

**ARCADIA**  
**AT THE**  
**OLD VIC**

**RELAXED**  
**PERFORMANCE**  
**VISUAL STORY**

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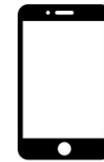
# YOUR VISIT

If you've never visited the theatre before, or haven't been for a while, here is some handy information to help you:



## Getting here

We are two minutes' walk from Waterloo (100m), Waterloo East (200m) and Southwark (200m) stations. The easiest way to get to The Old Vic is via public transport.



## Your ticket

You will have received your e-ticket when you made your booking. You don't need to print it — just show it on your smartphone and it will be scanned. Keep your e-ticket with you at all times, as ushers will ask you to show it when entering and re-entering the auditorium. If you lose or delete your e-ticket, our Box Office staff can help.



## Eat and drink

You can eat and drink in the auditorium but all drinks must be in non-glass cups or bottles. You can also take snacks into the show with you but you can't take hot food.



## Photography and videography

Photography is allowed in our auditorium before and after the show. We ask that no photography be taken during the show. There will be photography and video captured at the *Arcadia* relaxed performance. If you do not wish to be included, please speak to a member of staff.



## Airplane Mode

Please switch your phone to Airplane Mode before the show starts so that you can still access your e-ticket as required. We advise that you turn your phone to Airplane Mode (rather than switching it to silent) to make sure everyone's experience is as enjoyable as possible.



## Dress code

You can wear whatever makes you feel comfortable. There is no dress code and formal dress is not expected.



## Under 16s

*Arcadia* is suitable for ages 14+. Children under 16 should be accompanied by an adult. Babes in arms (under 18 months) are permitted at the Relaxed performance.

# WHEN YOU ARRIVE

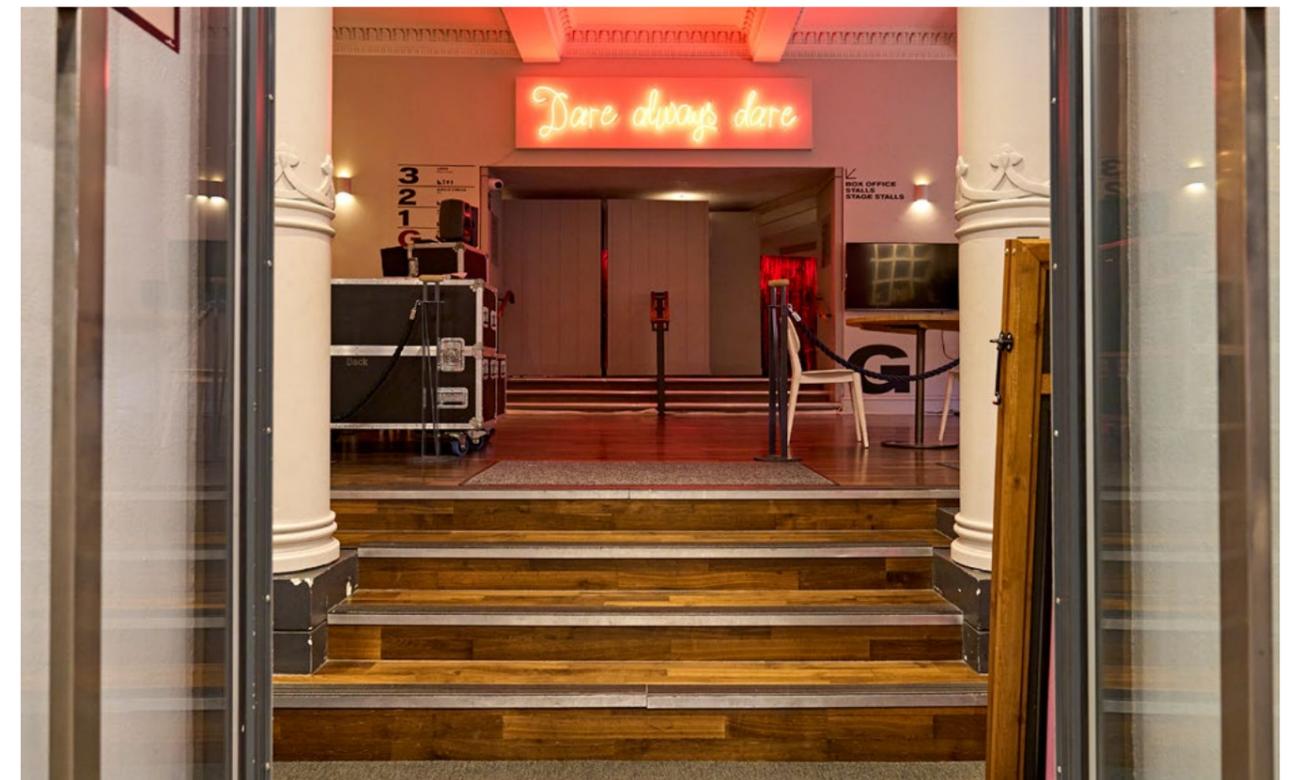
This is what the theatre looks like:



