

= Love , Loss , and What I Wore =

Love , Loss , and What I Wore is a play written by Nora and Delia Ephron based on the 1995 book of the same name by Ilene Beckerman . It is organized as a series of monologues and uses a rotating cast of five principal women . The subject matter of the monologues includes women 's relationships and wardrobes and at times the interaction of the two , using the female wardrobe as a time capsule of a woman 's life .

The show was initially presented as a part of the 2008 summer series at Guild Hall in East Hampton , New York , and then as a benefit series at the DR2 Theatre in New York in early 2009 . Later the same year , the show was produced Off @-@ Broadway as an ongoing commercial theatrical production at the Westside Theatre in New York , where it continues to run as the second @-@ longest running show in the theatre 's history . The production and its cast received positive critical attention . The production won the 2010 Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience as well as the 2010 Broadway.com Audience Award for Favorite New Off @-@ Broadway Play .

The show has been produced on six continents and more than eight countries . It began a national tour in the United States in September 2011 in Chicago . It is making an encore performance in Paris in January 2012 .

= = Background and development = =

Nora Ephron was a writer , director and producer best known for writing the screenplays of romantic comedy films . She received three Academy Award nominations for Original Screenplay , for Silkwood (1983) , When Harry Met Sally ... (1989) and Sleepless in Seattle (1993) . She had also written five best @-@ selling books , and she wrote the 2002 play Imaginary Friends , which fictionalizes the antagonistic relationship between Lillian Hellman and Mary McCarthy . Ephron sometimes co @-@ authored screenplays with her sister , writer @-@ producer Delia Ephron , including You 've Got Mail (1998) , Hanging Up (2000) and Bewitched (2005) .

Nora Ephron wrote the introduction to Beckerman 's eponymous 1995 book , which she immediately thought had dramatic possibilities . She identified with the stories in Love , Loss , and What I Wore because the book " is not about fashion ; it is about what clothes really are to us , those moments when we are constantly trying to find our identity through them " . Soon after its publication , Ephron gave the book to eight of her friends for Christmas . She became interested in writing her own version of the book . Once she decided to adapt Love , Loss , and What I Wore into a play , she and her sister emailed 100 women for stories .

The show 's monologues are sourced largely from Beckerman 's book . The Ephrons wove together a collection of stories adapted from the book with recollections of friends , including Rosie O 'Donnell . One of the monologues that became a highlight of the original production was based on Nora Ephron 's 2006 best @-@ seller I Feel Bad About My Neck .

= = Plot = =

A character called Gingy acts as the narrator . The show opens with her sketching various parts of her wardrobe that stir the most poignant memories . She weaves her life story among the other tales , describing her three marriages , " motherhood and the death of a child , each turning point marked by a particular item of clothing " . Her life is represented beginning with experiences in a Brownies uniform and extending through her full life .

In addition to Gingy , one character serves as the vixen , another plays a vulnerable gang member from Chicago , a third portrays a brave cancer patient , and the last serves as a mature woman pierced by vivid memories . One of these characters , named Heather , chooses conservative " think " shoes over high heels in her youth , but at a later stage in life shows a preference for high heels . The gang member likes insignias that are prominent on sweaters and their creator . Among the 28 stories , other notable tales include one about the influence of Madonna (with discourse including " Any American woman under 40 who says she 's never dressed as Madonna is either lying or Amish

. ") ; one about dressing room anxiety (a story revolving around the concept that " I 'm an 8 . I 've always been an 8 ") ; and one about your mother 's tastes in clothes (" I don 't understand , you could look so good if you tried ") . Three of the characters sometimes work as a trio and all characters have monologues .

