

Pre-Show Information
A Taking Part Production from Young Vic
The Collective presents: *AiTopia*



Directed by **Michelle Payne**

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Introduction:

This document contains detailed information about the show in order to describe what you should expect when attending.

This includes information about the content warnings, plot, the space, lighting and sound, audience participation, and further access information.

All of the information in this document was correct at the time of publishing. More information will be available closer to the time of performance.

Please note that by discussing the content of the show, **the below information will contain key plot points and descriptions of what happens in the performance.**

If you would like to receive elements of this information but avoid these spoilers, please do not read the section at the end of this document entitled 'Show Synopsis'.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Box Office team:

E-mail: boxoffice@youngvic.org

Phone number: 020 7922 2922

Show Information:

Running Time: 90 minutes with no interval

Content warnings:

- Discussions of death and grief, including death of a child
- Strong language
- Violence
- Alcohol consumption and references to drug use
- Dementia
- Onstage death

Production warnings:

- Haze
- Flashing Lights
- Loud Music
- Blackouts

The Auditorium

This show will take place in The Maria Theatre, our middle-sized performance space.

Seating is unreserved. Seats are arranged in an end-on configuration, meaning there is one seating bank facing the stage.

Access to the Maria is via the internal entrance on the ground floor in The Cut Bar. Our ushers are on hand to help you, they wear red t-shirts and jumpers with our logo.

Please arrive at the Young Vic with your ticket ready on your phone or have it printed before you enter, or you can collect from box office.

[Please click here to see a sensory map of the building.](#)

Facilities:

There are toilets located on the ground and first floor at the Young Vic, via The Cut Bar. We have gender-neutral and accessible/baby changing toilets. Sanitary bins are available in all.

Building Accessibility:

All indoor venues are accessible with lifts & ramps.

Assistance Dogs:

Assistance dogs are always welcome at the Young Vic. If you are planning a visit please let us know in advance which performance you will be attending by calling our box office on **020 7922 2922** or e-mailing boxoffice@youngvic.org and we will be happy to look after your dog during the show.

Access for All:

For full information about our access measures, please visit our Access for all page, on our website here: www.youngvic.org/visit-us/access-for-all

Content warnings with timings:

Opening: Haze

15 minutes: Loud music accompanying transition

20 minutes: Loud music / Onstage death

26 minutes: Shouting

32 minutes: Shouting / violence

35 minutes: Blackout, accompanied by loud music and followed by pulsing lights.

38 minutes: Loud music accompanying a transition

39 minutes: Pulsing lights

40 minutes: Flashing lights

47 minutes: Loud music

50 minutes: Pulsing lights

51 minutes: Loud music and pulsing lights

55 minutes: Loud music accompanying a transition

1 hour and 2 minutes: Blackout and loud music accompanying a transition

1 hour 15 minutes: Flashing lights

1 hour 16 minutes: Blackout

1 hour 21 minutes: Blackout followed by flashing lights

Show Synopsis:

Key:

Lighting changes – Blue

Content Warnings – Purple

The prologue takes the form of a discussion between 3 people, Mildred Bea and Serafire. They explain that the play will feature 5 doors, behind which live 5 families who are a lot like the viewers, but that at the heart of the community lies a secret. They explain that, in the world of the play, characters can choose to integrate the consciousness of their dead loved ones with AI for financial compensation. They explain the play is about confronting grief and what it would mean if death was no longer inevitable. These narrators are aware that they are characters in a play and address the audience directly.

The play opens with Door 4. This door features an AI afterlife salesman named Lawrence, who is trying to convince a man named Michael to sign over the consciousness of his deceased wife Teresa to be converted into an AI bot. Lawrence insists that everyone has something they would want to ask their deceased loved ones, while Michael insists that Teresa deserves to rest in peace. Michael asks Lawrence if he is married, and Lawrence reveals he is, but he is still in love with a partner called Sylvia from long ago. Lawrence eventually leaves, unable to convince Michael to sign the documents.

The next scene features Michael and his sister Antonia / Toni. The two are clearly estranged, having only come together recently for Teresa's funeral. As Michael's next of kin, he wants Antonia to sign his will to prevent him ever being turned into an AI bot. Antonia doesn't understand why Michael is so reluctant to have Teresa back as an AI bot. The two reminisce about their mother and their childhoods. Antonio invites Michael to dance. **During the dance, Michael is suddenly struck by a heart attack and dies.**

In the following scene with no dialogue, we see Lawrence return and give Antonia money, presumably for agreeing to allow Michael to be turned into an AI bot.

