Welcome to this introduction to ***Passing Strange***. There will be two audio described performances: on Saturday 22 June at 2.30pm and on Tuesday 25 June at 7.30pm For both performances touch tours will be 90 minutes before the show and the introductory notes will start fifteen minutes before the show begins. The production lasts for approximately 2 hours and 35 minutes, with one twenty-minute interval, and the live audio description will be given by Miranda Yates and Eleanor Margolies. These introductory notes will take about 10 minutes to listen to.

**Please note** there is loud music throughout, the use of haze and flashing lights, and strobe lights are used at the beginning of Act 2. **Production content warnings include**, themes of grief and bereavement including the death of a parent, strong language, including racial slurs and sexually explicit language, discussions about and depiction of drug use, discussions and depiction of sex work, depictions of violence, political unrest and rioting. Mentions of slavery and passing mention of Nazism.

The Young Vic describes the show like this: ***A young musician sets out on an electrifying musical odyssey to find himself and his place in the world, swapping his middle-class L.A. upbringing for punk rock and protest in 1980s Amsterdam and Berlin.***

There is an ensemble of seven performers, and a band of four musicians who are on stage throughout, and several of the actors play multiple characters. Props and costumes are used to help evoke locations, and we are always guided by the voice of the **Narrator**.

The Narrator is a Black man in his late forties with brown skin, close cropped black hair and a thin moustache. He has an athletic toned physique, soulful eyes and a charismatic charm as he describes the adventures of his younger self. He wears the same costume throughout, a pale green boiler suit worn with the cuffs and trousers turned back, with a black vest underneath and black boots. Occasionally during the performance he pulls the top half of his boiler suit down, securing it around his waist by tying the arms. When he first arrives he’s also wearing a black fedora style hat with a broad brim.

The set is open to us as we come in. The audience benches are in long rows facing the stage, with further seating wrapping around the space on balcony levels. The stage is raised about a metre above the stalls level of the auditorium. The floor of the playing area is triangular, with the front edge of the stage as the broadest side, and the two shorter sides receding away from us to a point at the back in the centre.

The walls are white, with the ceiling also following a triangular shape, angled downwards to a point in the middle of the back wall, with banks of coloured lights along the angled edges. This gives the space a vaulted scale, creating the feeling that we are in much larger arena style setting. The walls can also be used as screens for video projection, showing a variety of imagery including abstract or psychedelic patterns, a bank of smaller screens, blown up photographs, and live video of the action on stage, including faces in close up, or a live view of the audience itself. The playing area sits within a black frame, with huge arena speakers suspended to either side, and more speakers hanging down across the top.

However, the stage also evokes a much more intimate space, the corner of a music studio. There are rugs on the floor, and distinct areas for each of the four musicians. On the left, there is a red keyboard on a stand, and a guitar; a little further is another keyboard and a bass guitar, and sitting in the point of the triangle is clear Acrylic drum booth containing a drum kit and an old-fashioned standard lamp, while on the right there is another keyboard set up and an electric guitar on a stand. In the centre in a square of light is a mic on a tall stand.

Along the two rear walls, there is a narrow walkway, about a metre deep. It’s raised about a metre above the stage floor. Initially there are a couple of microphones on tall stands along it. Hidden within each side of the walkway there’s a narrow section that can extend forward by a couple of metres like a catwalk for specific moments in the action. In the wall behind the walkway are three concealed doors that allow access to it. On the far left of the walkway in a small pool of light is a beat-up guitar case, with place stickers plastered across its surface, inside is a mustard toned electric guitar. Opposite on the far right in another pool of light is a mattress with a silvery eiderdown, this is the bedroom of the central character, known as Youth.

**Youth** is played by a young Black man in his early twenties whowears a white t-shirt with red Adidas trim on the sleeves and collar, worn with pale blue jeans and white trainers. His **Mother** is in her 40’s with short cropped afro hair, she dresses in a conservative style in a dusky pink skirt suit, worn with a pale striped blouse, low heels and a necklace of brown beads.

