

A PLACE CALLED HAPPINESS

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY DEBS GATENBY



“Debs Gatenby pulls off the difficult trick of reducing you to tears of both hilarity and sadness” - Time Out

Commissioned by Contact



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Debs went on a journey to find happiness... and found something else. Travelling to the remote Scottish Island of Eigg and Cape Cod, Provincetown, she began an experiment to discover the secrets of 'How to be Happy'. Debs found herself feeling more disconnected as she lost herself in these wild landscapes. Documenting her experiences on film and sound, Debs tells us what she found; procrastination, Body Weather and being photographed by Andy Warhol's Studio 54 photographer. In this comedic and uplifting sequel to her critically acclaimed solo show Hi, Anxiety Debs shares the highs and lows of discovering happiness from a place within.

DEBS GATENBY

Debs Gatenby is a comedian, writer, performer and actress.

Over last 20 years, Debs performed for Queer Up North, Festival No. 6, Glasgay, Manchester Laughing Cows Comedy Festival and was the first performer on stage at Duckie – Royal Vauxhall Tavern. Debs performed with Christopher Green as part of his Working Men's Club show at Latitude Festival.

In 2013, Debs wrote and developed a solo show that was funded by the Arts Council and supported by Contact Theatre Manchester, Slunglow in Leeds and The Albany in London. The show successfully toured the UK in 2014, including as part of Anxiety UK festival in London and Homotopia in Liverpool. It had three sold out nights at the Contact Theatre.

Hi Anxiety: "All three performances in Manchester sold out, and the audience feedback was over-whelming positive. Demand for the show was such that we could have programmed another few nights had we the space." Queer Contact Producer.

Debs also shares her work at conferences and colleges and is currently developing work for radio. She is also touring her work internationally in New York and the Afterglow Festival in Provincetown Cape Cod MA.

THE TEAM

Producer: Jayne Compton (Switchflicker Productions)

Dramaturg: Mark Whitelaw (Olivier Award-winning director, Ursula Martinez & Duckie)

Director: Ashley Knowles

Technical Support: Lisa Mattocks (Quarantine & The Future)

Press Coverage: Rob Martin (Time Out).

Image Credit: Lee Baxter

MARKETING

Video trailer: <https://youtu.be/xgSq3v02HWg>

Full length show: <http://tinyurl.com/hzyd24m>

Website: <http://debsgatenby.co.uk>

Twitter: @debsgatenby

Target audiences:

- Contemporary theatre goers
- Comedy audiences
- Queer audience
- Mental health support users
- Well being groups
- People going through midlife process (although entertaining for all ages over 14)

Key words, when articulating the work:

Happiness, comedic, uplifting, emotionally engaging, fabulous, seriously funny, vulnerability, story-telling, delightful, discovery, journey, enlightenment.

Foyer feedback: Set up a Wendy House for people to interact with the content of the show and share audience feedback in an engaging way.

Merchandise: "I got off the sofa" t-shirts & coasters available

Creative Feedback: Wendy House available for people to interact with the content of the show and share audience feedback in an engaging way.

PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS

Soundtrack: invite audiences to submit songs which make them happy for the bar/ foyer soundtrack during the evening.

Venue installation 'Ambient Celebration' available to set up in venue as a show teaser. Debs refers to Ambient Celebration at the end of the show as she ended her year of searching for Happiness in charge of this hilarious department at Marks & Spencer, working as a Christmas Temp. She made a "bit of art work" to represent this experience. It could be installed in the foyer prior to the shows arrival at the venue as a quirky piece of interest.

Pop up yoga class: Comedy yoga session able to take place in foyer before the performance.

WORKSHOP

Creating Autobiographical Work.

From storytelling to starting to create a solo show: how to find your voice through your story. A 3 hour workshop for anyone and everyone interested in telling their story.

Capacity 4-12 persons - age 16+)

Fee negotiable.

"Thank you so much for the lovely workshop this evening. Everyone really opened up and shared, it was really useful for us and the group". Keisha Thompson Producer
Contact Young Company Contact Theatre March 2016.

PRESS COVERAGE

'DELIGHTFUL STORYTELLING... FABULOUS PYHSICAL PERFORMER'



- Canal St Online

Review here - <http://www.canal-st.co.uk/Box-office/canal-st-reviews/a-place-like-happiness-by-debs-gatenby>

'In both her writing and performance, Debs Gatenby pulls of the difficult trick of reducing you to tears of both hilarity and sadness, sometimes within a few lines. Her profoundly personal insights reveal a truth which is universal, resonating with anyone who has ever looked in a mirror and wondered what the hell is going on inside that person. Consequently, her life-laid-bare monologues, whilst telling us much about her, reveal something about us, too.'

- Rob Martin, Time Out

"Debs Gatenby's show A Place Called Happiness helps us through the rambling, non-linear journey that is your typical human life."

- Nicola Mostyn, Big Issue North:

<http://debsgatenby.co.uk/2016/02/02/being-human-show-previewed-in-big-issue-north/>

'AMAZING SHOW, FUNNIEST THING I'VE SEEN IN AGES'

- Audience member

Support for 'Hi, Anxiety':

"It was an absolutely beautiful show, so very connecting, so human. It's an emotional cracker." Simon Casson, Duckie.

"Deb's work stands out as something very different. There is a naked vulnerability that she achieves which very few people can on stage." Rachel McCall, Canada Water

"We programmed Debs previous show HI ANXIETY here at the HUB in 2014, which acquired great feedback from our audiences when we programmed it as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, and we are excited to be able support with her next venture, which we believe will form an appealing and popular offer in our on-going programme of touring work." Porl Cooper, Slunglow.

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK: A PLACE CALLED HAPPINESS

“Debs makes you rethink whether happiness is really the best thing there is. And then makes you realize oh its feelings that are valuable. With cleverness, warmth and wit (her off the cuff second thoughts are worth many visits to the same show) you’ll leave very moved – that is, with a big knot of emotions, including happiness. And admittedly some sadness because its hard to leave Debs’ orbit once you’re in it.”

- Dr Monica Pearl

“They’re not tights, they’re outdoor activity trousers”, one of my favourite lines from last nights show...and there were many. You were a bit good Debs Gatenby”

- Audience Member

“Will Debs ever believe she’s brilliant? This show says she is. “ Kate O Donnell

“Had such a fabulous night and not laughed that much in ages nice one.”

- Audience Member

TWEETS ABOUT THE SHOW

@NicolaMostyn: “@debsgatenby amazing show last night at contact. Funniest thing I've seen in ages. Well done Debs, that show needs to go on the road.”

@ciaratansey. “Just seen @debsgatenby and it is filled me with all the feels. What a fantastic woman.”

@TheRachelMorris “@debsgatenby awesome show. Touching and hilarious. @ContactMcr ”

@AshleeCox_ “@debsgatenby 'A place called Happiness' made me laugh, made me cry, made me feel hopeful.

PRODUCTION

Duration: 70 mins, no interval. Post-show discussion available.

Space: Theatre or more intimate space with technical facilities. End on seating.

Age appropriate: Over 14s

Technical

· Full technical rider and lighting plot available.

Company

· 1 x performer

Set-up and rehearsal time:

· Get-in time: 10AM onwards. Load-in and set-up: 2 hours. Get-out time: 1 hour.

Sound

- 1 x Professional PA system.

AV

- Projections onto the back wall of the stage space.
- 1 x Projector & VGA to control position
- Debs tours with a MacBook Pro, which is set up on stage to control visuals.

Booking

Contact: Jayne Compton **Email:** Jayne@switchflicker.co.uk **Mob:** 07803 601 885

