**Big Little Sister Post Enhance Touch Tour Program Notes**

**Please note this document may contain spoilers.**

Note that directions (e.g. left and right) in this text are given from the perspective of the audience.

**INTRO:**

Welcome to the touch tour of Big Little Sister. I’m Holly Gifford, the writer of this one-woman show.

I am a 5’9 white woman with wavy dyed blonde hair. I primarily play myself throughout the play though at times I impersonate and become different characters all marked by different accents. These include a Social Care worker, an American met on holidays, a Welsh owner of a college and an artist.

At times I will also speak in a British RP accent which will indicate that I am audio describing projected images/ text or hand held slides. Often I break the fourth wall, either by speaking directly to the audience or at times to the tech box with lines like ‘can we move on to the next scene now?’

**Set and Props**

We are in a black box theatre. The stage is bare and is surrounded on 3 sides by raked seating.

There is a door that leads directly into the auditorium, the one that you entered from. At one point during the action of the play I also use this door to enter and exit.

I primarily perform in the centre of the stage facing directly out to the seats in the middle. There is one microphone on a microphone stand, and that is positioned just at the end of the front row of seats on the left hand seating bank*.*

There is also a glass of water containing multiple slices of lemon and this is placed on the floor.

On my person as Holly, I carry an AA Duracell battery this is produced when we hear my brother’s communication aid say the word ‘battery’. At this point I go to hand it to a member of the audience but ultimately pull it back and waggle my finger at them.

**Projection Images and Text**

On the back wall of the theatre, projection is used frequently throughout the play. Sometimes the projection is text giving context to the year or location that the scene takes place in (also audio described by me), sometimes video and sometimes symbols which correlate to BSL *(British Sign Language)*. When I impersonate different characters there are also symbols projected to represent these people.

The projection is generally black and when text is projected this is white against a black background.

During the play you will at points hear the voices of my parents. Whenever these are heard there are videos projected simultaneously. These videos feature my head and shoulders, and I am in costume—dressed up as my mum in one video and my dad in another. In these videos I am in what looks like an oval frame with a blue mottled background similar to what one might find in an 80’s style yearbook behind me. The rest of the projection is in black.

**Mum:** As my mum I wear a short brown haired curly wig and a pair of thin-rimmed spectacles. I wear a navy and white striped collared sweater.

**Dad:** As my dad I wear a pair of thick framed, large glasses. I wear a grey straight-haired wig and a thick curly grey beard. Dad’s clothing is not on view as the beard covers the shoulders and neckline. But for context it is a graphic King Tubby t shirt.

One of these videos is of me as myself. Like the videos of my parents, it includes just my head and shoulders. You can’t see my costume, but it is the same as the one that I wear at the beginning of the play. The only time this plays is just before the Welsh scene. Me and my mum (video version) are watching a college promotional video and commenting on it.

**Programming scene:** Shortly after dancing to the song ‘Undercover Martyn’ by two door cinema club I am interrupted by my mum and asked to ‘add more for him to say’. At this point I sit in the middle of the stage with my laptop and begin to type. I am programming and what I am programming on my laptop is also projected. Simultaneously you will hear my brother’s communication aid begin to speak according to what I have created. I will audio describe the images that correlate in an RP accent.

**Patrick Interview Video:** Toward the end of the play a video is projected which features me visiting my family home in Bristol and interviewing my brother Patrick who we meet for the first time Patrick who is wearing one of my dad’s graphic t-shirts that reads ‘the scientist, dub master’ —this time not via a communication aid.

The video features me holding a hand held camera similar to a GoPro. The style is slightly fish eye in effect, and the shot switches between selfie views of me and what I/the camera sees: a blue front door, Patrick answering the door etc. The video is at points broken up with title cards which amusingly read and narrate the action. Captions such as ‘Quite a few minutes later’ and ‘it proved very difficult to convince Patrick to speak to me’ are used.

**Costume**

I begin the play in a White blouse with long sleeves that widen towards the bottom. The narrow sleeve cuffs form ties which are tied loosely at the writs. Over the blouse, I’m wearing a dark, fitted, denim waistcoat; and denim skirt. The waistcoat is buttoned up and matches the dark denim rah-rah style skirt. The skirt is adorned with a black and a cream satin ribbon, tied in a bow, which is worn at the hip. The waistcoat has a matching red paisley print bow at the neckline. I’m also wearing a pair of white lace up boxing boots.

