



Wonthaggi
Theatrical
Group Inc
EST 1969

AUDITION INFORMATION - *Home, I'm Darling* - 2026

By Laura Wade

Directed by Murray Maclean

1. Background to the Play

Home, I'm Darling is a 2018 dark comedy by British playwright **Laura Wade**, premiering at Theatr Clwyd before transferring to the National Theatre and then the West End. It won the **2019 Olivier Award for Best New Comedy**.

The play examines nostalgia, gender roles, domestic ideals, and the tension between fantasy and reality. It follows a married couple who deliberately adopt a 1950s lifestyle—complete with period clothing, décor, gender expectations, and technology restrictions. As their financial pressures increase, cracks begin to appear, exposing the emotional and psychological toll of clinging to the past.

The play ultimately asks: Is nostalgia harmless? Or can longing for the past cause us to lose the present?

2. Synopsis

Judy and Johnny live a life of domestic bliss; he goes out to work but looks forward to coming home and putting on his waiting slippers, sipping a cocktail and settling down for the evening. She stays at home and cooks, cleans, sews and makes the place ready for her man. The Martins are idyllically happy in this 1950s bijou home; except it isn't, and they're not. It's all a pretence as this actually modern day pair escape back to what they perceive as a happier less stressful time when Doris Day was queen of the movies and Rock Hudson wasn't even gay. They have kitted themselves out in vintage clothes of the period and furnished their home with period trappings which have cost a fortune to get hold of. Once Johnny gets home and the front door closes there is a world of cocktail parties, sitting round a small black and white TV set, enjoying home crafts and occasionally making it out into the real world for celebratory festivals of the era they are in thrall to. Of course, it is all an illusion which is quickly shattered after the first ten minutes when Judy extracts a laptop from the kitchen drawer. Essentially they are cheats to their own credo and from here the cracks start to show. For a start it turns out that she is the one who controls and manages the finances – hardly in tune with the decade in question. She once had a high powered job commanding a bigger salary than her husband but gave it all up and

now the money supporting their lifestyle is running out. It looks like they might have to sell up and take on a smaller place or, horror of horrors, that Judy might have to go back to work. Then Johnny reveals that he's only doing it all to keep his wife happy, that he has feelings for someone else (unacted upon he claims) and that he sneaks off for pizza at lunchtime instead of eating the lovingly prepared sandwich with which his domestic goddess sends him off every day. As counterpoints we meet best friends Fran and Marcus who also enjoy the fifties but don't take it as far as the Martins, though Marcus clearly feels that the gender politics of the era are something which should have been retained. There is also Johnny's boss Alex (female) – Judy's been assuming it was a male boss – who is very much a product of the modern era and Judy's mother a staunch feminist who brought her daughter up in a commune and is bemused as to why her offspring seems to be throwing away any advantages that the women of her time have managed to acquire. Sylvia has one of the best speeches in the play when she picks apart the iniquities of the 1950s. She was there and remembers it as cold, dirty, racist, misogynist and austere in contrast to Judy's day-glo coloured, sanitised, American Dream led recreation.

3. Characters & Breakdown

Judy

Age: 30s–40s

Description: Idealistic, bright, romantic, and deeply committed to her 1950s fantasy world. Judy is intelligent but emotionally fragile beneath her polished exterior. Her identity is tied to “being the perfect housewife.” She begins the play cheerful and enthusiastic but slowly unravels under the pressures she refuses to acknowledge.

Qualities: Strong emotional range, comedic timing, ability to portray vulnerability.

Suggested Audition Pages:

- pp. 12–15 — Judy enthusiastically explains the 1950s lifestyle.
- pp. 66–69 — Confrontation with Johnny as their financial issues peak.

Johnny

Age: 30s–40s

Description: Warm-hearted, charming, and originally supportive of the retro experiment, but carries deep insecurity about his career and masculinity. He loves Judy but feels trapped in a role he didn't fully choose.

Qualities: Emotional authenticity, ability to shift between lightness and frustration.

Suggested Audition Pages:

- **pp. 30–33** — Johnny expresses doubts about maintaining the lifestyle.
- **pp. 72–77** — Heated argument with Judy about responsibility and reality.

Fran

Age: 30s–40s

Description: Judy's friend. Positive, bubbly, loves vintage style but nowhere near as committed as Judy. She balances empathy with occasional bluntness. Supportive but realistic.

Qualities: Warm, grounded, comedic instincts.

Suggested Audition Pages:

- **pp. 12–15** — Conversation with Judy about the realities of her lifestyle.
- **pp. 49–53** — Heart-to-heart about the pressures of domesticity.

Marcus

Age: 40s–50s

Description: Fran's husband. Outwardly charming and confident with a tendency toward inappropriate behaviour. Has unresolved issues around boundaries, masculinity, and nostalgia for an idealised past.

Qualities: Ability to balance charisma with unease; comic but with darker undertones.

Suggested Audition Pages:

- **pp. 53–55** — Marcus flirts awkwardly with Judy.
- **pp. 98–100** — Tension with Judy regarding his behaviour.

Sylvia

Age: 60s+

Description: Judy's mother. Practical, modern, and unimpressed with Judy's retreat into the 1950s. Carries guilt about her own past but expresses it with candour.

Delivers some of the play's most honest and emotionally resonant moments.

Qualities: Strong actor with gravitas; excellent emotional clarity.

Suggested Audition Pages:

- **pp. 21–27** — The powerful monologue about what the real 1950s were truly like.

Alex (female)

Age: mid-20s–30s

Description: Johnny's young boss. Driven, modern, professional, and represents everything Judy's lifestyle rejects. Not villainous—simply pragmatic and ambitious.

Qualities: Confidence, presence, clarity.

Suggested Audition Pages:

- **pp. 85–90** — Alex confronts Judy about Johnny's declining job performance.

4. Suggested Audition Structure

Round 1 – Monologues/Solos

Auditions can read the selected passages for the particular character. There will be person/persons available to read in the other parts.

Ideally, if there are several auditions at hand, the director may get you to read together.

5. Notes for Auditionees

- This is a *modern* play with *retro aesthetics*, so 'period' 50's accents are not required. But it is an English play with references to English name-places. So a 'Mid-Atlantic' accent may be in order rather than trying to imitate a specific English dialect.
- Movement may be used in auditions (e.g., period-inspired gestures) but is not required.
- You do **not** need to bring props.
- Please familiarise yourself with the script's themes and get a feel for life in the 1950's.