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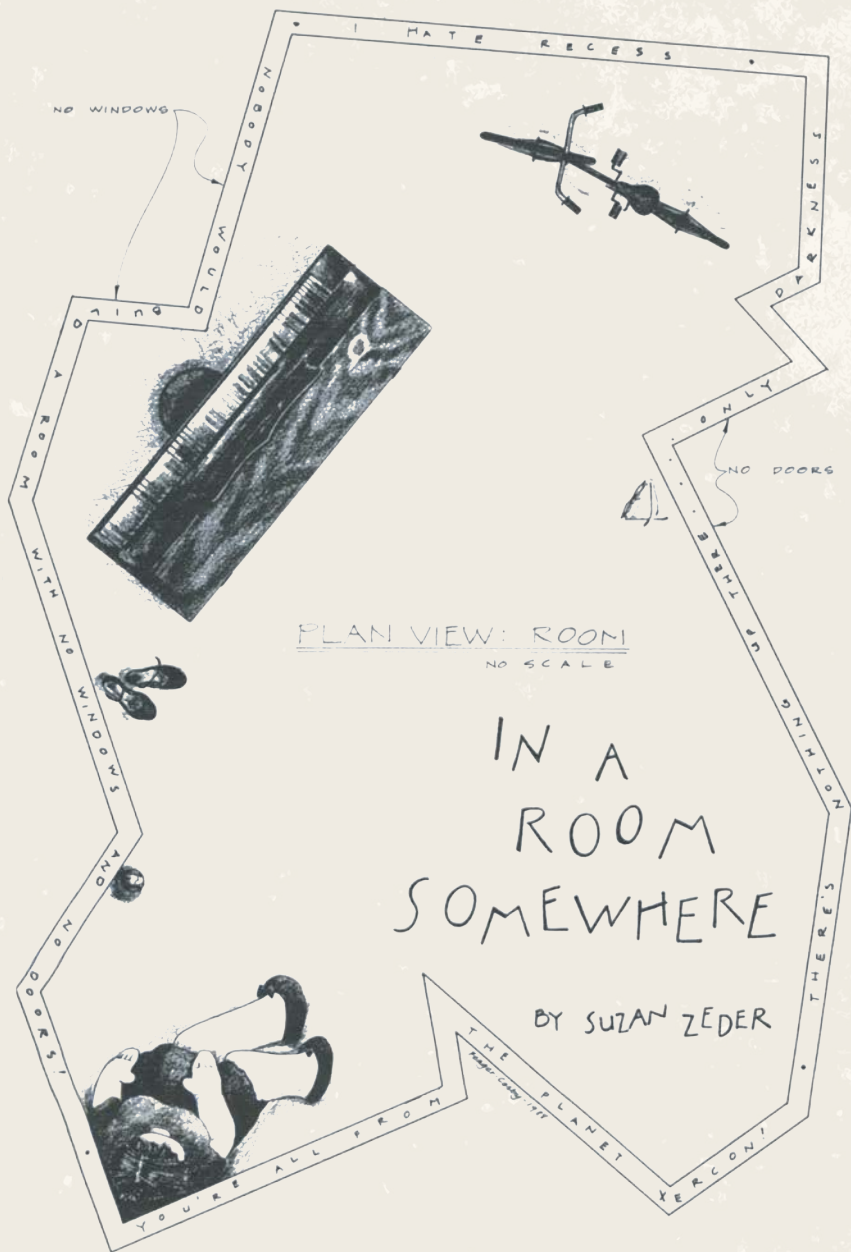
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Dramatic Publishing



PLAN VIEW: ROOM
NO SCALE

IN A ROOM SOMEWHERE

BY SUZAN ZEDER

In a Room Somewhere

TYA/USA Outstanding Play Award

Musical. Book and lyrics by Suzan L. Zeder. Music by Daniel Paul Davis. Cast: 3m., 2w. Suddenly, five adults find themselves in a room somewhere; a room with no windows, no doors and only the vastness of space where the ceiling ought to be. When they begin to find relics from their own childhoods, they discover that the only way out of the room is to journey through their own pasts. This powerful play of great humor, warmth and emotional intensity is the result of a three-year collaboration between this award-winning playwright and the gifted Metro Theatre Circus ensemble. It breaks new ground in the theatre for young audiences. *Single set. Suitable for touring. Modern Costumes. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Code: IA9.*

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Musical score by
DANIEL PAUL DAVIS



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DEDICATION

To the Metro Theatre Circus, who helped me build “the room” for the very first time, and to Carol who made it possible for all of us to go there.

