

Pre-Show Information
Young Vic presents
The Earthworks



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Directed by **Andrea Ling**

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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: Approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. The performance will last for approximately 1 hour, and the remainder of the time will be free for you to explore the installation.

Content warnings:

- Discussions of death and grief, and scenes of a sexual nature.

Production warnings:

- Haze, flashing lights and sudden loud noises, particularly during scene changes.
- Ready-made custard, play sand and slime on stage.

Please note these show warnings are subject to change until Wednesday 3rd April, when the show will be finalised. For more information about when these moments occur in the show, please read the show synopsis starting page.

The Auditorium

This show will take place in The Clare, which is the smallest of our three performance spaces.

The maximum capacity is 60. Seating is unreserved. More seating information will be available closer to the performance.

Access to the Clare 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.

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

Show Synopsis:

Please note this synopsis is subject to change until Wednesday 3rd April, when the show will be finalised.

Blue – Flashing lights / haze

Green – Loud sounds / stage effects

Orange – smells

Purple – Potentially distressing themes / content

The play opens with Fritjof (**Mark Edel-Hunt**) Holding a rectangle which looks like an iPad and is emitting light in his hands. He carefully puts this away before it can be seen by anyone else.

We cut to a new scene where Fritjof is sat at a bar in a hotel in Geneva. He is approached by a new character Clare (**Natalie Dew**) who asks if she can buy him a drink. Thinking she is making a flirtatious advance, Fritjof explains he is married, showing Clare his wedding ring. Clare explains that he has misunderstood her, revealing that she is also married. Fritjof politely tries to leave, but Clare asks him to stay and drink with her, and he accepts. In a comedic scenic she asks his name and is then surprised by its unusual nature, explaining that she is English with little knowledge of Sweden. Fritjof asks Clare what she does, and she reveals she is a journalist. Fritjof is immediately put on his guard by this and wishes her goodnight in preparation to leave, but she protests she is different to other journalists and asks him to stay for a free drink which he cautiously agrees to.

Clare continues to ask him questions, finding out that Fritjof is a nuclear physicist visiting from Edinburgh University for the switching on of the Large Hadron Collider. The conversation between them is awkward and stilted in a comedic way. When Fritjof once again tries to leave, Clare finally admits that she needs him to stay because she needs his help. She is writing an article on the Large Hadron Collider and needs a scientist's help to understand it. He seems unimpressed with her lack of understanding, particularly in her use of the term "the god-particle". Clare explains she has a degree in biology and is the science correspondent for a London

newspaper. This assignment is her first big chance to prove herself and she is very worried she will fail. When Fritjof still refuses to help her, she explains that she doesn't want to be remembered for a terribly written article that will exist on the internet forever

Fritjof agrees to help Clare by answering her questions. He explains the Large Hadron Collider will make a black hole, but it should be so tiny it will collapse in less than a second. Clare pushes for the apocalyptic angle, asking if there is any danger and explaining she wants to approach the article from a human angle. Fritjof satirises this idea, joking that everyone will indeed die but not because of this. Clare wonders aloud if she should call her husband to get a personal angle, and Fritjof agrees that it is good to “speak to the people you love”. Clare admits that she shouldn't be drinking because she and her husband are trying to conceive. She says that she hasn't taken a pregnancy test as she was meant to and that her husband will call her tomorrow and she will have to make up an excuse as to why. She asks Fritjof why he isn't with his wife, but Fritjof dodges the question saying a man can be alone in a bar.

Clare goes back to lamenting her article, anticipating the negative responses it will get if anything isn't correct. Fritjof says that he could speak to Professor Higgs as they work at the same university and their rooms are next to each other. Clare gratefully accepts and asks if they could go now, but Fritjof insists this would be inappropriate as it is one in the morning. The scene ends with Clare asking him if he would like to split another bottle of wine.

The next scene shows Clare and Fritjof outside Professor Higg's room, drunkenly trying to find out if the professor is awake. Clare is trying to wake him up, and Fritjof initially tries to stop her but ultimately joins in. The scene ends with both of them calling his name outside his room.

The next scene opens with Clare and Fritjof in the office of a hotel staff member Herta (**Anemone Rasmussen**). She is asking for Clare and Fritjof's passport numbers and telling them off for their “rowdy behavior”. She explains that because of the upcoming event with the Large Hadron Collider the hotel is on high security watch. She asks both characters to empty their pockets. Clare argues but ultimately agrees, saying she will be

complaining on social media. Fritjof refuses to empty his pockets, and Clare supports him against Herta who eventually agrees to let it go.

