**Katie Roche**

**by Teresa Deevy**

**Programme notes for Audio Described Performance**

**Abbey Theatre, 23rd September 2017, 2pm**

Welcome to the introductory notes for **Katie Roche** by Teresa Deevy. The play is directed by Caroline Byrne. The dramaturg is Morna Regan. Set and Costume Design is by Joanna Scotcher. The Original Composer is Ray Harman, and Lighting Design is by Paul Keogan. The Movement Director is Eddie Kay.

The performance begins at 2pm, and lasts for one hour and forty-five minutes, without an interval. Please note that this performance includes strobe lighting.

**ABOUT THE PLAY**

**Katie Roche** is a great woman. She is destined for big things and is determined to overcome any obstacle she meets. After marrying a respected man, Katie believes her ambitions will be realised. However, her journey will not be a smooth one. Katie must confront those who prevent her from being an influential and expressive person. Will her determined spirit save her? Or has her fate already been decided?

Directed by Caroline Byrne, this fresh and invigorating production is your chance to rediscover Teresa Deevy’s timeless play.

**ABOUT THE SET**

The set is stark and simple. Walls on either side of the stage rise up beyond the lighting rigs. Made of large wooden panels, they are painted in brown and black, creating a dark, marbled effect. On each side, there is a door with a round brass handle nearest the edge of the stage, while at the back in the left and right corners there are gaps in the wall reaching the full height of the stage. Overhead, this dark panelling juts in above the stage at about a metres depth to give the sense of a high ceiling.

At the back is a wall of glass divided into panels by a black frame, like a giant sash window. At the beginning of the show, it is raised up. The lower edge of this glass wall is cut on the diagonal, like the blade of a guillotine. Beyond this glass wall is a narrow walkway that spans the width of the stage, with the back wall depicted a dark, cloudy sky. This skyscape is sometimes obscured by lowering a black felt screen between it and the glass wall.

The floor of the stage is covered entirely by a fine, powdery brown soil. It is heaped smoothly across a central platform which takes up most of the stage, with a lower narrow walkway on all four sides where the soil is much deeper. Here, the actors’ feet can sink in as far as their ankles.

When the audience arrives, the stage is in darkness. In the very centre is a small house, like a doll’s house, barely half a metre high. It is a Georgian farm house with two sash windows on the ground and first floors, with columns and a portico around the central front door. The house is dimly lit by stage lights, with a bright light inside streaming out of its tiny windows and door. A small bedding plant sits in the soil just outside the house.

The lighting in the play is highly stylised – switching quickly from focussed spotlights to harsh white light filling the whole space. It catches faces of characters just before they come into the action of the play, guiding our attention around the barren space.

**ABOUT THE CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES**

The first person we meet is **Katie Roche** played by Caoilfhionn Dunne. Katie is a willowy woman in her twenties, nimble on her feet and full of physical energy. Her face thin with prominent cheekbones and gleeful fox-like eyes. Her wispy auburn hair falls to just below her shoulders. When we are first introduced to Katie she is wearing a simple, somewhat dirty short-sleeved mustard coloured dress in a flannel fabric, it is stained by the brown earth on which she walks barefoot. Katie has an incredibly expressive face - her inquisitive eyes constantly search for answers to her inner musings. Her broad smile is impish.

**Stanislaus Gregg** played by Sean Campion is a man with white hair, well kept and in his late fifties or early sixties perhaps. He wears a dark three-piece suit with a white shirt and dark tie with a silver tie pin. The silver chain of a pocket watch hangs from his waistcoat pocket, on his feet are polished black brogues. When we first meet him he wears a camel coloured trench coat and carries a black trilby hat and small cream-coloured suitcase. His face is handsome, serious, sometimes pensive. His movements are contained.

**Reuben** played by Donal O'Kelly is of similar age to Stanislaus. His clothes are old and frayed but practical. He wears dark trousers tucked into buttoned-up boots, on his torso a brown leather jacket with large collars which looks like it's been handmade, over which he wears a full-length dark green waterproof coat. In his hand he carries a wooden walking stick. Reuben, although sturdy and gruff looking with his wild unkempt white hair, walks with a limp.

**Michael Maguire** played by Kevin Creedom is of similar age to Katie. He also walks barefoot through the earth. His well-worn brown trousers are rolled up to his calves. His jumper is an array of browns, cream and green. He wears an oversized brown coat that hangs loosely. Michael’s handsome, youthful face is framed by curly brown hair. His cheeky smile is further accentuated by his rosy cheeks.

His friend **Jo Mahony** played by Dylan Kennedy wears trousers rolled up to just below the knee and a grey sweater. He has short brown hair and a youthful face, a little less animated than his friends. Joe also walks barefoot.

Amelia played by Siobhan **McSweeney** is a rotund woman with a handsome face. Her dark brown hair neatly is pinned up and accentuates her gentle features. She wears a black outfit of long pleated skirt which rests at her ankles to reveal dark green socks. Her outfit is completed by a black fitted jacket with a silver pin on the left lapel. On her feet she wears flat black court shoes.

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That concludes the introductory notes for this production of **Katie Roche**. They were prepared by Máirín Harte and Bríd Ní Ghruagáin, who will be describing the performance. Audio description at the Abbey Theatre is provided by Arts and Disability Ireland with support from The Arts Council.

Thank you. Go raibh maith agaibh.