Original Production commissioned by and created with
Metro Theatre Circus
St. Louis, Missouri
1985

AUTHOR'S NOTES

I am deeply grateful to the many people who gave so much of themselves to build this 'room': to the Metro Theatre Circus, whose lives, thoughts and feelings formed the foundation; to Carol Evans who joined the parts together with passion and compassion; to Daniel Paul Davis who filled the air inside the room with music; and to my husband Jim, who taught me to believe in the healing power of this special place.

Each of you who will produce, present, or perform in this play will build your own room. I have provided a very specific blueprint to challenge and spark your imagination; but you will furnish it with your own personal metaphors and people it with your concept of these characters. In this quest, I urge you to look to the depth of your vision and to trust your audience, no matter what their age. Allow them to come to the room on their own level and to take from the room whatever they will. I have seen this play performed for audiences of pre-schoolers through senior citizens; the play works on entirely different levels for different ages.

I urge you not to try to simplify or literalize this "room", so "even kids will understand." There need be no artificial indications of what is past and what is present. The character of Cat is deliberately enigmatic: to make her the obvious 'therapist' in the room is to diminish her, and to deprive your audience of the fun of figuring her out for themselves.

I am often asked: "What age is this play aimed at?" This play, more than any other I have written, is aimed at the child within the adult and the adult within the child that exists in all of us. The four years that I have spent in this 'room' has given me an entirely new conception of time, not a chronological progression where childhood is something past and done with; but a cyclical whole deepened by the simultaneity of time.

Just as the adult tree is nourished by the sapling that still grows deep inside, this play has reaffirmed my faith in the power of that child space within us all.

— Suzan Zeder
1988

CHARACTERS

MASON WELCH A Carpenter
KURT PAXTON A Salesman
MICHAEL WAVERLY A Musician
LEIGH-ANN (DUDLEIGH) SCOTT A Law Student
CATLYN (CAT) A Person in the Room

Also four life-sized, soft sculptured doll-like creations, who will be used to represent various adults. There are three female dolls and one male doll. The females represent teachers and mothers. The male represents all fathers.

TIME

One hour of real time, right now.

PLACE

In a room somewhere.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Opening

Look for a Door Mason, Kurt, Cat
Think What I Think Michael, Cat, Kurt
Good Teachers/Wicked Teachers Company
Movin' to the Music Cat, Dudleigh, Michael
Ballad of the Bike Kurt
Saaa Boss Michael, Mason

IN A ROOM SOMEWHERE was commissioned by and created with Metro Theatre Circus. It was rehearsed and performed over a three year period from June of 1984 until November of 1987. The original cast created the following roles:

Mason Nicholas Kryah
Cat Claudia Holzapel
Kurt Scott Hanson
Michael Larry Pressgrove
Dudleigh Jan Feager Cosby

The production featured an original score by Steven Radeck, costumes by Clyde Ruffin, set by Nicholas Kryah.

The production was directed by Carol Evans.

IN A ROOM SOMEWHERE

**Book and Lyrics by
SUZAN L. ZEDER**

**Musical Score by
DANIEL PAUL DAVIS**

IN A ROOM SOMEWHERE

By Suzan L. Zeder

The room is a mysterious place. On the stage floor are colored lines indicating the boundaries of the space. On all sides of the acting area are indications of four emphatic walls, invisible to the audience but solid to the characters. Walls are suggested by sharply angled corner pieces which seem to disappear into an upward infinity. The walls are there, and yet they're not.

Dominating the space is a large abstract sculptural piece. Primarily, it is a clock with no numbers and only one hand. This clock will keep practical time and the hand will make one full revolution during the action of the play. The piece is large enough for characters to move behind and out of sight. This structure should challenge the imagination of any set designer, as it must "deliver" various objects into the room during the action of the play: objects such as a pair of glasses, a large ball, report cards, tap shoes, a baseball, etc. Perhaps there are small trap doors which pop open to reveal objects, or chutes which propel objects into the room. Perhaps the whole structure turns almost imperceptibly and reveals nooks and crannies where objects are hidden. The structure itself should be of a neutral color; the objects should be brightly colored.