The Los Angeles Times spent a full paragraph on a vignette about two high school prom dresses . The junior prom dress was a conservative powder blue gown to wear with a nerdy date . The senior prom dress was a sexy black mini dress that was befitting of her more desirable date . The dresses presented an identity crisis to one character : " Here 's the thing ? I 've never really known for sure which of those two people I am ? the girl who almost doesn 't get asked to the prom at all or the girl who gets to go with the really cute guy . Every time I thought I knew which one I was , I turned out to be the other . Which is one reason I think I got married , to , like , end the confusion . "

The New York Times presented three stories that it felt were particularly emotional : the first was about a woman who removed miniskirts from her college wardrobe after being raped , but continued wearing her favorite boots ; another was about wedding attire anxieties ; and the third was about the choice of adorning a newly reconstructed breast with a tattoo . In addition to these three stories , the same article also noted a humorous ode to black as a part of a wardrobe or in fact as a wardrobe , when one character notes : " Sometimes I buy something that isn 't black , and I put it on and I am so sorry " .

Other stories include recollections about the dress purchased for the date with a guy who subsequently married someone else ; the foibles of spandex bras that result in a look known as the monoboob ; issues involving toe cleavage ; the Juicy Couture tracksuit that is a prominent staple of California wardrobes ; wardrobe choice on the wrong day of the month ; and the story about an incarcerated lover and the strategic hole in a certain pair of pants .

= = Production history = =

= = = Initial benefit productions = = =

Initially , Love , Loss , and What I Wore was presented on August 2 , 2008 at the Bridgehampton Community House as a benefit for the renovation of the John Drew Theatre / Guild Hall in East Hampton , New York . The production , directed by Karen Lynn Carpenter , starred Linda Lavin , Karyn Quackenbush , Leslie Kritzer , Kathy Najimy , and Sara Chase . Then Daryl Roth produced the play in a Monday night series of benefit performances for Dress for Success , which is a charity organization that serves low @-@ income women by enabling them to afford work clothing and providing job support , again under the direction of Karen Lynn Carpenter . The set of seven Monday night readings were held from February 2 ? March 9 , 2009 at the Off @-@ off @-@ Broadway DR2 Theatre . The first seven performances had seven different casts . The first cast at DR2 Theatre was Marian Seldes , Joy Behar , Katie Finneran , Heather Burns and Lucy DeVito . Other participants in the original readings included Tyne Daly (who created the narrator character , Gingy , for the New York Production) , Rosie O 'Donnell , Samantha Bee , Rondi Reed , America Ferrera , Debi Mazar , Marlo Thomas , Blythe Danner , Christine Lahti , Parker Posey , Julie White , Kelly Bishop , Sarah Jones , Veanne Cox and Kristen Wiig .

= = = Off @-@ Broadway = = =

The play was then performed Off @-@ Broadway , beginning on September 21 , 2009 , with 3 consecutive runs each lasting 4 weeks and having an entirely new 5 @-@ person cast . The production officially opened on October 1 , 2009 at the Westside Theatre . The cast originally included Daly , O 'Donnell , Bee , Katie Finneran and Natasha Lyonne . The rotating cast also included Mary Birdsong , Kristin Chenoweth , Lucy DeVito , Jane Lynch , Rhea Perlman , Mary Louise Wilson and Rita Wilson . Chenoweth was replaced in the last of the initial three 4 @-@ week runs by Finneran . The production benefited Dress for Success . Karen Lynn Carpenter directed ,

with scenic design by Jo Winiarski , costume design by Jessica Jahn , lighting design by Jeff Croiter , sound design by Walter Trarbach and make @-@ up design by Maria Verel . Daryl Roth was the producer and Alexander Fraser was the co @-@ producer . The production was staged with the five women seated , all dressed in black , at the lip of the stage , consulting scripts on music stands as needed . Ilene Beckerman 's original drawings were presented on placards , hung on clothes hangers on a clothes rack , stage right of the Gingy actress .

