

# The Neighbours

## Tarragon Theatre

### Fact Sheet

This fact sheet has key information about the show and the theatre that you may find useful and that may help you to fully enjoy your time with us.

### **Key Information**

Location:	Tarragon Theatre Extraspace
Address:	30 Bridgman Ave Toronto ON M5R 1X3
Onstage:	February 24th - March 15th Tues - Sat at 7:30pm and Sat - Sun at 2:00pm
Previews:	Tue February 24th, Wed February 25th at 7:30
Mask Required Performance:	Sat February 28th at 2:00pm
Preshow Tarragon Talk:	Tue March 3rd 6:00pm - 7:00pm
Postshow Talk Backs:	Sun March 1st, Thu March 5th, Sun March 8th, Thu March 12th, Sun March 15th
Student Matinées:	Wed March 4th, Wed March 11th at 1:00pm
Performance Length:	approximately 90 minutes
Intermission:	There is no Intermission for this show.
Quiet Room:	There is no Quiet Room for this show.
Late Entry:	Is not permitted for this show (Details on page 3).
Reentry:	Is permitted for this show (Details on page 3).
House Program:	<a href="#">click for House Program</a>
Venue Guide:	<a href="#">click for Venue Guide</a>
Audience Resource Guide:	<a href="#">click for Audience Resource Guide</a>

## **General Things to Know**

- The performance will be at Tarragon Theatre in the Extraspace.
- Evening performances start at 7:30pm. Afternoon performances start at 2:00pm. Student Matinéés start at 1:00pm.
- Digital tickets are emailed to you when you book them and will be emailed again on the morning of the performance.
- If you arranged to have your ticket printed for pickup, please arrive 30 minutes before the show starts to get it from the Box Office.
- The lobby has benches to sit on and make yourself comfortable on.
- The Bar/Concessions is open for all performances except Student Matinéés.
- Food cannot be eaten in the Extraspace, but can be eaten in the Lobby. Drinks are allowed in the Extraspace. Hot drinks must have a lid.
- Tarragon Theatre only requires masking for certain performances. However, you are welcome to wear one in and around the venue at any time. Please note that some staff may wear masks, but it is not required for staff to be masked.
- The women's washroom is on the ground floor.
- The men's washroom, all gender washroom, and single-stall accessible washroom are on the second floor.
- The second floor can be reached by stairs or elevator.
- This show has assigned seating.
- You can find your seat assignment on your digital or printed ticket.
- The Extraspace will open 30 minutes before the performances, at this time the ushers will start scanning tickets so people can go in and take their seats.

- An Usher will tell you where to find your seat when they scan your ticket.
- Your mobile phone should be set to silent during the performance.
- The Extraspace is air conditioned and may be cold when you first enter. It will quickly heat up once the show begins.
- The lights over the audience will be lowered and it will be dark. Then the performance will start.
- If you need to leave during the performance for any reason, you can. When an usher notices you trying to leave, they will help you exit to the lobby using the doors you entered from.
- Reentry is permitted for *The Neighbours*. If you wish to return to the Extraspace and the performance, please talk to the Box Office staff and they will let you back in at an appropriate moment. They may direct you to a different seat depending on how full the Extraspace is and where your original seat was.
- Late Entry is not permitted for *The Neighbours*. If you arrive after the performance has already started you will not be allowed into the theatre. Box Office staff can help you reschedule your tickets for a future performance, or refund your tickets.

## **About The Neighbours**

From Governor General's Award winner, Nicolas Billon (*Butcher, Iceland*), *The Neighbours* examines how good people can be complicit in acts of cruelty.

Simon and Denise reside in a modest house on a quiet street, their life blissfully low-key and unassuming. But when it comes to light that their next-door neighbour has been hiding a sinister secret, it forces the couple to re-examine the past, leading the audience to a surprising conclusion that asks hard questions about the bonds that unite us.

