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Navigating New York? Piece of Cake.

The stars of a musical meet for a stroll in the city on one rainy, blustery afternoon.

By DOUGLAS CORZINE

A month into the Broadway run of the new musical “Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York),” the meet-cute leads met for their own trek through Manhattan. But just as Sam Tutty, a British import who originated his part in London, and Christiani Pitts, an American who came aboard for a run in Cambridge, Mass., set out for the afternoon, a sudden rainstorm swept through.

“In true New York fashion,” Pitts recalled, “we come up from the subway, and people are being damn near knocked over by the wind.”

Weeks later, during a video interview, Pitts was still thinking about an older woman she’d seen holding onto her bags in the storm: “It was like a little metaphor for what New York is, that things might be thrown at you, but you just got to keep your head down and keep it moving.”

Every night at the Longacre Theater, Pitts and Tutty make up the entire cast. Tutty plays a chipper young Brit named Dougal Todd who visits New York for his estranged father’s wedding and gets to know the younger bride’s even younger sister, Robin Rainey, played by Pitts. Robin, a nonsensical native New Yorker, meets Dougal at the airport to help him navigate the train. Somewhere between the Flatbush bakery where they’re sent to pick up a wedding cake and the Fifth Avenue department store where they find themselves on a shopping spree, these unlikely companions learn to see the city through each other’s eyes.

In the show, Dougal stays in a budget hotel. [CONTINUED ON PAGE C4](#)

Christiani Pitts and Sam Tutty, who star in the new musical “Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York).”



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tel in Chinatown, so Tutty and Pitts started their journey at Uncle Lou, a Cantonese restaurant on Mulberry Street. Tutty said his character was a “bouncing, maniacal golden retriever” in awe of New York City. Tutty, who grew up 30 minutes from London, might not share Dougal’s wide-eyed wonder, but he is still a tourist: He has been to the top of the Empire State Building on two separate occasions.

Before “Two Strangers” came to Broadway, he had only visited New York for short work trips, including an audition for the title role “Dear Evan Hansen” for a West End transfer — the part that won him an Olivier Award in 2020. He said that “walking with purpose” made him feel at home in the city. “That’s the truest New York,” he explained: “Everyone’s heading somewhere.”

Both actors live not far from the theater, but Pitts knows the city much better. Her father, the journalist Byron Pitts, worked at CBS News when she was young, and her family moved to Montclair, N.J., when she was in elementary school. When she first visited New York, she said, the city “felt very big and unobtainable.” Seeing theater helped her realize she wanted to be part of

it. Her love for New York City has made its way into her work. “Two Strangers” is her third Broadway credit, after “A Bronx Tale” and “King Kong” — and the third to take place in the city.

Tutty said he did not have much time for exploring during the show’s run, but Pitts is still trying to get him off the beaten track. During their walk, she was pitching a seaside excursion. Tutty had heard it before, but he feigned shock: “I don’t want to go to Coney Island; it’s 10 degrees outside!”

cakes. There, Tutty reflected on the show’s developmental journey. “Two Strangers” had a long trek in England — its 2019 productions in Ipswich and Northampton, under the title “The Season,” revolved around Christmas. The writers Jim Barne and Kit Buchan did substantial rewrites before the first London production in 2023 and continued to fine-tune the show.

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ery iteration of the project, shares Tutty’s appreciation for the sides of the story American audiences have brought out — and for everything Pitts added to the mix. They both remember catching each other’s eyes across the rehearsal room when Pitts auditioned for the Cambridge production, and Jackson said that excitement had been borne out in her performance.

“There’s a real deep-seated warmth and generosity of spirit that sits within Christiani’s version of Robin,” Jackson explained. “Even though Robin starts off the show with a sort of impenetrable shell that needs to be broken down by Dougal, we can see the warmth and the kindness that lingers just under the surface.”

Pitts and Tutty pressed through pedestrian crowds on Canal Street, then caught a perfectly timed uptown train. Over the din of the train car, Tutty discussed bringing the show to the United States.

Some of the laugh lines feel sharper here. “You’re from New York so you probably go up the Statue of Liberty all the time,” Dougal tells Robin. (“I didn’t even know that these lines were funny,” Tutty explained.) Others, like a line about British student exams known as GCSEs, don’t quite connect. Tutty said that American audiences helped him find a more “grounded” character beneath all the bluster — a young man feeling isolated and unsure whether he made the right choice to come to the United States.

After the rainstorm, the actors hustled to Magnolia Bakery and regrouped over cup-

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Later over video, Tutty elaborated. The audience meets Dougal in two consecutive numbers before Robin is given her first solo, “What’ll It Be.” When that happens, Tutty gets a brief moment offstage, but he doesn’t retreat to his dressing room. “I have a little window to just peek through these, like, holes of wires and curtains,” he said, and he takes the time to watch his co-star.