

00:00.12

Andrew

Hello everyone, this is Andrew Pond, Artistic Director of Eclectic Full Contact Theatre. Welcome to the Half Hour Audio Hour. Today we have a special interview with the cast of Lost In the Wild, Susan Davey, Ian Rigg, and Monica Szaflik talking about, amongst other things, exactly how the Gilmore Girls and The Twilight Zone are connected. We hope you enjoy.

First I want to thank ah you Ian Monica and Susan for taking the time to not only do this interview but also for giving of your time and talent to be part of this project. We really appreciate it.

00:20.95

Susan

Thank you.

00:21.78

Ian

And Likewise

00:22.84

Monica

Happy to be here.

00:24.80

Andrew

Great. So first question because I love actor origin stories. Um, how did you get into acting and we'll just we'll start with Ian.

00:37.20

Ian

Um, ah hell ah ah well I was a very shy kid. Ah you can probably ascertain from the the ums and ahs just there. Ah you ons stage. You know what to say and real life Real life is what's scary. Onstage You have the lines in front of you, you have the relationships and everyone's standing in the dark. So my mom put me on stage to build confidence as well as bond with my dad. Ah, he's a avid actor as well. Um, in his retirement. He's gone on to do. Ah, featured extra work Hopefully he can get some cool speaking roles as well. But on lots of Chicago movies and Tv so that's awesome.

01:18.50

Andrew

Cool.

01:31.70

Ian

Ah, but he back in the day he worked long hours you know, but you cherished the escape he bought for the audience of for himself, you

know, like just watching him up on stage shows all those years. It's all for the audience. It's for that aha moment that when you found your calling. You know when you've found what fills you with life and as you know once you've contracted the malady of acting it's chronic terminal condition. No one escapes it alive. The only treatment is applause until you're on found out. Wow So That's my. Rambling Origin story.

01:50.26

Andrew

But I love it. Ah Monica.

01:55.96

Monica

Again, This is probably a question better suited for my therapist but um, the long and the short of it is I Guess this is my way of having emotions and not getting in trouble for it But ah, but yeah now I just love being a a part of you know I just love storytelling like any and every storytelling is like the universal language same with music like it's how we connect as humans. So yeah.

03:08.36

Andrew

Wonderful and Susan.

03:18.37

Susan

Yeah I ah no pressure then or great answers. Um, yeah, it wasn't something I particularly thought about as a child or growing up anything like that. I was into dance I did ballet for a number of years. Um, and. It felt almost like a natural progression of performance and storytelling. I think were a little bit spoiled in Ireland where I grew up with the sort of richness of theater in that tradition and honestly I just saw a wonderful production of a play um in my hometown of Belfast. Um. By ah, a local playwright though long past called Stuart Parker it was a play called Pentecost and I remember I just bought a program to see how people became actors with the little bios that they have and I found that there was an acting school in Dublin the gaiety school of acting and I phoned them up the next day and. That was it basically I've been doing a version of this ever since? Um, yeah.

04:19.94

Andrew

At is amazed and don't ever don't ever worry about your origin story answer because one of my favorites was a guy I worked with once said that he got into acting because in college, Bowling was full so he took his none acting class because of that. Um.

04:44.40

Susan

Right? Mine was classical Ballet wasn't quite going my way and then acting happened and I haven't been able to quit since.

05:00.20

Monica

Didn't Meryl Streep oversleep for her bar exam.

05:07.97

Andrew

There you go? Um so what drew you to this project and we'll start with Monica.

05:16.39

Monica

0. Okay, so people who know me know I'm really into like supernatural creepy stuff. Um I'm wearing like I think 4 different crystals right Now. Um I'm yeah so I'm I'm definitely that a that that girl. Also my favorite types of shows any kind of performance or shows is things that leave you with more are things that leave you with more questions than answers. Um, which I'll I'll get into later when we get to another question but like yeah. like so anything supernatural anything suspenseful. Anything's thrillery um I'm always like sign me up.

06:08.95

Andrew

Cool. Ah Susan.

06:12.67

Susan

Yeah I mean I love it because it's um, fairly local to where I grew up so that's a nice kind of a treat. It's not something I get to do very often is things set local to my accent so that was nice, very evocative. Um. You know I'm from an island so anything that's to do with the coast or the sea and like Monica says that kind of dark supernatural edge to things just feels very close to my heart and heritage like I was raised on a steady diet of ghost stories as my bad time story from my mother. Um. So that was my my kind of thing about it and I do love that It's quite open-ended I don't think I have answered all those questions for myself either about this script.