All around the room are lumpy objects covered by neutral colored sheets of silk. There are several small boxes and cubes of odd sizes and shapes; these are also neutral but underneath and within the inner recesses are vibrantly colored. A piano and bench are partially covered by a neutral sheet.

CAT, MASON and KURT are onstage. MASON and KURT are frozen in stop-action positions: MASON perched up on one end of the piano with a hammer raised above a non-existent nail, KURT stands with both arms raised in frozen excitement. If he were animated he would be yelling. CAT sits quietly, only her eyeballs move as she shifts her gaze from KURT to MASON. She is dressed in bright colors, MASON and KURT wear neutral colored pants and jackets which cover layers of bright clothing.

The "Opening" Music is heard and the sound of ticking.

CAT: Well?

(Mason brings the hammer down sharply, hitting his thumb)

MASON: Ahhhhhhh! I can't believe I did that! JEEEEE!

(He deals with the pain by denying it)

MASON: It doesn't really hurt, not really! It doesn't really HURT!

(Cat crosses to Mason)

CAT: It would help if you would shout a very bad word very loud. If you keep it inside, your eyes will bug out and your ears will flap.

MASON: Who are you?

CAT: My name is Catlyn but you will call me Cat.

MASON: Where in the world am I?

(Suddenly, Kurt comes to life, shakes his fists and shouts)

KURT: So, go on, shoot, shoot! SHOOT!

(There is the sound of a buzzer)

BRIAN!!!!

MASON: What is going on here?

(Kurt realizes he is not where he thought he was)

KURT: Where's the team? Where's the court?

MASON: Where's the roof? Where's the house I was . . .

KURT: Where in BLAZES are we?

CAT: We're in a room somewhere.

KURT: Just a minute ago I was coaching my kid's basketball team, we're down by 16 points, and Brian, my own kid, is just standing with the ball. I nearly had a heart attack; he's just standing there looking stupid. So, I yell at him . . .

CAT: Maybe you died.

KURT: What?

CAT: I saw it on Twilight Zone; all these people were trapped in an elevator, except that really they were dead and they had to spend eternity going up and down between floors.

KURT: I didn't die. It was just the end of the quarter.

MASON: If he died, what am I doing here? I was up on the roof and just about to nail down a shingle . . . wait a minute, that was yesterday! I finished the roof yesterday! It's like a dream, I remember things in bits and pieces, like a dream.

KURT: What is going ON?

CAT: Extra-Terrestrials?

KURT: What?

CAT: I saw a movie about people who had been taken on a space craft. Once they were on board, the aliens stuck little flashlights in their noses to see inside their brains.

KURT: (*Uncomfortable*) I think you've seen too many movies.

MASON: The name's Mason . . . Mason Welch, pleased to meet you, Coach.

(*Kurt flips a stack of cards out of his shirt pocket*)

KURT: Kurt, Kurt Paxton, I just volunteer as a Coach, actually I'm a field rep for The Jock Shop, you know: uniforms, running shoes, basketballs . . .

CAT: I'm Cat.

(*He hands cards to them*)

MASON: (*Turning over the card*) Way to go, Coach.

KURT: What?

MASON: It's blank.

KURT: WHAT?

(*Mason shows him, Kurt pulls the stack from his pocket*)

KURT: (*Astonished*) They're all blank! But they can't be.

CAT: Maybe they're blank so you can just make up whoever you want to be next.

KURT: (*Perturbed*) What kind of salesman has blank cards?

MASON: An air salesman?

KURT: I just looked at them this morning, they had my name on them.
"Kurt Paxton . . .

MASON: Blank billboards?

KURT: . . . Field Rep., Jock Shop."

MASON: Donut holes?

KURT: I sell sporting goods!

MASON: If you say so, Coach.

KURT: Kurt!

MASON: Whatever.

KURT: Look, there has got to be a way out of here. Try to find a door,
a window, anything.

MASON: You got it, Coach.

KURT: Kurt!

(Music begins for "Look For A Door." Kuri and Mason speak/sing this number as they search the room. They explore the walls in very specific mime establishing the boundaries)

KURT: Look for a door.