The production continued at the Westside Theatre with an open @-@ ended commercial run with the casting strategy of rotating 4 @-@ week casts because it enabled the production to pursue higher caliber actors . Nora Ephron stated at one question and answer session : " We keep re @-@ casting it so we can get really great actresses to come for four weeks . It is really hard to get really good people to work Off @-@ Broadway for six months because it does not pay much , but you can get them for four weeks . " Other well @-@ known actresses who have performed in the Off @-@ Broadway production include the following : Carol Kane , Debra Monk , Janeane Garofalo , Fran Drescher , Melissa Joan Hart , Brooke Shields , Victoria Clark , Tovah Feldshuh , Loretta Swit , Mary Testa , Nikki Blonsky , Donna McKecknie , B. Smith and Marla Maples . As of October 2011 , it was the second @-@ longest running show in the history of Westside Theatre .

The show won the 2010 Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience as well as the 2010 Broadway.com Audience Award for Favorite New Off @-@ Broadway Play . Daly and O 'Donnell were nominated for 2010 Drama League Awards for Distinguished Performance . Tara Rubin , Merri Sugarman , Eric Woodall , and Luran Schtuzel were nominated for the 2010 Casting Society of America Artios Awards for NY Off @-@ Broadway Comedy / Musical Excellence in Casting . The show 's 1,000th performance played on March 15 , 2012 . The production closed on March 25 , 2012 after 1 @, @ 013 performances . 32 rotating casts and 120 actresses participated in the production over its entire run . The final cast was Sierra Boggess , Joyce Van Patten , Karyn Quackenbush , Erica Watson and Ally Walker .

= = = US National Tour = = =

Carpenter directed a US national tour that began in Chicago in September 2011 with an engagement at the Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place . Roth produced the Chicago production . The Chicago cast included Nora Dunn , Felicia Fields , Roni Geva , Katie O 'Brien and Barbara Robertson as Gingy . Although the show was originally scheduled to run through October 23 , 2011 , it was extended to December 4 before opening and later extended again to January 1 , 2012 . The post @-@ Chicago national tour performances were set to be headlined by the December 7 ? 30 Off @-@ Broadway cast that included Daisy Eagan , Sonia Manzano and Loretta Swit .

= = = Other productions = = =

The play was next produced at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles . The Geffen production ran from May 12 , 2010 to November 19 , 2010 , breaking box office records . The Geffen casts also rotated . Well @-@ known actresses there included Kane , DeVito , Rhea Perlman , Nancy Travis , Daly , Bonnie Franklin , Meredith Baxter , Florence Henderson , Marissa Jaret Winokur , María Conchita Alonso , Christine Lahti , Lauren Hutton , Teri Garr , Mimi Rogers and Sally Struthers . Most of the initial Geffen cast had performed in the Off @-@ Broadway run . At the Geffen Playhouse , the show was directed by Jenny Sullivan . Kane played the role of Gingy when it debuted in Los Angeles .

By the end of 2010 , the play had been staged in New York , Los Angeles , Toronto and Buenos Aires , and numerous other productions around the world have run since then . Carpenter directed the international production that has run in many countries . The Toronto production ran from July 16 to October 2 , 2010 at the Panasonic Theater . The play was presented in Sydney from January 3 ? 30 , 2011 at the Sydney Opera House with an opening cast of Natalie Bassingthwaight , Judi Farr , Amanda Muggleton , Magda Szubanski and Mirrah Foulkes , under the direction of Wayne

Harrison , with some minor modifications to localize some of the Americanisms . In South Africa , the show was performed from April 8 ? June 12 , 2011 at Studio Theatre , Montecasino near Johannesburg and at the Theatre on the Bay in Cape Town from June 15 to July 2 under the direction of Moira Blumenthal . It made its Asian premiere in Manila from July 14 ? 17 , 2011 at RCBC Plaza with a cast that included Bituin Escalante ; the production was directed by Michael Williams and Azanza @-@ Dy .

= = Themes = =

The show , which has a running time of about 1 hour and 30 minutes , is composed of 28 different stories that seek to illuminate the female identity . Generally composed of comic stories , the show often addresses sad , bitter or sentimental issues . Beckerman 's memoir takes as its departure the clothing worn at pivotal times of her life and serves as the foundation for the show . The Ephrons augmented this with a collection of similarly themed stories presented by four additional characters .

