwW9B0bvc?feature=shared>

The Performers: Joëlle's chameleon-like portrayals of close to a dozen of the 22 different characters, combined with her compelling vocal interpretations are buoyed by co-author Kelly Wyatt's colourful supporting characters and harmonious vocals, as the script carefully weaves the essential threads of constant, compassion, care, and connections. The scenes are supported by the brilliance of music director/pianist/supporting actor Nico Rhodes, whose insightful musical arrangements render homage to Nilsson's timeless songs.

Ultimately, the play invites audiences to re-evaluate their perceptions of memory loss and mental health, and to reflect on the profound importance of empathy and compassion in the care of others - whether family, community, or ourselves. While often associated with aging, Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia are increasingly affecting younger people, reminding us that these stories are not just about the elderly - they are about all of us.

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

This play contains mature subject matter. Not recommended for young audiences

Why a play about Dementia?

A word from the co-writer and creator Joëlle Rabu: "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 resident, the family, the care aids.

Inspired by the onset of dementia in my father, the poignant conversations with one of my oldest friends afflicted by Alzheimer's and the profound experiences recounted by my son who worked at a residence for people with dementia, during the pandemic, I sought to weave together a musical narrative that captures the essence of loss, resilience, humour, courage, confusion, outrage and strength. At times, these conditions make you laugh, at times they 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."

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



Joelle Rabu, Writer & Actor

www.joellerabu.com

Booking: Margot Holmes, Caline Artists International, A Partner in the Maverick Cooperative.

T. 250-729-5951 margot@caline.com www.caline.com