MASON: Check the walls.

KURT: Check the floor.

MASON: Look around on the ground
For a trapdoor or a hatch.

KURT: There has got to be a catch
Like a keyhole or a latch.
Look for a window.

MASON: Look for a door.

KURT: Look for a window.

MASON: I'm looking for a door.

CAT: But there isn't any door.

MASON: There has to be a door.

KURT: Look for a window.

MASON: I'm looking for a door!

CAT: (*Sings*) You can look all day.
You can look until you drop.
You still won't find it,
So you might as well stop.
There isn't any window.
There isn't any door.
You can try, till you cry,
But I've tried it all before.
Look high, look low;
There is nowhere else to go.

KURT: Keep looking for a window.

MASON: There isn't any door!

CAT: There isn't any window.

KURT: I heard you before!

MASON: (*Spoken*) Wait a minute. No one would build a room with no windows and no doors! I know! I'm a Carpenter.

KURT: Okay, then, Mr. Carpenter, where is it?

MASON: The name is Mason, and I don't know!

KURT: Well, then, look harder!

(Music continues)

KURT: Look for a door.

MASON: Check the walls.

KURT: Check the floor.

MASON: Look around on the ground
For a trapdoor or a hatch.

KURT: There has got to be a catch.
Like a trapdoor or a . . .

CAT: (*Spoken*) Wait a minute! There isn't any ceiling either!

KURT: What?

MASON: What?

KURT: Where?

CAT: There!

(*Sings*)

Up in the air
In the dark
Nothing there
Not a ceiling or a roof
I can show you; I've got proof!

KURT: Just because we can't see up there

MASON: Doesn't mean it can't be up there.

CAT: If you toss up a ball
You'd hear it hit before the fall.
Right?

MASON: Right.

CAT: Right?

KURT: Right!

CAT: (*Spoken*) Well, go ahead and try it!

(Cat produces a small ball from her pocket. Mason tosses it straight up; it comes down. He throws it again, a bit higher. On the third throw, he palms the ball and tosses his empty hand in the air. The ball seems to disappear into the void. All this is reflected in the music)

MASON: *(In awe, spoken)* It's like watching it fall down a well.

ALL THREE: *(Sung)* There isn't any ceiling

. . . There isn't any door.

. There isn't any window

. There isn't any . . .

(The music ends)

KURT: *(Calling)* Hey . . . is there anybody out there?

CAT: I don't think anyone can hear you.

KURT: Might as well try! Hey, Hey, Hey!

CAT: I tried.

MASON: *(To Cat)* How long have you been here?

CAT: I don't know, my watch is broken!

MASON: *(Checking his watch)* Mine's stopped.

(Kurt checks his watch)

KURT: *(Amazed)* Look at that, the hands are whizzing around faster and faster.

MASON: How time flies when you're having . . .

(Cat lifts one of the sheets and peeks under it. She gives a little shriek)

KURT: What is it?

CAT: A leg!

MASON: A leg?

CAT: A leg!

KURT: Oh, my Lord.

(Cat points to one of the lumps under a sheet)

CAT: There's a body under that sheet!

MASON: *(Indicating another lumpy object)* Uhhh, you mean like this sheet?

CAT: Just like that sheet!

KURT: Oh, my Lord.

MASON: So, what did this . . . leg look like?

CAT: Dead! It looked like a dead leg! Look for yourself!

MASON: Okay . . . I will! Sure . . . uhhhh Kurt, you check out that one, and . . .

CAT: Cat.

MASON: Check out that one.

(With trepidation they approach the objects and whip off the coverings. A magical sound is heard)

KURT: What the?

(They hold up life-sized doll-like figures. They are soft and stuffed and have no distinctly distinguishable faces)

MASON: Dolls! They're dolls!

KURT: They **are** dolls.

CAT: This one looks just like my fifth grade teacher.

MASON: *(Pointedly)* That is **not** your teacher.

CAT: Oh yeah, who is it?

MASON: It's a doll, just like this . . .

(Mason removes the final sheet covering a lumpy object on the piano stool. Under this sheet is Michael, wearing formal evening clothes. As soon as the sheet is removed he begins to play: "Michael's Entrance." He plays as if in a trance)

MASON: HEYYYY!

KURT: It's alive!

