**The Homecoming Introduction**

Welcome to this introduction to The Homecoming by Harold Pinter. There will be two audio described performances: on Friday the 12th and Thursday the 18th of January. For both performances touch tours are at 6pm, the introductory notes will start at 7:15 and the performance itself at 7.30pm. The production lasts for approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes, including an interval, and the live audio description will be given by Miranda Yates and Eleanor Margolies.

The Young Vic warns that this production contains haze, sudden blackouts, loud and sudden jazz music during scene changes, loud and sudden drumming sound effects, and smoke from stage cigars and cigarettes.

**Content warnings include** themes of misogyny and gender stereotypes, strong language including explicit sexual language and sexist slurs, threats of violence and murder, particularly violence against women. References to rape, sexual slavery, and scenes of a sexual nature. Scenes of physical violence and onstage death. Derogatory language about sex workers and ableist language.

This introduction will last about 10/11 minutes.

There are six characters, five men from the same family, and one woman who has married into the family.

We first meet **Lenny**. He is a slim and slightly built man in his twenties, with brown hair in a short back and sides cut. When he first appears, he wears a dark suit and has a cigarette tucked behind his ear. Lenny often sits with one ankle resting on the knee of the other leg, adopting a pose of sophisticated nonchalance. Later we see him barefoot in navy silk pyjama trousers and dressing gown with a white vest.

His brother **Joey** is a white man in his late twenties, tall and slim, with dark brown hair falling with one lock over his forehead, and low, heavy eyebrows that give him a brooding look. He first appears in training clothes: a navy tracksuit with white stripes down the legs and arms, and a white roll neck jumper underneath. Later Joey appears in his boxing kit – boxer shorts, gloves around his neck and wearing soft flexible boots - white leather lace-ups. Joey is slow moving but full of pent-up energy, taking the stairs two by two.

The father of these two young men is **Max**, a white man in his seventies with freckled, pale skin. His once red hair is swept back in a Brylcreamed grey quiff, and he has a grey beard and beetling eyebrows. He wears black trousers held up by braces and his white shirt is open at the neck, showing his white vest underneath. Max has a slight limp due to a hip injury and uses a wooden walking stick, particularly to help him when sitting down or getting up from an armchair. On going out, he adds an overcoat and peaked cap.

Max’s brother, **Sam** has black hair swept back from his forehead, a grey walrus-style moustache and ruddy cheeks, and wears glasses with dark frames. He is well groomed and smartly dressed, in a double-breasted black suit with a handkerchief in the jacket pocket and a striped tie held in place by a silver tie pin. His broad chest and bulk add to his military bearing. To go out, he puts on a long jacket and chauffeur’s cap. When he washes up, Sam adds a striped half apron that used to belong to Max’s deceased wife.

Max’s oldest son, **Teddy,** is the tallest of the family, with wavy strawberry blonde hair is neatly combed and parted on one side. He’s in his mid-thirties, clean-shaven and carrying himself very upright. Teddy is last of the family to appear, wearing a black raincoat, and carrying a brown leather suitcase. Under his coat he wears a smart dark brown two-piece suit, with a pale shirt, dark red tie, and a rust toned knitted wool tank top. His shoes are tan loafers.

Teddy’s wife, **Ruth**, is a petite white woman, with dark brown hair in a pixie cut. She first appears in an iconic 1960s outfit: a cream mini-dress with a funnel neck, three-quarter length sleeves and knee-high black patent leather boots. Over this she wears a leather coat in burnt orange. Her nightwear is a black silk slip to just past the knee with a black sheer dressing gown with marabou feathers on the cuffs and black mules with a low heel. For Sunday lunch, she wears an ankle-length long-sleeved shimmering gold dress that has a high split and matching gold mules. Later Ruth wears tight black capri pants with a fitted cream blouse with embroidered detail on the cuffs and collar. A black bow at the collar and black patent shoes add to the demure look, almost that of a waitress, but not quite.

The action takes place in the living room of a London terraced house, with a staircase leading up to unseen bedrooms. The space before us is much larger than this would suggest and has an airy and abstract feel. In the pale- grey palette, which initially in low light seems to be much darker, there are just a few splashes of colour such as soft pink or a muted bluish-green teal.

The living room is on a square platform covered in grey carpet that thrusts forward about 10 metres from the back of the theatre into the auditorium and is about 6 metres wide. It’s raised about a metre above the level of the audience seats in the stalls. The seating wraps around three sides of the platform on both stalls and balcony levels.

In the back wall, there is a large opening, about 6 metres wide and high, like a theatre’s proscenium arch, with a section of plain white wall a couple of metres wide either side of the opening. This leads to a rear space about 3 metres deep, mainly taken up by a large staircase that leads up to the first floor. Three steps lead up from the bottom of the staircase to a half landing, then the stairs turn to the left for another 8 or so steps to the top landing. The landing then doubles back to the right, leading to unseen bedrooms. The staircase and landing have a painted wooden balustrade.

Just to the right of the bottom of the staircase is a doorway that leads out to an unseen kitchen and a downstairs bedroom. At the same level on the opposite side is a small recess where coats are placed on hooks as characters arrive through an unseen door further back on the left. There’s a tall mirror near the coat recess, facing us on the wall that encloses the staircase. As people come and go from the house, we hear the sound effect of a door opening and closing.

The few items of wooden furniture are spread widely in the large living room, and all the woodwork is painted in a patchy steel grey wash, adding to the abstract quality of the setting.

At the front edge in the centre is the empty frame of a small 1930s style fireplace and hearth. It has pale teal tiles with a stack of coal in the fireplace and a plain glass ashtray and a packet of matches on top. To the left in the corner is a metal coal bucket. On the floor on the right is a record player with a wire rack holding a dozen records. Further back are two chairs, both with their backs to the imagined walls of the room. The one on the right is Max’s chair, with wooden arms and a teal seat cushion. To its side is a small table with a plain glass ashtray. The chair opposite is a plain wooden rocker that once belonged to Max’s wife, also with a thin teal seat cushion. In the centre of the floor is a circular pale green rug, with a muted grey pattern, that looks worn.

Further back, on the left, there’s a plain wooden chair with a small side table – with another glass ashtray on it. Facing us at the back of the space, as if defining the imagined wall between hall and living room, there is a wooden sideboard with carved legs. On it is a tray with spirit bottles and glass tumblers, a pale blue soda syphon, and at the left end, a smoked glass bowl of lush green granny smith apples – a contrast to the muted tones of the room. Lastly, in line with the sideboard, to the right, is a low three-seater sofa upholstered in a dusty rose-pink velvet with three antimacassar cloths on the back of the seat.

Expressive lighting is often used to change the sense of the space and mood, occasionally highlighting heightened moments e.g. stark white light can close in on a character or outline one area or character whilst plunging the rest of the space into dark shadow. When we first come into the space it is open to us, but thickly wreathed in smoky haze, and so dim that everything seems dark grey.

**The Cast And Company**

**Joey is played by David Angland**

**Lenny by Joe Cole**

**Ruth is Lisa Diveney**

**Teddy is played by Robert Emms**

**Max is played by Jared Harris**

**And Sam is played by Nicolas Tennant**

The Designer is **Moi Tran**

Lighting Designer **Sally Ferguson**

Sound Designer **George Dennis**

The Homecoming was written by Harold Pinter and Directed by Matthew Dunster.

This is the end of the introduction to The Homecoming, if you have any questions or require further assistance please call the Young Vic box office on 020 7922 2922.