The next scene shows Fritjof and Clare in Clare's hotel room. Clare is trying to figure out a way to get more alcohol, turning to the minibar in the room. Fritjof says they should eat something first, and the two have a short conversation about Swedish food. Clare then asks Fritjof what he has in his pocket that he didn't want show Herta. Fritjof refuses to talk about it, so Clare turns the conversation to the origins of the expression "the god-particle". Fritjof explains that the name was a mistake and ultimately it doesn't matter if the Higgs boson is found or not, which makes Clare accuse him of being a nihilist. Fritjof talks about the possibility of slowing down light, and Clare cuts him off by kissing him. She apologises, but he tells her she doesn't need to, and the scene ends with the two kissing.

The next scene opens with Clare and Fritjof in bed together in the hotel room partially undressed. Clare is apologising, and it becomes clear they were stopped from having sex because Clare has started her period. Fritjof jokes that she no longer needs to take a pregnancy test, and there is an awkward silence. Fritjof steers the conversation back to the article Clare is meant to be writing. Clare admits she no longer cares about the article, as it won't matter anyway unless it is bad and people can tear it apart. She turns back to her feelings of guilt around her husband, revealing that he desperately wants to have children whereas she does not. *She asks Fritjof if he and his wife have children, and Fritjof reveals his wife has died less than a year ago.*

The next section of the play contains discussions of grief at the death of a family member.

Fritjof tells Clare that his wife was an engineer who was fascinated with the Large Hadron Collider. He also explains that Clare is the first person he has kissed since his wife passed, and when Clare apologises he explains it's alright as his wife would want him to move on. He explains his backstory growing up in a mining town in Northern Sweden, how him and his wife used to take walk in the tunnels and how returning to them tomorrow to see the Large Hadron Collider feels like a betrayal of his wife. He explains how his wife died of a hereditary illness, and Clare takes his hand to comfort him. Fritjof says he thinks they should leave the room, and

Clare agrees. She begins to pass him his clothes, and notes that one item of clothing is heavier than the others.

The next scene shows Fritjof and Clare in the hotel kitchens attempting to make custard. Fritjof explains that custard is a non-Newtonian liquid, and that you could therefore run across it. He then becomes pre-occupied thinking about the speeds of different particles, while Clare hunts for the implements. They end up finding a large tub of custard in the fridge. Fritjof demonstrates that the custard is liquid, but solid when punched. The scene devolves into the two of them having a playful food fight with the custard.

The next scene finds Fritjof and Clare back in Herta's office. Herta is telling the two characters off for being in the kitchen which is out of bounds for guests. She threatens to call the police and charge them for property damage. Clare tries to bribe Herta, but she rejects this. She insists that Fritjof turn out his pockets. Clare protests, but Fritjof agrees, pulling out the same light producing device we saw him with at the beginning of the show.

The next scene opens with Clare and Fritjof back in the hotel room. Fritjof is explaining his strange device is "slow glass", which slows down and stores light to the point that it allows you to look into the past. He explains he was sent this by an old colleague, and that he and his wife used it to bring light and joy into their family home, creating a "living wallpaper" on the wall of their front room. This leads him to think about his wife and her funeral. He explains he coped alright for a few weeks after her death, until he came home to a dark house and realised the light from the slow glass had gone out. He avoided it for a few days, until one night under the influence of alcohol he chipped a piece off the wall and reactivated the glass, so it showed him his wife 10 years ago. He talks about how the mining town he grew up in is at risk of collapse. When Clare asks if he still feels he will be betraying his wife by visiting the Large Hadron Collider tomorrow, he explains he no longer thinks you can betray the dead as you are a different person afterwards; the person you were while they were alive dies with them. He then dictates the words he thinks Clare should write in her article about the Large Hadron Collider. Clare asks if that will be good, and when Fritjof asks if it matters, she explains she wants it to matter, wants to find meaning in the world.

The next scene takes place in the hotel lobby the next morning, where Clare and Fritjof meet each other again. Fritjof explains he hasn't been able to talk to Professor Higgs, but Clare says it's fine and that she has already written the article. Fritjof jokes that the world might end, and the two momentarily agree until Clare says that it won't and Fritjof agrees. Clare explains that the bus to pick up press is coming soon, and she needs to get ready. She gives Fritjof a hug and tells him to take care of himself. She then gets a call from her husband, and walks away talking to him, telling him she misses him. Left alone, Fritjof pulls out the slow glass, but then comes to the realisation he doesn't need to look at it and puts it away again. The play ends.

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

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Phone number: 020 7922 2922

See you soon!

Welcome Team