CAT: It's a person! Hey there! Hey there! Hey there!

KURT: How do we stop him?

MASON: I don't know.

(Cat, crosses to Michael)

CAT: Please stop.

(Music stops)

MICHAEL: *(Unaware of where he is)* I'll never get it; never!

CAT: Hello.

MICHAEL: *(He looks up and sees her)* I'm terribly sorry but I have this practice room signed out for the whole hour. If you want to use this room you've got to sign up for it with the Competition Coordinator.

MASON: Ahhhhh, I don't think you are quite where you think you are.

MICHAEL: *(Realizing where he is or isn't for the first time)* Huh? Where am I?

KURT: We're all trapped in this room somewhere.

MICHAEL: Well, there's got to be a window, there's got to be a . . .

KURT: There isn't.

MASON: We looked.

MICHAEL: Who are all you people?

CAT: I'm Cat, he's Kurt, and that's . . .

MASON: Mason Welch. Pardon my appearance, I didn't realize this abduction was black tie.

MICHAEL: I'm Michael Waverly, and in exactly two hours I am supposed to play in the most important Piano Competition of my life.

(He looks at his watch)

MICHAEL: What the . . .

(He shakes his wrist and taps his watch)

KURT: We have got to get out of here. We're all going to starve to death!

(There is a strange kind of music: "The Sound of Forgotten Smells")

CAT: What's that smell?

(Others sniff, sound continues)

It's popcorn, like at the Saturday afternoon movies!

KURT: No, it's not! It's chocolate chip cookies, just like my Mom used to make.

MICHAEL: No, it's not! It's hay! That's just how the fields on my Dad's farm used to smell in the spring, just after mowing.

MASON: No, it's not!

CAT: What do you smell, Mason?

(The sound stops)

MASON: Nothing!

(There is another strange sound, as suddenly a door pops open on the structure or an object flies in through a chute)

MICHAEL: What's that?

(Cat crosses to the structure and removes a pair of glasses)

CAT: My glasses!

MICHAEL: What?

CAT: My glasses.

KURT: Where?

CAT: I heard that sound and then I found my very first pair of glasses there!

MASON: Oh, come on, your very first pair . . .

CAT: I got them when I was eleven and I thought I'd die of shame.

(She looks at them closely)

Now, I'm sure that they're the same, I stomped on them and cracked the frame.

(She puts them on)

It was bad enough when I had to get braces and everyone at school called me tin grin, then I got these and they called me four eyes. When I refused to wear them, I kept bumping into things, and then they called me klutz. My body was ruining my life!

MASON: Hold it. Those can't be your glasses.

CAT: Why not?

MASON: How did they get here?

KURT: How did we get here?

MICHAEL: Where's here?

(Michael slaps his hand down on the piano for emphasis, to everyone's astonishment Michael's Piano plays by itself)

MASON: Heeeey!

CAT: It's playing.

MICHAEL: I just touched it.

KURT: You started it.

MICHAEL: I just touched it.

MASON: Do something.

MICHAEL: I just touched it!

CAT: Well, touch it again.

(Michael touches the piano again it stops. Michael really looks at the piano)

MICHAEL: I don't believe this!

MASON: I don't either!

MICHAEL: This is my piano.

KURT: So?

MICHAEL: No, I mean this is MY piano.

MASON: Yeah, you were playing it when you . . .

MICHAEL: I was playing a Steinway in the practice room, but this isn't it.
This is my own piano, the very first one I had when I was a kid.

MASON: You mean this looks like your piano.

MICHAEL: Look, here, there's a ring left by a glass of chocolate milk.
I got a spanking for that. And I can feel where I used to park my
gum while I practiced. Wait a minute . . . this can't be that piano.

CAT: Why not?

MICHAEL: I left it with my parents on the farm. Their house burned
six years ago. They lost everything, including my old piano.

MASON: You have got to be kidding.

MICHAEL: But this is my piano alright!

KURT: (*Explodes*) We have got to get out of here! WE have got to . . .
(*The strange sound is heard again and suddenly a small two-wheeler
bike is propelled into the room, straight into Kurt's outstretched
hands*)

KURT: Oh my Lord! It's the Flyer.

MASON: What?

KURT: The Flyer!

MICHAEL: (*Looking up from the piano*) Where?