EXTRACT

love
and other
non-fatal injuries

a collection of six short plays
by
Alex Broun

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The plays

3.
somewhere between the sky and the sea

18.
Saturday Night Newtown Sunday Morning Enmore

28.
Cate Blanchett wants to be my friend on Facebook

42.
Missing Katerina

54.
The Kiss

64.
The Kill

Cast size

love and other non fatal injuries can be performed by a cast ranging from just four (2 male, 2 female) right up to 18 (10 male, 8 female)

Playwright's note:

Plays may be performed in any order, either included or omitted at the director or producers discretion. Settings and place names may also be altered where desired to localise productions.

somewhere between the sky and the sea

a short play

by

Alex Broun

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Phone: + 61 408 268 043
Email: info@alexbroun.online

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Cast

RAMON

STEPHANIE

MADELEINE

Setting

A city

Synopsis

Ramon de Guardo is a young Portuguese composer living in a large city. He has written a violin concerto, the perfect violin concerto. He knows because it came to him in a dream. And there is only one person to play his perfect concerto. The world's greatest violinist - Stephanie Lythe. But then he meets Madeleine. A romance - with violins, set between the sky and the sea, that stretches across the globe

Somewhere between the sky and the sea

WE HEAR A VIOLIN CONCERTO. SPOTLIGHT.

RAMON: It starts with a composition.
A violin concerto to be exact.
It came to me one evening – in a dream.
I am not joking – I dream the whole thing.
Every beat, every note.
Then I write it out free hand, like Mozart – minus the billiard table – and like Mozart, I don't need to change a note.
It comes out perfect.
That's how things come out when you dream them.
Perfect.
And there was only one person to play my perfect concerto.
The perfect musician – Miss Stephanie Lythe.

LIGHTS UP ON **STEPHANIE**, FROZEN LIKE A STATUE.

RAMON: Now you are thinking he's crazy.
How is he going to get Stephanie Lythe to play his music?
The greatest violinist in the world, not to mention the most beautiful.
She who stands for all that is magical, she who soars above us all – like the sky.
Deep azure, pure, unattainable.
That gasping beauty we all reach for but we will never ever touch.
She who also happens to be playing at the Opera House the evening after I dream my concerto.
Stephanie's concerto.
It came to me in a dream, so my dream must play it.
It is fate, my destiny.
Her destiny.
I am sounding like a stalker and that is exactly how the Concert Hall security staff treat me when I turn up at the stage door wanting to talk to Stephanie.
They kick me out – hard.

THE CONCERTO IS SUDDENLY CUT OFF.
LIGHTS DOWN ON **STEPHANIE**.

RAMON: So I go to a bar nearby to drown my sorrows, still clutching my concerto. There is a very bad jazz band.
I can not even afford a glass of wine.
My dream has become a nightmare.

MUSIC. LIGHTS CHANGE TO SUGGEST JAZZ BAR.

RAMON: Then miracle number two – Stephanie walks in.

STEPHANIE ENTERS, WITH VIOLIN CASE, TALKING TO PEOPLE. SHE SITS AT A TABLE.

RAMON: At first I can't believe it.
I just watch her for awhile.
She is not as beautiful as on her poster – not perfect - but in a way that makes her more beautiful.
Maybe she is not like the sky after all.
Maybe she is attainable.
Maybe I can soar with her.
She is with some other musicians.
Her "backing band".
She clutches her violin case like it is a needy child.
That gives me hope.
We are the same.
She needs music too, like me.
She clutches it, clings to it, craves that certain magic.
It gives me courage to go after.
To attain the unattainable.

RAMON GOES OVER TO **STEPHANIE**. **STEPHANIE** IS LAUGHING.

RAMON: My name is Ramon. I have written you a concerto. You must play it.

STEPHANIE IS A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK.

STEPHANIE: (TO SOMEONE) No Peter. It's okay. He looks harmless. (TO **RAMON**) Did you come to the concert?

RAMON: No. I could not afford a ticket. I am a poor composer.

STEPHANIE: Hence the concerto.

RAMON: (THRUSTING IT FORWARD) You must play it.

STEPHANIE: Now now Ramon. I don't take strange compositions from men in bars.

BEAT.

RAMON: I am sorry. I will leave you to your evening.

STEPHANIE: Not until they've at least had a drink.

STEPHANIE POURS HIM A GLASS. **RAMON** SITS.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) So I – Ramon de Guardo – sit down with Stephanie Lythe, the greatest violinist in the world – and drink.
I float like a bird in the blue blue sky.
But careful, not too close to the sun.
She asks me about my story.
(TO **STEPHANIE**) I am from Portugal.

