

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Cold Harvest

by Noëlle Janaczewska

EXTRACT

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KASIA	A second generation Polish-Australian.
FRANCISZKA (FRANIA)	Kasia's mother.
TADEUSZ	Kasia's father.
JULIANNA	Franciszka's sister.
YONG-SU	A second generation Korean-Australian.
MYONG-HWA	Yong-su's mother.
JACK	Yong-su's father.

Cold Harvest is an ensemble play. At various times these seven principal characters are required to take on the voices of minor characters.

A live string trio or quartet is an important and integral part of *Cold Harvest*. Ideally, the actor playing Yong-su should be able to play the violin, viola or cello; competently enough to be able to join with the string trio or quartet on occasions.

MUSIC NOTES

The music, which constitutes a vital element of *Cold Harvest*, is all played live by a string trio or quartet. It should be a mix of classical and contemporary genres, referencing the musical traditions of both Poland and Korea.

DESIGN NOTES

The stage area is painted all white.

Cold Harvest has two central images. The first is a large storehouse. A glasshouse-type structure, containing shelves of glass jars of preserved fruit and vegetables, and luxuriant vines that twist up towards its roof. Inside the storehouse are a table and chairs. The second image is an escalator (or a flight of stairs, if the budget doesn't run to an escalator). This up-escalator connects the stage to a mezzanine level.

The costumes are elegant and stylised; close to, but not quite, everyday clothing.

SCENE 1

Music begins. YONG-SU is playing with the live string trio/quartet.

Inside the storehouse, among the shelves of pickled and preserved foods in glass jars and luxuriant vines twisting up towards the roof, candles glow. At the table, a meal is being eaten. FRANCISZKA, TADEUSZ, MYONG-HWA and JACK are all seated around the table. Dishes are passed back and forth, murmurs of conversation and laughter are occasionally audible. The scene is animated and has a strong quality of ritual.

For a while, all we can see is the meal taking place inside the storehouse.

JULIANNA is just visible. A shadowy figure at the rear of the storehouse.

Gradually the lights reveal more of the stage. KASIA is watching the proceedings inside the storehouse. From the outside. YONG-SU is also watching the meal inside the storehouse. From his seat with the musicians.

Suddenly the music stops.

The meal stops. For a moment everyone freezes. Then FRANCISZKA and MYONG-HWA slide back a storehouse wall. The event resumes, spreads out from the confines of the storehouse to include KASIA and YONG-SU, who now leaves his place with the musicians.

The music resumes.

In the following section FRANCISZKA's and TADEUSZ's line are directed to KASIA, and MYONG-HWA's and JACK's to YONG-SU. The two disconnected dialogues overlap.

FRANCISZKA Do you remember -

MYONG-HWA You remember -

TADEUSZ You must remember -

JACK It's always been -

FRANCISZKA She was the sister -

MYONG-HWA The old ways -

TADEUSZ Of your second cousin with the ginger hair -

FRANCISZKA And spots -

TADEUSZ Did he have spots? I don't -

FRANCISZKA Oh, yes. A dreadful skin problem -

MYONG-HWA	Handed down by your grandmother -
JACK	To your mother -
TADEUSZ	Now Australasian manager of cups and lids -
JACK	It was her wish -
MYONG-HWA	Honour the spirits -
JACK	Enjoy the rituals of -
FRANCISZKA	The sister of that boy -
TADEUSZ	Who lived next door to -
JACK	Both cultures -
MYONG-HWA	Ch'usök (the Festival of the Harvest Moon) -
TADEUSZ	That chap who was -
JACK	Christmas -
FRANCISZKA	Those people with the dog that was -
TADEUSZ	Head of accounts at Grace Brothers Parramatta -
JACK	Best of two worlds -
MYONG-HWA	Back home -
JACK/TADEUSZ	Do you remember?
<i>Music.</i>	
JACK/TADEUSZ	Do you remember?
FRANCISZKA	Jak się nazywa? (What's her name?)
TADEUSZ	She went out with that boy -
FRANCISZKA	Który? (Which one?)
MYONG-HWA	The old ways -
JACK	It's traditional -
FRANCISZKA	A new Mitsubishi Lancer

