

Writers' Notes

BY BRIAN HILL & NEIL BARTRAM



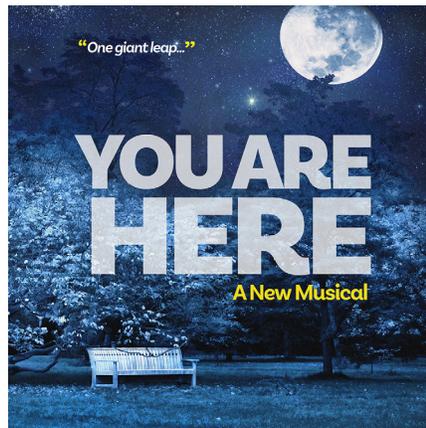
You Are Here is the story of a woman who, late(-ish) in life, takes a small step away from her sheltered suburban home and makes a giant leap into a world as unfamiliar to her as the surface of the moon.

When we first set out to write this piece, we had just completed our run of *The Theory of Relativity* at Goodspeed, which was a view through the eyes of 20-somethings about to step into the unfamiliar world of adulthood. After writing for that incredibly talented company of young actors, we thought it would be an exciting challenge to tackle something that viewed the world from the other end of the spectrum, from a 50-something point of view.

The theatrical canon isn't exactly crowded with leading roles for brilliant actresses of a certain age. For every Dolly or Rose there are dozens of Laureys, Julies, Marias, Millies, Cosettes, Elphabas, Anastasias, Elsas, Anna...the list is endless. So, we were intrigued by the possibilities presented to us by tapping into the talents of an established actress who could bring a depth of life and work experience to this piece. We were also interested in tossing her into a time period that would test anyone's limits, let alone our central character Diana, who has decades of established patterns and ingrained behaviors.

1969 was a time of great social upheaval. The women's movement was gaining its footing, race-related riots were frequent and volatile, the Vietnam War was raging on,

and men were walking on the moon. It was also a time of great change in the music world. It was the moment when parents and children stopped listening to the same music. Hair had premiered on Broadway just one year earlier, and the Beatles had made a splash on *The Ed Sullivan Show* only a few years before that. The surface serenity of the previous twenty years was cracking. But many were watching this through the safe filter of a television screen. We wondered what this would have been like for our grandmothers who had gone through one, maybe two, world wars and were finally able to settle into the social stillness of the 1950s only to have the cart upset once again.



This combination of a veteran performer playing a specific yet familiar character living in a turbulent time feels particularly fertile. Add to the mix our wonderful director Sarna Lapine and Goodspeed's Terris Theatre (our home for both *The Story of My Life* and *The Theory of Relativity*) and we feel we're in the perfect place to really dig into this story. We plan to spend our time here developing the

piece to see if Diana's journey into the wildly unsettled world of 1969 will resonate with audiences who are experiencing the equally unsettled world of 2018. The similarities between this year and that are constantly surprising us, and we're likely to find more as we dive in deeper with our extraordinary cast and creative team.

In hindsight, it seems as though *You Are Here* has evolved into a companion piece to *The Theory of Relativity*—each looking at the changing world from opposite ends of the age spectrum.