STEPHANIE: A Portuguese composer?

RAMON: We have beautiful composers. Escobar's Requiem, Gaspar Fernandez, Sara Carvalho.

STEPHANIE: Ramon. I am teasing. I have played with Sara in Milan. *Magnifico*. And what are you doing here?

RAMON: Everybody in this city is from somewhere else. I came to study at the conservatorium. I forgot to go home.

STEPHANIE: Or did somebody make you forget?

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) Is she flirting with me?
Is the greatest living violinist flirting with this poor composer?
Does the sky bend to kiss this sun?

STEPHANIE: We have to go back to the hotel now. Early flight. So I will kiss you goodnight Ramon de Guardo, Portuguese composer.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) Then she kissed me.

STEPHANIE KISSES **RAMON** ON THE LIPS.

RAMON: On the lips. And left.

STEPHANIE EXITS.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) I am so shocked I don't even notice she has left my composition.
Then another miracle.
She comes back.

STEPHANIE: (RETURNING) Almost forgot.

STEPHANIE PICKS UP THE COMPOSITION.

RAMON: My email is on the cover.
STEPHANIE: So I can invite you to the premiere.

STEPHANIE EXITS AGAIN.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) And she is gone.
Now I wait for her email.
And wait.
And wait.
A week goes by, a month, six.
The sky was unattainable after all.
My composition sits on my kitchen table.
Lonely, silent, unborn.
I decide to give it life.
A friend at the conservatorium gets some musicians together and they play it for me.
Just in a studio.
A private performance.

THE VIOLIN CONCERTO RETURNS.

RAMON: The music seems light, insubstantial, not as I imagined it.
Is it in my notes or in the playing?
Can I only hear Stephanie playing it?
But someone is impressed.

MADELEINE ENTERS.

MADELEINE: I'm Madeleine, with three e's. I liked your music.

RAMON: *Gracias.*

MADELEINE: Don't thank me. I didn't do anything. You are a beautiful composer.

RAMON: I am?

MADELEINE: Wouldn't say it if I didn't think it. What else have you written?

RAMON: Some.

MADELEINE: Can I hear them?

RAMON: I don't have recordings.

MADELEINE: Then I'll come over and look at the scores.

RAMON: Okay.
BEAT.

MADELEINE: So this is your cue.

RAMON: My …

MADELEINE: To ask me around to dinner to look at your scores.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) She is very direct.
(TO **MADELEINE**) I am not a good cook.

MADELEINE: Then I'll bring something. You like Indian?

RAMON: So Maddy comes around for dinner.

LIGHTS CHANGE. THEY SIT AT A TABLE.

RAMON: Maddy is short for Madeleine and is a good name for her.
She is mad – but in such a good way.

MADELEINE: Ouchy Mama. This vindaloo is hot.

RAMON: She is like the sea.
Quiet and still one moment.

MADELEINE: Your music made me fill warm. In here.

RAMON: Raging and wild the next.

MADELEINE: (A WILD LAUGH) And then the string breaks and I fell off my chair, landed on my big fat bum.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) I look into her eyes and now I see a different blue.
A different magic.
Dark, powerful, alive.
She is not like the sky at all.
She is with me – in my kitchen.
On my level.
I can touch her, swim with her, be with her.
I can hold her in my arms.
(TO MADELEINE) I would like to kiss you now – Maddy with three e's.

MADELEINE: I should very much be liking that.

RAMON KISSES HER.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) Two weeks later she moves in.
And my little boat tosses on this glorious sea.

RAMON: (CONT) Sometimes the wind is gentle and cool and the sailing smooth and joyful.
Other times the wind is hot and fierce and I cling on as we smash bow first into the waves.

MADELEINE: I know you're the artistic one in this relationship but do you think at some point you could actually contribute to the rent.

RAMON: She is lying when she says that.
I pay my share.
Most weeks.
She plays the cello.
Beautifully.
But after she moves in with me she plays less and less.
She says she doesn't need to play anymore.
I don't understand this.
She talks about leaving the conservatorium, getting something solid.
She says something about "Nursing".
(TO **MADELEINE**) But how can you give up your music? It is part of you, your soul, your heart.

MADELEINE: If we're going to survive one of us is going to have to give it up their music – and it ain't going to be you.

RAMON: But Maddy – this is why I love you. Because you love music, like me. You can not give it up. It is your blood.
(TO AUDIENCE) Suddenly her face changes.
She goes very still.
Have I said wrong words?

MADELEINE: Ramon. Did you just say you love me?

BEAT.