There is one costume change in the play. This is the only time I leave the stage and occurs when I say **‘**I want to speak to him’**.** I come back into the auditorium after the interview video has played wearing a black trousers suit with a white shirt underneath. The boxing boots are gone and instead I wear white socks. I will also be carrying a red fan which has the word ’Barcelona’ painted on it. This is the same costume that I was wearing in the video, the effect being that I have just returned from the interview. This fan is also in the video you’ll be able to hear me open it just before I start interviewing Patrick.

**Key Visuals**

The play begins with me entering the stage and standing directly behind the microphone. As I speak into the microphone a series of images are projected onto the back wall of the space. These images correlate to BSL *(British Sign Language)* and detail the birth of first, one child and then ‘six years later’ (according to text projection), another child.

A final image shows a figure pointing to themselves. The audience learn that this is me - Holly, our protagonist. As well as speaking I will also be making sounds which relate to and represent the different images being projected. For example….

**- ‘1999’, Holly’s birth:** I move to the centre of the stage and assume a position which is half foetal and half renaissance portrait with my legs and arms slightly raised but my bottom on the floor.

**-‘2002 or maybe 2003’, The poo story:** At this point I move to a seated position in the middle of the stage with my legs directly in front of me and facing the middle seating bank. It is like I am sitting in a bath. When I say ‘this is my final win over you’, I tense up my face to the point of it going red. We hear the pre-recorded voices of my parents and their videos are projected. They are shocked and this shows on their faces.

**-‘2009’, Lemons:** I pull a slice of lemon out from the glass of water that I am drinking. This is offered to an audience member but ultimately not given to them as I tempts but then pull it away. In panic, I stuff this slice of lemon into my own mouth at the sound of my mother’s voice. I turn to the audience and grin revealing a great big lemon slice smile.

**Dancing:** I dance on stage at two different points in the play. The first is when we hear Two Door Cinema Club’s ‘Undercover Martyn’ playing overhead. I am interrupted by the sound of my mother’s voice, and which point I begin to work on my laptop in the middle of the floor. There is a visual gag when you hear the sound of claps in this song. This is where I instead slap my breasts.

More dancing happens later in the play to the song ‘Get Ready’ by Congo Natty. This time I am standing behind the microphone which I have moved to centre stage. I am hosting a house party and sometimes speak into the mic impersonating different party guests.

**The Social Care Worker:** When impersonating this character I stand awkwardly on stage with a smile plastered on my face—one that doesn’t quite reach my eyes!

**-‘2009’ Historical village in Wales-** During this scene you will hear my feet against the floor at first the pace will be slower but it will pick up getting quicker and quicker indicating that I am running.

**- 2016 Amsterdam Airport:** I sit in the middle of the stage furiously unlacing my boxing boots at the request of airport staff.

**The American:** I stand side profile to the audience and assume an exaggerated, slightly hunched over position as if crooning. I then turn to face the audience and speak in an American accent. At the same time, an American Flag is projected on the wall behind.

**Welsh Colleague:** When you hear me speak in a Welsh accent with the welcome to ‘idyllic isolated rural Wales’, I am also holding a series of flash cards. These flash cards are A4 in size and each shows a graphic and sometimes a piece of text. These display the hidden sub-text to what the Welsh woman is saying. For example when the lady says ‘Independence building’ the flash card reads instead ‘Unpaid Labour’. These flash cards will be audio described by me in an RP accent.

**Artist:** For this character I begin the scene amongst the audience and start with a slow clap. My voice for this character is very similar to my own. You’ll know this character is talking once you hear this clapping. Behind me theatre masks of tragedy and comedy are projected.

**Argument with brother’s communication aid:** During this scene I begin to shrink slowly toward the back of the stage as my brother’s reasoning begins to get the better of me.

**-‘2020’:** I speak about my move to London and also home life in Bristol. As I list different technological devices, I point in random directions, physicalising their presence in the space: a TV, a radio, a communication device etc. This is to give a sense of the feeling of overwhelm. I point up to symbolise my toilet and straight ahead to indicate a corridor at which point I turn in the space as I have ‘bumped’ into a social care worker.

**Patrick’s song:** When we hear Patrick’s song play overhead, I sit with my back to the audience listening. My knees are bent slightly in front of me.

That is the end of the program notes.