

In 2006 Doug Haverty and Betty Garrett (founder of Theatre West) hatched an idea. At that time Betty was still doing plays and musicals and writing songs AND running her long and successful Musical Comedy Workshop at Theatre West, while Doug was co-moderating the playwrights group at Theatre West. Normally, in her workshop, the members focus on finding good songs to sing for auditions or they work on songs they will be performing. She thought it would be a fun change of pace to actually have them perform in musical one-acts that Theatre West writer members wrote for them. Doug and Betty brainstormed on this and decided to enlist the help of the Academy for New Musical Theatre (ANMT, which has since changed its name to NMI). So, writing teams were assembled and they wrote one-acts for the members of Betty's workshop. Betty loved this creative process. Doug Haverty invited his collaborator from INSIDE OUT, Adryan Russ and together they wrote two of these one-acts. They were presented as readings at Theatre West and were eventually part of Theatre West's annual festival of new works called WEST FEST. Additionally these two one-acts were presented at NMI as part of the Dramatists Guild's national Friday Night Footlights Series.

People loved the one-acts and were very intrigued by them and wondered if they could be expanded to full-length musicals. Doug and Adryan considered this, but instead decided to leave them as one-acts and write one more to make an evening of three musical one-acts.

As in the Broadway-favorite THE APPLE TREE, LOVE AGAIN is comprised of three musical one-acts all with a similar theme: making difficult choices in love. These three stories are all a bit unusual and inspired by real life events. "In a Different Light" shows us two couples in Paris: one on their second honeymoon, one there on business. One half of each couple were lovers in college and have not seen each other in over twenty years and, naturally, they run into one another in line at The Louvre. How does this happen? Why does this happen? What are the odds of this happening? They discover they still hold a candle for one another and the question becomes: when this happens to you, do you act upon it or just walk away? When fate steps in, do you duck for cover? This story was inspired by a similar event that happened to Haverty and his wife, Dorathy (who has worked in Music Publishing in North Hollywood for twenty years and currently volunteers at The Discovery Shop in Toluca Lake), when they were in England, doing a walking tour of The Tower of London and walked right smack dab into someone they both knew from thirty years ago and had not seen since.

The second musical one-act, "Two Lives" shows us two life-long friends, cut down in the middle of running errands and then being confined to a hospital room: their bodies are attached to life-support with little or no brainwave activity being registered. But they are very much alive, vibrant and active brainwave-ically. They sing and dance and try to make themselves heard to those around them. This story was inspired by hospital bedside visits where nurses encourage you to talk to the patient and you wonder if they can hear you or not ... or what the patient is thinking behind that cloud of morphine and tubes and monitors.

The final one-act, “Forget-Me-Not” focuses on a couple who are part of the sandwich generation; they are taking care of children and divorced grandparents at the same time. This particular couple is finding it hard to make ends meet (imagine that in today’s economy) and confront the very real possibility of having one grandparent move in with them. Then, the unthinkable happens and the wife loses her job and they consider also moving the other grandparent in with them. Both grandparents are dealing with memory issues, so the smart aleck grandson suggests to his parents that they move the grandparents in together and just not remind them that they’re divorced. This story was inspired by real events with close friends of Doug’s. When Doug made this same suggestion that the smart aleck grandson makes, his friend’s response was, “I can’t do that, Doug. It sounds like a play. Go write it.” And so he did.

This is truly an ensemble play, with a cast of 7 – 18 (depending on how versatile the actors are). We meet everyone at the beginning of the play as they explain the set-up of three musicals and how the endings are left up to the audience to decide. The entire company appears several times throughout the play reinforcing the other recurrent theme of making every minute count. Some actors play one role, some play two and one plays three. It’s definitely an evening where one must suspend their belief and let the imaginative theatricality of the piece take them on the three journeys.

The world premiere production of LOVE AGAIN took place in 2015 at the Group Rep under the direction of Kay Cole. This production was dedicated to Miss Betty Garrett.