## **About the Performance**

Here are some things about this show you may find interesting or helpful as an audience member:

- This is the North American premier of *The Neighbours*. The play was first performed in Tokyo, Japan in 2019.
- The characters acknowledge the presence of the audience and talk directly to them throughout the play. This is called Direct Address.
- The story of the neighbour in the play is inspired by several events that happened in real life. See the Audience Resources Guide [link on page one (1)] for more information.

## **Performer and Character Information**

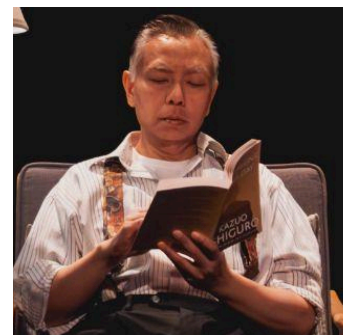
Performer: Tony Nappo  
Character: Simon Armstrong  
Character Info: Simon is a white man in his 60s. He uses a cane and hearing aids. He is the husband of Denise. Their daughter Sophie is in university.



Performer: Ordena Stephens-Thompson  
Character: Denise Armstrong  
Character Info: Denise is a Black woman in her 50s. She is the wife of Simon. Their daughter Sophie is in university.



Performer: Richard Tse  
Character: Au Yeung Wei  
Character Info: Wei is a Chinese man in his 70s. He lives on the same street as Denise and Simon.



Production Photos by Jae Yang

## **Content Advisory**

Please note that the Fact Sheet contains spoilers from this point on.

- *The Neighbours* deals with and presents content which may be difficult for some, including: kidnapping, sexual assault of a minor (discussed, not described or depicted), suicide, police violence, alcohol consumption, racism, the death penalty, implicit homophobia/misogyny, and physical violence.
- Guns are not depicted on stage but are discussed.
- Physical/Sexual violence is not depicted on stage but is discussed.
- Alcohol is drunk several times during the performance.
- The word 'fucking' is used during the performance.
- The word 'bitch' is used during the performance.
- The word 'hookers' is used in a derogatory manner once during the performance.
- A character describes a hypothetical situation in which they would kill an infant once during the performance.

## **Sensory Advisory**

- There are no strobe lights during the performance.
- There are no sudden loud sounds during the performance.
- The characters talk directly to the audience throughout the play. However, the play is not participatory and there is no expectation or desire for you to talk back to them.

## Set Description and Photo

The floor of the stage is painted to look like a map of the street where the characters live.

On the right half of the stage is Simon and Denise's living room. In the middle is a cushioned armchair with a wooden side table to the right. On the other side of the armchair is a wooden chair with a thin cushion covering the seat. In front of the armchair is a cushioned ottoman.

The left side of the stage is Wei's living room. In the middle is an armchair with a floor lamp to its left. Also on the left of the armchair, in front of the lamp, is a wooden side table. On the table are a book and a coaster.

Hanging above the stage in a line from one side to the other are the broken up pieces of a model house.



Set Design by Kelly Wolf

## **Plot Summary**

- Simon walks on stage while the audience is still entering the theatre. He sits in his armchair with an open can of beer and falls asleep while the audience finishes taking their seats.
- A Tarragon employee gives a preshow speech, then the performance begins.
- Wei enters. He sits on a chair and reads a book. He continues to do various domestic activities for the entire performance.
- Denise enters and wakes Simon up.
- They talk about their daughter, Sophie, and the barbecue they just hosted attended by some of their neighbours.
- At the barbecue, everyone wanted to talk about a recent article about a tragedy that happened next door to them.
- Simon and Denise recall a time when the neighbourhood tried to have speed bumps put on the street to make it safer.
- Denise starts talking about a day several months ago when she saw police cars in front of the neighbour's house, but several times is interrupted by comments from Simon.
- Denise finishes the story and explains that their next door neighbour was discovered to have kidnapped a ten (10) year old girl named Kayla and kept her caged in his basement for the last twelve (12) years until she finally escaped.
- It is mentioned that Kayla gave birth to a daughter during captivity.
- Simon explains that the kidnapper was killed by the police when they went to arrest him.
- Denise and Simon start talking about the media attention the street started getting.