RAMON: Yes. Yes I did. I do. Love you. Maddy, my Maddy.
(TO AUDIENCE) Then she cries and I love her even more.
I love her so much I think my heart will break.
I have enough in me now to write ten thousand concertos.

MADELEINE EXITS.

RAMON: Finish.
All happy.
Life is never that simple.
The next day – my phone rings.
(ANSWERING PHONE) *Si.*

LIGHTS UP ON **STEPHANIE**.

STEPHANIE: Is that Ramon?

RAMON: *Si.*

STEPHANIE: Ramon de Guardo.

RAMON: Stephanie?

STEPHANIE: *Si*, it's Stephanie. Look I'm sorry I haven't been in touch. I left your concerto on the plane and then when I finally got it back the front page was missing so I didn't have your email and then I got confused and thought you were from Portugal. Then Peter – you remember from that dreadful jazz bar? He remembered you were *from* Portugal not *in* Portugal so then I finally rang the Con and Margaret gave me your number. I hope you don't mind.

RAMON: No Stephanie.

STEPHANIE: About your concerto. I love it. In fact I love it so much I want to play it. Can you come to New York?

RAMON: New York? When?

STEPHANIE: Tomorrow. The orchestra will book your tickets. Business class okay, so don't get ideas and ask for First.

RAMON: Okay. Can Mad –

STEPHANIE: And Ramon – I'm looking forward to seeing you.

RAMON: Me too Stephanie. But can Mad -

STEPHANIE: Okay, see you then.

LIGHTS DOWN ON **STEPHANIE**.

RAMON: Can Maddy come too?

MADELEINE ENTERS.

MADELEINE: You have to go to New York?

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) So I told Maddy.
And she understood.
Of course.

MADELEINE: That's wonderful. You deserve it.

RAMON: They only send one ticket.

MADELEINE: Absolutely. I couldn't go anyway. Double shift tomorrow and who's going to help out with Mrs Windschuttle's colonoscopy. You go. Bring back enough memories for both of us.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) She is heartbroken.
But she refuses to let me see it.

MADELEINE: I'll make us some dinner. Going away feast.

MADELEINE EXITS.

THE VIOLIN CONCERTO RETURNS.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) 29 hours later I am in Carnegie Hall in New York listening to the greatest violinist on earth play my concerto.
I am dead.
I have gone to heaven.
I am flying in the sky.
But somewhere far below me – is the sea.

WE HEAR APPLAUSE.

RAMON: Around midnight I walk Stephanie back to her hotel room.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

STEPHANIE COLLAPSES IN A CHAIR, KICKS OFF HER SHOES.

STEPHANIE: God I hate those things. Why can't they listen to the music and then go home? Schmooze, schmooze, schmooze. (STANDING) Night cap? What's your room like? Hope they gave you a decent view. The park? (BEAT) You're quiet. What's wrong? Don't tell me you didn't like it? I know you wrote *pianoissimo* in the Scherzo but I felt it was stronger *forte*. We tried it in the rehearsal –

RAMON SUDDENLY PUTS HIS FINGER ON HER MOUTH.

RAMON: It was the most beautiful music I have ever heard. If I die tomorrow I die contented and at peace.

STEPHANIE: Guess you liked it.

STEPHANIE LOOKS AT **RAMON**.

STEPHANIE: I'd forgotten how handsome you were.

RAMON: I could never forget how beautiful you are.

STEPHANIE: I guess this is the part where we kiss.

RAMON PULLS BACK.

STEPHANIE: What's wrong? Oh crap. I never asked. Don't tell me there's Mrs Ramon?

LIGHTS UP ON **MADELEINE**.

RAMON: (TO AUDIENCE) This is the part where I say: "Yes Stephanie, there is a Mrs Ramon."
Her name is Madeleine with three "e's" and she is good and kind and she used to play the cello but recently she's given that up to go back to nursing so she can support us while I compose.
She is the sea beneath this very shaky boat and she has kept me afloat for more than a year.
She is more than any man can hope for.
But then I look at Stephanie and I realise she is more than I ever dreamed of.
She was my dream – is my dream – and tonight she brought my dream to life.
To say no to this moment is to say no to life and I am not dead. Yet.
The sky opens its arms and I fall into in its embrace.

RAMON AND **STEPHANIE** KISS.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

RAMON: The males and females in the audience are now thinking two completely opposite things.
Both end with the word "bastard".
In my language they have a saying for me - *tolo para o amor.*
Fool for love.
Or is that just fool.
You may want to try some others:

STEPHANIE RE-ENTERS.

RAMON: The next fortnight is like living in a dream.
Or has my life become the dream?
We go to concerts, parties, openings.