06:59.51

Andrew

Excellent and Ian.

07:04.50

Ian

Ah, well I was invited to this process. Ah fairly later in the process. Well, That's ah, quite a compliment ah to be thought of that thought trustworthy having seen me in a previous show but the script

of course called me, it's got you know the. Feminine Energy. It's got the Moody Ambient. It's got Grief. It's got loss spooky water specter Stuff. You know is an easy decision and it's been quite a delight to work with these very marvelous actors.

07:32.86

Andrew

I I like spooky water specter stuff. that sounds like an awesome album name. And now is this the first audio drama that you've done?

07:52.78

Susan

Not for me.

07:54.55

Monica

No.

07:58.37

Ian

I kind of like I've done fully voiced over characters . Ah like live on stage or pre-recorded but those were always like played on stage like you know, sometimes you're playing like an automaton that's controlling everybody and you're never seen on stage. Ah but I've never been I don't think I've been in a fully flesh out audio drama like this and ah, it's cool because the. The bare bones nature of it almost makes it like more bountiful like it's of course literal theater of the mind you're just having voices and the word painting of sound effects. But your mind is conjuring everything from there. I think Oscar Wilde said we are all our own devil and we make this world our hell but that's true because there's nothing. It's ever going to be scarier than your own imagination. You are painting and designing your own desires and nightmares with no other senses to depend on.

09:02.41

Andrew

Cool. Well we know what Ian likes about the the the ah the medium. Ah Susan what what is it that what is it that you like about ah audio drama about the medium and some challenges.

09:07.16

Susan

Like I'm a big-- I'm an avid listener myself outside of of working on it as an actor as well. Um, from an actor point of view. It's just so different to stage and screen. You get to be very It's just a very intimate experience I think. Um, you really focus on storytelling in this very pure way with just the text you know the words and your voice. there's something kind of magical about conjuring up like the oldest way of telling stories which is verbal, um and to be able to connect with people in their headphones that feels very personal, very

intimate, very close to me. I love to listen um myself to things like this. It can be as Ian said like your imagination can run a little bit wilder. There's less distractions. Um, the challenges though are, there's less distractions. You've got to make your voice to all of the emoting for you. You know there's no camera that's gonna you know, come in close and grab that emotion on your face. You can't sit back and and be lazy with it either and it's nice that you can but you can. You can miss other actors sometimes recording on your own and and that kind of connection. It's been a wonderful thing I think during the pandemic so accessible for all of us to be able to work like this which is quite an equality thing which I've really liked but I guess I Miss Um, a little bit of human. Contact and touch as well.

10:51.85

Andrew

and and I totally understand that it's one of the reasons that we like to at least for the first rehearsal try to put everybody on video so you can at least see each other. And Monica what is it about what is it about it that you like and what are challenges that you got.

11:11.97

Monica

But I always love the challenge of performing a character that obviously has a different accent than my own has a very different background than my own like creating these full-fledged characters with sometimes just a few lines, but the thing that draws me the most to this medium is the Freedom. Um, it's so I also love doing puppetry because a a puppet can do so much more than I can both. You know, physically and like me I can literally have them like flip their leg like you know I can I'm singing upside down while having their legs behind their head. Um, but with voice acting there's no limit. Ah you know you give some sound effects and you play with your voice and you-- You could be flying and there's ah it's it's freeing and it's I guess it's also better on the budget. You know you don't have to get a rig system. But um, you know? Yeah, yeah, there's just nothing. There's nothing holding you back and ah to tying in. Again with what Ian said there's nothing There's nothing better than your own imagination like I love going to life theater because it's never going to be the same show twice but when it's in your mind versus someone else's mind just listening the story that you're painting the scenery the feeling the sounds it's it's. There's nothing like it and ah yeah.

12:31.21

Andrew

Wonderful, wonderful! Um, so in what ways do you relate to your characters. Ah Ian.

12:48.65

Ian

Well, you don't have to like the characters you play you just have to

love them. No I'm very different from James Ah he's not I don't see him as a very particularly creative Kind of guy or or artsy or... I think he focuses on the mundane and the material, and I also ah value fidelity. Ah I think it's it's it's basically a spoiler! for the script. But I think. It's also relatable though because you find commonalities because we've all made mistakes we always are trying and running last minute to fix them and we're all just making attempts to live. We're all just trying to recapture our lives.