To create the LA Baptist church they attend, chairs are set in a row against the left wall on the walkway and lit by a sharp rectangle of light as churchgoers take their places, cooling themselves with saucer-sized fans. Later, four chairs create a car.

Here we meet **Terry**, and **Sherry** the bad kids at church. Terry has light brown skin and twisted neck length locks. Sherry also has light brown skin and long black braids. Both wear jeans and black T-shirts with their band name The Scaryotypes across the front and chunky black boots. **Mr. Franklin**, church pianist, youth choir director and the son of **Reverend Jones** is a Blackman in his 40’s with short, cropped hair and a neat moustache with large, animated eyes and a wide engaging smile. **Edwina**, described as ‘a teenage goddess’, is slim with light brown skin and wears her hair in short braids. She wears faded skinny jeans with a black mesh top and black satin bra top underneath and black boots.

Later in Amsterdam we meet **Renata**, an abstract artist and café waitress who wears her long braids under a red patterned bandana, and **Christoph**, an academic who wears red glasses and ties his locks back in a scrunchy. We also meet **Joop**, a body liberationist wearing a pair of cut off denim shorts and floral garland headband and nothing else. **Marianna**, a neo-hippy wears yellow ankle boots with cut off denim shorts, a cropped bra top and a crocheted cap.

Moving to Berlin at the height of the punk era, we meet **Hugo** a militant music critic who wears a studded black leather jacket and a black cap with his hair poking out of the top in spikes and hanging down at the back, his eyes are sunken in a pool of black and red eyeshadow. **Sudabey,** an avant-garde filmmaker and writer has a striking mane of bright red punked hair that pokes up from a black leather cap and falls in a thick curve over one side, her eyes and lips are outlined in bold black strokes, with red stripes across her cheeks. **Desi**, a den mother and social engineer, wears a battered green military jacket with wide lapels and has her long black braids under a pale bandana that’s worn with a green beret. Her lips are scarlet and her eyes are lined by thick kohl eyeliner. Finally **Mr Venus** is a performance artist, with a bright blue Mohican mane, his eyes and lips are heavily lined with black and he has a stripe of white and turquoise across the top of his cheekbones. He wears roomy black pinstripe trousers with braces worn over a long-sleeved black mesh top under a white graffitied vest.

**The Cast and Production Credits**

The Narrator is **Giles Terera**

The Youth is **Keenan Munn-Francis**

The Mother is **Rachel Adedji**

**Other parts are …**

Rev Jones, Terry, Christoph and Hugo, played by **David Albury**

Edwina, Marianna and Sudabey played by **Nadia Violet Johnson**

Desi, Sherry and Renata, played by **Renée Lamb**

And Mr Franklin, Joop and Mr Venus played by **Caleb Roberts.**

The understudy for the Narrator is **Brandon Lee Sears**

The understudy for the Youth is **Stephenson Ardern-Sodje**

And the understudy for the Mother and ensemble is **Simone Robinson**

**The Band include -** Musical Director **Jerome van den Berghe**

**Pete Billington**, **Ikechukwu Onwuagbu** and **JT Taylor.**

Set & Costume Designer is **Ben Stones**

Lighting Designer **Richard Howell**

Sound Designer **Tom Gibbons**

Video Designer **Will Duke**

Passing Strange is written by **Stew Stewart** in collaboration with **Annie Dorsen**, with music by **Stew Stewart** and **Heidi Rodewald**. It has been directed by **Liesl Tommy**.

This is the end of the introduction to *Passing Strange*. If you have any questions or require further assistance please call the Young Vic box office on 020 7922 2922.

Upcoming audio descriptions at the Young Vic include *A Face in the Crowd* with

Audio Described Performances on Tue 1 0ct, 7:30pm and Sat 26 Oct at 2:30pm; *Girl in the Machine* on Fri 25 Oct at 7.45pm and *The Little Foxes* on Thu 19 Dec, 7:30pm and Sat 18 Jan, 2:30pm.