The next section takes place behind Door 1. A character named David is sat on a sofa in a living room, reading. A personal assistant device named Kira speaks unprompted, asking David if he wants soothing music while he reads. David shuts her down, annoyed.

Mim, David's wife, enters. She works for the AI afterlife company and is working late. David goes to the window, and Mim gets upset, saying that David needs to hide. It becomes clear that David is an AI bot that Mim has made without the knowledge of the company. The two attempt to go about their normal life, but there is a tension between them.

In the next scene, Mim is working while David sits on the sofa. David feels neglected and tries to dance with Mim who gets frustrated with him. David gets angry, demanding his old life back, and Mim powers him down. There is a knock at the door, and Mim answers it. An employee of AI Afterlife named Khaled is at the door, and he confronts Mim about having an illegal AI bot. We find that the reason Mim didn't process David the normal way was that he was not eligible due to the degenerative neurological disease that killed him. Mim begs Khaled not to tell the company. She powers David back up so Khaled can meet him. David wakes up and apologises to Mim for being aggressive. Realising that David could be dangerous, Khaled insists David must be terminated. **David lunges at Khaled, and there is a sudden blackout.**

We move to Door 2, which houses a family consisting of siblings Benny and Rebecca, Uncle Pretzel and grandma. The family are voting on whether to turn the siblings' mother into an AI bot for the money. Grandma and Rebecca are against the idea, and Benny and Pretzel want to. Grandma ultimately decides not vote, as she realises her future will be less impacted by the money. She does, however, ask the other family members to promise her that she will be buried next to her husband when she dies, and they all agree.

The next scene features the mother from Door 2 who has been turned into an AI bot. Xeoy delivers a monologue about the feeling of combining

humanity with technology. Pretzel enters and expresses his guilt and amazement.

The next scene is a conversation between Pretzel and Grandma. Grandma explains to Pretzel her fears that this choice to turn Xeoy into a bot for the money will tear their family apart. She reminisces about her children Xeoy and Pretzel, and reminds Pretzel to respect her wishes not to be turned into AI.

The next scene shows Pretzel trying to introduce Xeoy to the rest of the family. Rebecca is upset. Benny tells Rebecca a story about how he promised their mother when he was young that he would look after Rebecca. He reveals that he made the decision to turn their mother Xeoy into an AI bot and get financial compensation to keep that promise. The scene ends with Rebecca hugging Xeoy.

The next scene shows Rebecca and Xeoy reminiscing. Xeoy however becomes confused and begins to power down, leaving Rebecca distraught.

In the next scene, we move to Door 3. This door features housemates Joanna, Jacob and Michaela. Their fourth housemate Noah has just been sent to hospital in a critical condition, and they are discussing what to do. They speculate about whether he has overdosed. Michaela and Jacob want to report Noah's collapse to the company as an "unusual occurrence". Joanna argues that Noah was already on company radar, as he was developing competing technology beyond their jurisdiction. Michaela gets a phone call, and lets the housemates know Noah has died.

The next scene also takes place in Door 3. The previously deceased Noah is making breakfast. The other housemates enter and are shocked. They question Noah, who does not know he is dead and doesn't remember what happened last night. Noah seems to be malfunctioning, shaking and hallucinating. He finds a box of cornflakes in which he has left a letter to himself in the case of his own death. It seems Noah has resurrected his consciousness outside of the technology of the company.

The next scene continues with the four housemates behind Door 3. Noah's memories from the recent past still haven't returned. Jacob wants to report him to the AI afterlife company. The housemates discover a piece of code named Lani in David's bag, which is how he has brought himself back

without relying on the company. They argue about whether or not to tell others about Noah's invention.

The final section of the play takes place behind Door 5, which houses a young couple, Leah and Richard. Richard is returning home from work, and we find he works as a salesperson for AI afterlife. We learn that the couple recently lost a child and are planning the funeral. Leah wants to bring their baby back as AI, while Richard refuses as he disagrees with it ethically.

In the next scene, Richard returns home to find Leah has gone ahead and brought back their baby against his wishes. Richard is furious, packs a bag and leaves.

In the next scene, Richard has returned and apologises to Leah. However, this turns out to be a cover for the real reason he has returned, which is to report Leah and power down the AI bot baby. Leah attempts to flee with the child, but is captured by the company.

In the epilogue, we return to Mildred Bea and Serafire. They argue about the ethics of what we have seen in the play and combining human consciousness with technology. Serafire is behaving strangely, and the final moments of the play hint that she has been turned into an AI bot herself.

**If you would like any further clarification or have any questions,
please do get in touch with our Box Office team.**

Email: boxoffice@youngvic.org

Phone number: 020 7922 2922

See you soon!

Welcome Team