13:37.67

Andrew

that that is that's a that's a that's a lovely way of looking at it. We're all just running last minute to fix our mistakes. Um, it's ah. Monica how do you How do you relate

13:58.43

Monica

I think I relate to Bardhanna in that in two ways in that I I'm I'm a mother so I do relate to the you know the feelings that you can't describe unless you are a mother that you could have for a child even one that you may not have necessarily ever met. Um and you know so that nurturing even even before I had kids the like my my nickname around cast was always mama bear even when when I wasn't the Oldest or the you know wasn't playing the mom character and and it's it's a nickname that I I Always really loved. Um, but I also relate to...I too have at times have felt trapped in my life and I know how unnerving that can be and how unsettling it is You know, like the claustrophobic feeling of like you have no control and like how it can drive you to madness. Um desperate to like you know, get some sort of footing on your own fate. Um, so yeah I think that's where I relate to her.

Andrew

so Susan how do you relate to your character.

00:06.21

Susan

I feel like in this ah moment anyway, Katherine is quite There's a loneliness to her as sort of an isolation. Um I think a lot of us can relate to that actually after the last two years particularly in Ireland where our lockdowns were so. Absolute um and they felt never ending for a while. I think as well. She's kind of open to the mystery of Bardhanna she's takes a leap of faith. She's not asking the questions that James does and I think there's something of me in that. Um, that I I tend to trust and believe quite quickly. Not always a wonderful quality to have as I've learned but um, something I don't seem to be able to change much either and I I do like that about her. She's obviously very. practical, very independent, very pragmatic person who's been through a lot of loss and trauma and yet something about her believing in this whole message in a bottle thing. There's a kind of a a lovely innocent wonder Um, which gives me hope for her and

I Think as well is really important to to try and hold on to.

01:24.48

Andrew

Wonderful and now the question that ah has actually become the most apparently difficult of all of them which I thought was going to be the easiest. Ah. No spoilers on how the show the show ends but it it. There's there's a lot of twists to this story which made me think of the twilight zone. So of course what is your favorite twilight zone episode or your favorite twilight zone-y kind of story that you may have heard. And ah since Ian you're the only one who's apparently ever watched the twilight zone. Um, we'll start with you.

Ian

Alright I may crack my fingers roll my neck a bit because we'll be here a while. a massive fan of the show and Rod Serling considered the the last angry man on Tv there was always a righteous anger and what was cool is he never really edited anyone else's scripts too hard. He Believed in his fellow writers and always held a mirror up to you know Ah a very twisted land I call home. Ah, the absolute favorite is Death's Head Revisited. It's the of course the one with the ex-commandant hiding out in Argentina has gone back to relive like a sadistic sense of nostalgia but he's put on tribunal by the people he tortured to death and it ends with ah the the iconic. It must remain standing because they're a monument to a moment in time when some men decided to turn the earth into a graveyard at the moment. We forget this the moment we cease to be haunted by its remembrance then we become the grave diggers...

03:13.97

Andrew

That was also a pretty spot on Rod serling that was pretty cool. Ah.

03:18.80

Monica

And yeah, well done.

Ian

A man hosts a podcast Andrew Pond is about to discover the Twilight zone there it is right up ahead. Signpost! Some other favorites are a Prop Seven over and out. Ah 2 that's just ah that one that. Is one of the rare ones that doesn't really contain any supernatural elements. It's just ah, literally a 2 handed ah a Russian and an American they've both appear to be the only survivors of a nuclear war and ah, do they kill each other. Do they love each other and move on? the howling man is a pretty chilling one about a man who thinks he's captured the devil in his closet. The shelter is another one without any supernatural elements whatsoever again, that's rare for the show but it's literally just people trying to get into the one bomb shelter on the street and it's utterly mortifying. It's terrifying But what

are some other things people like that are like the twilight Zone then? Now that I've monologued.

04:59.48

Andrew

Um, Susan we're gonna we're gonna get this answer from you before you lose internet again.

05:10.86

Susan

Something like the twilight zone I mean I was racking my brains with this. I have never seen the twilight zone I was trying to like download a copy wasn't happening. Um. It's like time right? This kind of a time loop or so the only thing I could think of that I've watched recently that is maybe so a somewhat similar theme is Russian Doll? I don't know if anyone's seen it. It's Natasha de Leon who I just think is kind of a phenomenal performer and it's... I Still don't have a clue what it's about having just finished season Two. it's very trippy but I love this. She's like very, there's like a history component to it. It's gone completely off the tracks which I adore and I don't think we see enough off at the minute. But honestly you know. Twilight zone I feel like I have absolutely 0 experience to speak on it as I was saying if we were going to nerd out with a show with lots of episodes gilmore girls I mean I can watch orle all day that's kind of like its own twilight zone. It's forever autumn or fall in stars Hollow no one grows older.

