

BILL BRYSON'S

Notes from a **SMALL ISLAND**

By Tim Whitnall

Directed by Christine Rayment



NODA
For every stage

16-24 JAN
2026, 7.45PM

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Thank you for joining us for Bill Bryson's Notes From A Small Island.

With 60 scenes and over 40 characters, this play is certainly a challenge to stage and has been a real team effort. From starting a demanding set build in early December - thank you Bob, Mervyn and Emma for your enthusiasm and building brilliance – and coping with the disruption of the festive break, it's hard to believe how much we have achieved in such a short time.

Our actors are all creating multiple characters and have all brought lovely individual details to each one. Even the briefest of appearances through a window or gossiping in a doorway have been thought about with care – we may be using every costume rail in the building and there are hats and accessories on every surface backstage!

I must single out Marlon, playing Bill Bryson, who has poured hours of commitment into this challenging role. Bill narrates and brings us into the action of each scene and you'll see he is rarely off the stage.

Our technical team of Fred, Craig, David and Andrew have cleverly created scenes that allow us to keep the action moving while giving visual cues as to where we are. They, too, have spent hours to bring this play to life and I'm hugely grateful as always for their commitment, creativity and expertise.

The support of a brilliant backstage crew is also vital for a production where actors are stepping off stage as one person and returning half a page later as somebody else. A huge thank you to Dave, Amy and Sarah for their support and to Jan who has spent hours behind the scenes sourcing and making the many props you'll see.

The music provides further clues to where we are in time as we hop back to the 70s, through the 80s and into the early 90s. There's something for everybody and I hope you all hear something you like!

I do hope you enjoy tonight's performance.

Christine

CAST

BILL BRYSON | Marlon Gill
CYNTHIA AND OTHERS | Camilla Alexander-White
THE COLONEL AND OTHERS | Alistair Brown
VINCE OF THE WIRE ROOM AND OTHERS | Adam Butcher
MYFANWY AND OTHERS | Karina Bygate
NEWSPAPER SELLER AND OTHERS | Sophie Nickerson
YVONNE BUNN AND OTHERS | Tricia O'Toole



SYNOPSIS

It's 1973, and a young Bill Bryson arrives in Dover ready to conquer the UK. As he grapples with the eccentric rules of the Bluebird Guest House and encounters Kia Ora, streaky bacon, lemon curd and scotch eggs, he knows it's where he's meant to be.

So begins his love affair with the UK, meeting the love of his life and eventually making this small island his home. Join Bill as he travels the length and breadth of the UK from Weston-Super-Mare to Milton Keynes, Blaenau Ffestiniog to Glasgow and everywhere in between, meeting a hilarious cast of characters along the way.

Bill Bryson's memoir *Notes from a Small Island* spent three years in the Sunday Times bestseller list, sold over 3 million copies and was voted the book that best represents the UK.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	- Christine Rayment
Lighting & sound design	- Fred Rayment
Projection and video	- Craig Fisher & Andrew Hayward
Lighting & sound operation	- David Witherall
Technical crew	- Richard Foster, Liam Whiteside & Aidan Brown
Set Build	- Marlon Gill, Mervyn Wilson, Bob Adams Emma Dickson & Fred Rayment
Backstage crew	- Dave Simmonds, Sarah Cunnane & Amy Malcolm
Publicity Team	- Sarah Cunnane & Christine Rayment
Props	- Jan Drury
Costumes	- Rosemary O'Toole & cast
Rehearsal prompt	- Rosemary O'Toole

With thanks to the Dunstable Rep committee, front of house & bar teams, and everyone who has supported this production

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