MYONG-HWA	Your grandfather was always -
TADEUSZ	The brother of the girl who -
FRANCISZKA	Was related to -
TADEUSZ	A company car of course -
FRANCISZKA	The spotted dog -
JACK	Respected by everyone -
FRANCISZKA	Who lived down the road -
TADEUSZ	To jest jego brat (That's his brother)
FRANCISZKA	Next door to -
TADEUSZ	The yellow house with the huge apple tree -
FRANCISZKA	Went out -
TADEUSZ	With the dog -
MYONG-HWA	You remember -
FRANCISZKA/JACK	You remember -
KASIA/YONG-SU	No. I don't.
FRANCISZKA	Yes, you do.
KASIA	No, I don't remember.
TADEUSZ/MYONG-HWA	Of course you do.
TADEUSZ	We've told you, she was the elder sister -
FRANCISZKA	Of that boy with -
JACK	We must preserve -
TADEUSZ	The dog -
FRANCISZKA	Ginger hair and spots -
MYONG-HWA KASIA	Our customs - I've told you -

YONG-SU I don't remember.

KASIA Years ago.

YONG-SU Why should I remember?

FRANCISZKA You must remember -

MYONG-HWA Of course you do -

FRANCISZKA You're just pretending you don't remember -

JACK To show us how different you are -

TADEUSZ How far away from us you are -

KASIA I've told you -

YONG-SU I don't remember.

The movement stops. Abruptly. The music stops too.

The light changes. Only JULIANNA is now visible inside the storehouse. Peeling apples among the jars of preserves.

KASIA (To YONG-SU) How can you remember -

YONG-SU (To KASIA) A place you've never been?

KASIA (To YONG-SU) Powidła, marmolada, konfitura, dżem. I know four different words for jams. But I can't tell you I love you in Polish.

JULIANNA blows out the candles in the storehouse.

SCENE 2

Music blends with the sounds of the city. Traffic, footsteps, church bells and voices.

KASIA A tram cuts through the early morning traffic. Down wide avenues flanked with winter trees. Past shop fronts stocked with World War Two.

JULIANNA The forecast for Warsaw is for a top of three degrees with the possibility of late snowfalls.

Although this scene contains no actual dialogue between KASIA and YONG-SU, there is nevertheless the sense that they are telling their stories to each other.

KASIA In front of me is the Palace of Culture. Like an enormous wedding cake plopped down in the heart of the city. My mother's sister, my Aunt Julianna lives -

JULIANNA Get a bus going up Gen. Wł. Andersa, and get off just after -

KASIA I can't find the street on the map. I'll have to ask someone. Ah! Przepraszam panią, (Excuse me Madam) I say to a woman in a floral skirt. Um, gdzie jest ... ? (where is ... ?)

JULIANNA/FRANCISZKA/
TADEUSZ Mówię tylko po polsku. (I only speak Polish.)

KASIA But I'm speaking Polish! O. K., try someone else. This time a businessman. Przepraszam pana. He points to the left; the street's been re-named. The map my mother's lent me is out of date.

TADEUSZ *(To FRANCISZKA)* Jak się nazywasz? (What's your name?)

KASIA What's your name, my father asked my mother when they first met.

FRANCISZKA Franciszka.

KASIA And now

TADEUSZ Jak się nazywasz?

KASIA This businessman is asking me. Um, Kasia, I reply, and before I've realised what's happening, he's grabbed my arm and is leading me down this alley, saying, I think, chodźmy na jednego. (Let's go for a drink.)

A medley of popular classics - the kind of music favoured by up-market department stores. At the back of the stage an escalator to an upper, mezzanine level is visible.

JACK/MYONG-HWA *(Chanted softly under YONG-SU's lines.)*
Cold cuts/ teas/ rice/ cookies/ noodles/ chocolates/ ginseng

YONG-SU I'm with my cousin in the food hall of the Lotte Department Store in downtown Seoul.

JACK/MYONG-HWA *(Chanted as before.)*
Sesame oil/ chilli paste/ cakes with white and pale green