Welcome to this introduction to ***Further Than The Furthest Thing*** by Zinnie Harris, directed by Jennifer Tang.

The audio-described performance at the Young Vic Theatre will be on Tuesday 11 April. There will be a touch tour at 6pm, the introductory notes will start at 7:15 and the performance itself at 7.30 pm. The production lasts for approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes, including an interval, and the live audio description will be given for by Eleanor Margolies and Miranda Yates.

The following introduction will take about ten minutes to listen to.

Notices outside the theatre warn that the show contains strong language, xenophobia, and depictions of pregnancy and infanticide. The show contains references to sexual violence, mental illness, self-harm and death. There is use of haze and loud sounds as well as flashing lights.

***Further Than The Furthest Thing*** tells the story of a group of remote islanders and is based on real events on that took place in 1961 on the island of Tristan da Cunha - a remote British territory, and one of a group of volcanic islands mid-way between South America and Africa.

The performance takes place in the round, with four rings of curved bench seating, entirely surrounding a circular floor which is about 8 metres in diameter. The seating is made of pale wooden board, topped by pads of recycled foam. The 4 rings of seating are cut into quarters by four aisles that lead down to the main playing area. These aisles are used by the actors as well as the audience. When they are not involved in a scene, actors withdraw but remain visible, sitting quietly at the top of the aisles, level with the highest row of audience seating.

The main playing space is covered with linoleum with a soft marbled texture in a pale pinkish brown. Throughout the piece, video projections onto the floor evoke the changing textures of moving water and waves. The colours are intense – deep purples and blues – and the movement hypnotic. In addition, we gradually realise that the circular playing area can revolve. At times it does so very slowly to give different perspectives on the unfolding action.

A room in a home on the island is created with just two items of furniture: a simple chair with a tubular metal frame and black wooden seat, and a wooden step-stool used as a table.

In Act two, new more industrial elements have been added to the set: four curved tables that together make up a circle about 4 metres in diameter, with gaps in between them so that actors can make their way into the centre of the circle. This broken circle is a smaller version of the shape of the auditorium itself.

A black swivel chair at one of these tables creates a managerial office while workers sit on grey high stools. Props are stowed under the tables, including a 1960s pale green tea set on a tray and a wooden box of jars.

There are 5 actors of diverse heritages. The clothing worn by the islanders is simple and influenced by elements of Japanese culture, using natural cotton, denim and heavy linens in blues and greys. And there’s a quality of innocence, or gentleness in their manner, that’s also reflected in the poetic simplicity of their speech.

**Mill Laverello** is in her early 50’s with pale, luminous skin and soft blue eyes. Her long blond hair is tinged with grey and worn in a relaxed up-do. Mill is slim and about 5ft 4 with an earthy energy, as one strongly connected to her environment, and her movements are deliberate and purposeful. Although a mature woman she retains an element of childlike wonder at the world around her. Mill has a neat appearance wearing a pair of navy baggy trousers in a heavy linen worn with a long-sleeved smock in the same material that finishes below the knee. On her feet are a pair of soft welly boots and she speaks in a soft Scottish accent.

Mill is married to **Bill Laverello** who’s in his early sixties. Bill is about 5ft 9 and stocky with brown skin. His short cropped afro hair is greying at the edges and he has a neat, trimmed beard. Bill is unconcerned about his appearance, and has a rugged and practical look. His clothing lends him the air of an otherworldly fisherman; he wears loose fitting mid blue cotton trousers that taper slightly below the knee to the ankle, and are held up by braces and worn with a matching blue t-shirt. Over this he adds a heavy cotton overshirt in the same blue. Bill, like many of the islanders, wears Japanese Jika-tabi shoes in a soft blue canvas that pull snugly up over the ankle and have a gum sole and a split toe. Bill speaks with a West Country accent.

Returning to the island fresh off the boat from South Africa is Bill and Mill’s nephew **Francis.** Francis is in his early twenties and tall, well over 6ft. He’s slim with light brown skin and curly afro hair. Francis seems constrained by his clothing. He wears heavy mid-grey trousers that finish just shy of his ankles with a pale shirt patterned by a faint stripe, worn with a tie knotted at the collar. Over this he wears a grey canvas jacket and on his feet are a pair of grey suede lace-up boots. Initially Francis’ movements lend him a youthful air, that’s a little awkward. As the story unfolds, he gains in confidence, his posture more upright and strong and he speaks with a northern accent.

Also on the island is **Rebecca** who, like Francis, is in her early twenties. Rebecca has a pale make-up free complexion and is of mixed Japanese and white British appearance. Rebecca has thick neck length dark brown hair that’s initially worn with the sides pulled back. When we first meet her, she is about 7 months pregnant and sits at the top of one of the aisles. Rebecca wears a comfortable long-sleeved navy dress in a heavy linen fabric. The dress finishes just below the knee and is fastened on one side of the neck and at the cuffs by neat brown buttons. Like Bill she wears jika-tabi shoes. Rebecca has a grounded energy, comfortable in her own stillness as she lets others speak. Though pregnant, she doesn’t touch her bump and she moves freely unconstrained by her growing shape.

Francis introduces us to **Mr Hansen**, a factory owner from South Africa. Hansen is in his forties, with light olive skin, short salt and pepper hair and a trimmed beard and moustache. His sharp eyes are watchful as he takes in the islanders and his new surroundings. He wears a sharp suit in pale blue, with a grey silk tie and matching patterned silk handkerchief. Over his suit he wears a fine, pale cream wool coat, and he speaks with a South African accent.

The performance begins as a singer walks through the space, her soft vocals casting an ethereal ambiance to the island setting. The young woman represents the embodiment of the island and is in her early thirties with light brown skin and large dark eyes that are decorated above the brow and at the side by small white pearls. Her long dark hair is worn up in a blue cloth wrap and she wears a loose fitting navy blue dress that finishes below the knee. She moves gracefully and is invisible to the other characters.

In Act 2, Mill and Rebecca both wear a very pale pink aprons of heavy cotton that cross over at the back and has two wide pockets that sit flat at the front. Bill now wears a pale pink boilersuit.

**Cast and Production Credits**

Mill is played by **Jenna Russell**

Bill is played by **Cyril Nri**

Francis is played by **Archie Madekwe**

Rebecca is played by **Kirsty Rider**

Mr Hansen is played by **Gerald Kyd**

And the singer is **Shapla Salique**

The design is by **Soutra Gilmour** with lighting by **Prema Mehta**

Video Deign is by **Ian William Galloway**, Composition is by **Ruth Chan**, with sound by **George Dennis**, and the Musical Director is **Michael Henry.** The Production Drama Therapist is **Wabriya King.**

***The Writer is*** Zinnie Harris and director is **Jennifer Tang.**

That’s the end of this audio introduction to ***Further Than The Furthest Thing***. If you have further questions or would like to book for the touch tour, please contact the Young Vic box office on 020 7922 2922.