**BRIEF ENCOUNTER**

**Practical Information about the show**

* Brief Encounter is 2 hours 20 minutes long from start to finish with an interval.
* First half (Act 1) is 51 minutes long. Second half (Act 2)  is 1 hour and 7 minutes.

The interval is 20 minutes.

* There is speaking, singing and dancing in this show. There is a live band who play many instruments - a piano, electric guitar, a double bass, drums and percussion. The drummer is inside a small room that is part of the train station cafe. This is behind the piano player.
* Often, people clap after the songs. You are welcome to join in with the clapping if you would like, but you don’t have to.
* There are smoke effects that are used twice in the show. These happen at the very end of the first half, and near the end of the second half. The lights on the floor will light up just beforehand so you will know when it is going to happen.
* Our show is set in a train station. At certain times the theatre will shake/vibrate to imitate a train passing by. This is an effect created using speakers underneath some of the seats.

**The characters of Brief Encounter**

* Many actors play multiple characters. They wear different costumes for each character. Sometimes, an actor will be in the same scene as different characters.
* Here is a list of who is playing more than one character:
* Fred, Albert and Stephen Lynn are played by one actor
* Stanley and Bill the airman are played by one actor
* Bobbie, Johnnie the airman, and band leader are played by one actor
* Myrtle, the restaurant waitress, and Mary are all played by one actor
* Beryl, Hermione and Dolly are all played by one actor

* At other times, actors may all play waiters and waitresses or boatmen, but these parts do not speak any lines. They will sing.

**The Story**

**Act 1**

* Brief Encounter is a love story about two people who meet on a train platform.
* It is set in a train station cafe. Myrtle Baggot is the cafe owner and Beryl Waters is the cafe waitress.
* At the beginning of the play we also meet Albert, who is the station’s ticket inspector. Albert is in love with Myrtle.
* Stanley, who works at the train station selling chocolate and cakes, is in love with Beryl.
* Laura is a housewife who arrives in the cafe with something in her eye. Alec, a doctor, helps Laura and gets the dust out of her eye. They both leave the cafe to catch their trains.
* Laura arrives home to her husband Fred and young son Bobbie. They are a happy family.
* Over the next few weeks Laura and Alec keep bumping into each other. First, they meet in the street, then later they end up in the same restaurant for lunch. Eventually, they learn that they both enjoy the cinema and decide to go and see a film together.
* After their cinema trip Laura and Alec agree to meet up again at the train station the following Thursday.
* Laura goes home to her family to learn that her son, Bobbie, has been in an accident while she has been out.
* At the train station cafe Myrtle has decided she cannot be in a relationship with Albert. Stanley and Beryl are starting to form a relationship.
* In the last scene of act one Albert is trying to convince Myrtle to go on a date with him, but she is unsure. We see Laura waiting for Alec, and Stanley looking around the station for Beryl.
* Two airmen come into the cafe looking for a drink. They become nasty and aggressive when Myrtle won’t give them alcohol as it is out of hours. Beryl calls for Albert, who sees the airmen off.  Myrtle realises she likes Albert and agrees to go on a date with him.
* Laura is waiting in the train station cafe for Alec. He is late. Laura is about to leave the station when Alec runs in. He asks her to meet him at the same place and time the following week. She agrees.

**Act 2**

* Laura and Alec are sailing on a boating lake together. The company all sing a song about sailing away and make the image of a blossom tree using branches.

Laura and Alec like the blossom. They are not very good at rowing the boat.  Alec accidentally falls into the lake as he reaches for the blossom. Laura tries to reach him but she ends up in the lake too. Soaking wet, they need to remove their clothes.

* Laura is alarmed as she and Alec have feelings for one another. She asks Alec to stop their friendship but Alec declares his love for her and they kiss.
* Laura goes home to Fred. She is very distracted thinking about Alec.
* The next Thursday Laura and Alec meet in a hotel. A spectacular dance number takes place. This is in Laura’s imagination. In reality, they are interrupted by two of Laura’s snooty friends who are shocked to see her with an unknown man.

Laura is humiliated and runs away from the hotel.

* Back at the train station cafe Albert is getting dressed. Myrtle and Alec sing about their love for each other. Albert gets down on one knee and proposes marriage to Myrtle. She accepts.
* Laura has been walking around in the rain. She eventually goes to find Alec. He is at a flat owned by his friend Stephen Lynn. Alec and Laura kiss and they begin to be intimate with each other. They are interrupted by Stephen. Horrified, Laura runs away, dropping her scarf. Stephen enters the flat, he is ill and decided not to stay out for the evening. He notices Laura’s scarf and suggests that Alec has been seeing female patients at the flat. He asks Alec for his key. Alec gives him the key and leaves.
* At the train station cafe Stanley has asked Beryl to stay late with him after work so that they can spend some time together and he can walk her home. She agrees.
* Laura enters the cafe very late at night and asks for a drink. Alec follows after her and tries to apologise for Stephen coming home unexpectedly. They have an argument, and Laura says she wants to break off their relationship. Alec tells her that he is moving very far away to South Africa.They agree to meet up one last time, at the station, the following week.
* Stanley picks Beryl up from the cafe when it closes and we see them leave together.
* The next week (Thursday) Albert has got permission from the train station manager for him and Myrtle to be married. Stanley enters in a fluster, saying that Beryl’s mother has become very sick and she must go at once. Beryl and Stanley leave together.
* Laura and Alec sit in the train station cafe with not much to say to each other. They are heartbroken at having to say goodbye. Just when they think they have more time together, Laura’s friend Dolly comes in dramatically. Dolly tells Laura a lot of gossip. It is time for Alec to catch his train. Laura and Alec have to finally say goodbye to each other for the last time.
* Overcome with despair, Laura runs out onto the train tracks. At the last moment she decides to move out of the way of the train. She arrives back at home with Fred, who thanks her for returning to him.
* Laura plays the piano and sings a song to reflect on what she has learned about life and love. All the actors enter and sing together about how love is just one part of life, and how there are many ways to love each other.
* The actors will bow and people will clap. Some people may cheer.  You are welcome to join in with the clapping if you would like, but you don’t have to.
* The actors will leave the stage and the band will continue to play. You can leave at this point or stay in the theatre until the band has finished.
* When the band have finished playing some people may clap and cheer. You are welcome to join in with the clapping if you would like, but you don’t have to.

Thank you.