The show is staged in what is described as an " unapologetically low @-@ tech " manner . The play uses clothing as a metaphor for women 's experiences . In addition to clothing , accessories such as a purse are important , and Charles Isherwood of The New York Times notes that when Ms. Ephron views a purse , " In the chaos of its interior she sees a symbol of herself , as in a dark mirror smudged with old lipstick and smelling of spilled perfume . " The show consists of five women 's monologues about wardrobe malfunctions , puberty 's relationship with personal wardrobe , first date outfits , lucky underwear , prom dresses , favorite boots , irreplaceable shirts , the detested , disorganized purse , and experiences in the dressing room . The recollections about the clothing prompt the women 's memories about their mothers , boyfriends , husbands , ex @-@ husbands , sisters and grandchildren .

= = Critical reaction = =

The original benefit series was described as intimate and starry by Broadway.com. Isherwood described the Off @-@ Broadway play as a " show about matters of the heart and matters of the closet " in The New York Times . In Variety , Marilyn Stasio called it " a bittersweet meditation on the joys and tribulations of women 's lives , reflected through the prism of their clothes " . In Bloomberg News , the critics commented that the playwrights were " literary alchemists expert at mixing the sentimental and the satirical and turning out something poignant " and noted that the clothing and accessories dominated the memories while " The men are extras . " The Los Angeles Times described the show as a cross between The Vagina Monologues and What Not to Wear . Helen Shaw , writing for Time Out , also described the Ephrons ' style as similar to The Vagina Monologues ' Eve Ensler . Jay Reiner of The Hollywood Reporter also notes that from the work " a tapestry of the collective female psyche emerges that is tender and insightful without being sentimental " . TheaterMania.com , Inc. describes the show as " So insightful and entertaining is this survey of sartorial preoccupations and the deeper questions underlying them that multiple viewings would be advisable . "

A highlight derived from Ephron 's book and that was consistently praised was the O 'Donnell portrayal of the role of the purse in the scene " I Hate My Purse ! " . While Reiner says , " There 's an amusing ' I hate my purse ' segment " , Isherwood notes " The smartest and shapeliest piece of writing in the show is that acerbic essay by Nora Ephron about her troublesome relationship with purses ... Entrusted to Ms. O 'Donnell , who does it proud , the essay is a defiant denunciation of the tyranny of the pocketbook , a ' j 'accuse ' for the era of the ' it ' bag . " Shaw described O 'Donnell 's purse performance as an aria , and Jerry Tallmer of The Villager called it " one of the pillars of the show " . This scene is sometimes performed alone outside of the theatre .

Isherwood also notes that this serves a female audience . " If there are chick flicks and chick lit ? derogatory though some might find those terms to be ? Love , Loss , and What I Wore should clearly be classified as chick legit ... for the women who can share deeply in the particulars of experience dissected and discussed . " The Los Angeles Times notes the light nature of the subject

matter : " ... isn 't out to reclaim female sexuality from centuries of oppression ; it wittily celebrates wardrobe malfunctions ... " According to Reiner , the show points out that " ... if there is one thing the females of the species have in common , it 's a deep and abiding love / hate relationship with their wardrobe ... this wonderfully witty show illustrates , what one wears to the party is sometimes more memorable than the party itself . " He also notes that the entire performance has meaning as it is " jam @-@ packed and resonant " throughout . Shaw notes that " The cozy humor strikes many women 's funny bones with a mighty whack , perhaps because it reaffirms so perfectly their own preoccupations . "

Certain monologues on subjects such as weight , status bags and high heels did not achieve their full potential according to The Los Angeles Times reviewer . Time Out magazine describes certain lines as oversalted , but forgivably so .

= = = Major awards and nominations = = =

The original Off @-@ Broadway production earned several recognitions :

At the November 2009 Casting Society of America Artios Awards , the Ephrons earned the New York Big Apple Award .