06:23.51

Ian

All of Rory's boyfriends are dead whooooooo.

Susan

It's sweater weather for like 20 years Luke's diner gets no new decor I mean It's a stretch go with me go with me

06:44.16

Andrew

You know it's ready for it's ready for a reboot I see I see I see this becoming a ah a Netflix original supernatural reboot after what they did to Sabrina the teenage witch which anything is possible. Um. and and Monica

07:04.94

Monica

So yeah I I've always had an appreciation for twilight zone I knew about it. You know whenever anything creepy happened. You know everyone do that. do do do do do do do things so um but yeah I just didn't have um when it was on the air I just didn't have access to Tv but I have always been drawn to shows like it and okay if you have to pick a favorite episode I do know of some and I've seen clips of some

but obviously the one with the the gremlin on the on the wing with Shatner. I'm sure it's everyone's favorite. So it's like a cop out answer. But I I just know. I Don't think there's anything more disturbing or scarier than not trusting your own mind. Um, and I think that's that's again, like we're tying back to nothing scarier than your and imagination exact same thing and so my favorite genre of any type of movie storytelling book is supernatural suspense thrillers. Um.

And so like I you know I love watching shows on on ah Netflix like dark until it went a little too off the rails for me and um I think my favorite M night Shamalayn, Stephen King but my favorite of all of those it's an unknown. It's a hidden gem horror movie called what lies beneath has anyone has anyone else seen...

08:30.75

Susan

Yes, was that Michelle Michelle Pfeiffer?

Monica

her oh my god I I yes Michelle Pfeiffer Harrison Ford such a gem I don't know why this isn't like a classic.

Susan

yes that needs to come back I love that film. Yeah.

08:39.20

Monica

Um, it's it's so good and everyone I've told about has never heard of it and then I lend them my Dvd and they're like where did this come from this is amazing and ah you know, no spoilers. But it's it's about this woman who doesn't know if she's going through a psychotic episode and she's dealing with some you know hidden trauma that she hasn't ah processed or unpackaged. And ah or if she's actually or if her house is actually haunted so um and it's just so well written and so phenomenally acted that like you know I've watched it I've watched it 300 times and I still find little subtle nuances that I'm like oh. Okay I see what you did there. So yeah.

09:18.48

Andrew

Excellent, Well on that incredibly spooky note. Um, ah I Just want to once again. Thank you all so much for being part of this.. It's been an absolute ah blast doing this and We Really do appreciate you all being willing to be part of this this project.

09:43.21

Monica

So thank you so much for having us. It's been great

09:44.32

Ian

The delight is ours.

09:45.61

Susan

Thank you so much. It's been wonderful. Yeah.

Monica

And it's I'm 1 more thing I love that I've been able to work with an international cast I've never been able to do that before. So so thank you Andrew for casting Susan

09:53.26

Andrew

Yeah I it's It's what it it's It's honestly one of the really cool things about doing this is that we've had the ability to work with people From all over because of the fact that it's all audio and it's all online. So boundaries really borders really mean nothing.

10:23.50

Susan

Um, you're all in you're all in Chicago is that right.

10:28.41

Monica

Ah, yes, yes, we're in Chicago.

10:30.13

Andrew

The rest of us are all age but we've also done. We've also done episodes of this where I'm the only one in the US and everybody else has been everybody else has been ah overseas. Ah so it's been. It's been really quite A fun experience to be able to to do this ah and and to be able to work with so many people.

10:53.63

Susan

Yeah, know it makes things so accessible. No I really appreciate it. It's so much you know just to be able to connect across the water as well. Um, and this is my last job Ireland-side I guess I fly to America this week With my green card to move So it's quite a nice way to wrap things up.

Andrew

Thanks for listening to the Half Hour Audio Hour. We hope you enjoyed this special interview. Please like, follow, and subscribe to our podcast. You can even leave a review! If you liked what you heard, head over to redcircle.com/shows/half-hour-audio-hour where you can help support us through a one-time or recurring donation and become our partner in helping to highlight the voices and stories of women,

BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ artists. And don't forget to head over to eclectic-theatre.com to find out about our serialized audio dramas--Bloody Bay, Clusterf**k, Deep Shadows, Monocyte, and Throwing Shade. On behalf of myself and everyone here at EFCT, thanks for listening.