- Simon tells a story about a neighbour asking him to build a fence in her backyard. He also explains why he prefers Robertson screws.
- They then start talking about Wei and tell a story from Sophie's childhood in which she hurt herself biking and Wei helped her get back home.
- Simon and Denise start talking about when they were called back to the police station.
- Simon explains that when detectives first came to their home to get their statements, he accidentally lied. He told them he had never been in the kidnapper's house, forgetting that he once built him a railing before Kayla had even gone missing.
- Denise and Simon go on a tangent debating what breed of dog the kidnapper always said he wanted to have.
- Denise reads a section of the recent article, which is an interview with Kayla detailing her experience.
- Denise remembers that they had gotten distracted from telling the story of going to the police station.
- They explain that the police wanted to tell them some things the investigation found which related to them:
  - Kayla's captor would frequently collect donations of clothing and toys for what he claimed was charity.
  - Sophie donated generously to it every year.
  - Since they were close in age, Kayla was given Sophie's old clothes and toys, many of which had Sophie's name on them.
  - Because of this, when Kalay gave birth to her daughter she named her Sophie.
- Simon tells the story of when he first started teaching Sophie to swim.
- Denise mentions going to visit Sophie after they told her what the police told them.

- Simon recalls that the kidnapper would often talk about his Uncle Ned who was always getting him into trouble and asking him to do things he didn't want to do.
- Denise references a part of Kayla's interview where she mentions that Uncle Ned is what her captor called his penis.
- They talk about putting up 'missing' posters after Kayla first disappeared. Simon notes that he even saw one on the kidnapper's fridge when he was over building the railing.
- Denise realizes that means Simon was there after Kayla's abduction, not before like they previously thought.
- Simon becomes upset and angry at this realization so Denise tells him to go for a walk.
- Simon exits.
- Denise talks about parts of Kayla's interview where she talks about her kidnapper being 'a loving father' to their child.
- Denise tells the audience that if she were in Kayla's position she would have chosen to kill the infant once it was born.
- Denise then recalls for the audience an argument she once had with Sophie where her daughter expressed that Denise's marriage to Simon was its own kind of cage.
- Denise looks at a photograph from the article of Kayla's interview. She gets a magnifying glass to look at it closer. She becomes shocked and upset by what she sees.
- Simon returns.
- Denise says nothing to him and exits.
- Simon tells the audience about the last time something upset him this much: On a trip to India with Denise, a man and his family began talking to them in a language they didn't speak, seemingly begging.

- Denise returns in the middle of the story. She does not answer Simon's questions about what happened, and tells him to finish the India story.
- Simon finishes explaining that when they retreated back to the hotel, the staff there drove the man away and started physically assaulting him.
- Denise argues with Simon about her own interpretation of what happened in that story.
- Denise confronts Simon with the photo from the article showing the cage Kayla was kept in. It is screwed to the wall with Robertson screws.
- Simon admits that he installed the cage after the railing. He explains that Kayla's kidnapper told him he wanted to get into dog breeding, but didn't have a license so he had to do it in secret and asked Simon not to tell anyone about the cage.
- Denise demands that Simon tell all this to Sophie when she arrives home.
- Simon begs her not to ask him to do that.
- Denise puts on a coat and exits.
- She goes over to Wei's house and he invites her in.
- Denise asks Wei if they can talk about Kayla's kidnapping. He agrees and goes to make them tea.
- Simon hears a knock at the door and Sophie calls from off stage asking to be let in.
- Simon stays sitting in his chair as Sophie keeps knocking.

**THE END**

## **Contact Information:**

If you have any questions or concerns about this Fact Sheet or planning a visit to Tarragon Theatre please reach out.

We love feedback on our accessible programming, if there is anything you would like to share please send us an email or give us a call.

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