We have two entrances. One is on the road called The Cut which is directly in front of the theatre. There are dropped curbs leading onto this road via the pedestrian crossing. This is what the front entrance looks like:



There are some steps at this entrance:



The other entrance is on Waterloo Road and it is wheelchair accessible with lift access:



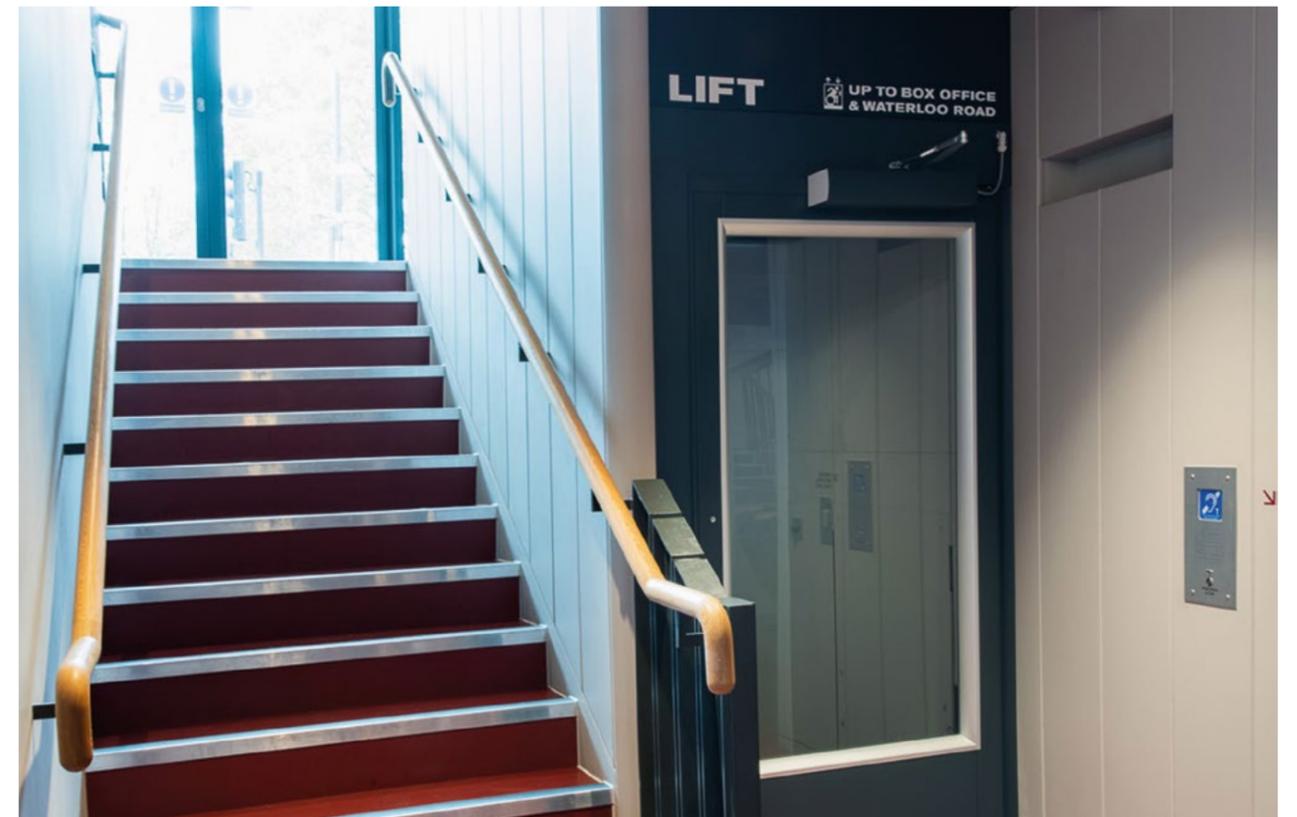
There is lift access to the Box Office, inner foyer and Penny bar and cafe on the basement level:



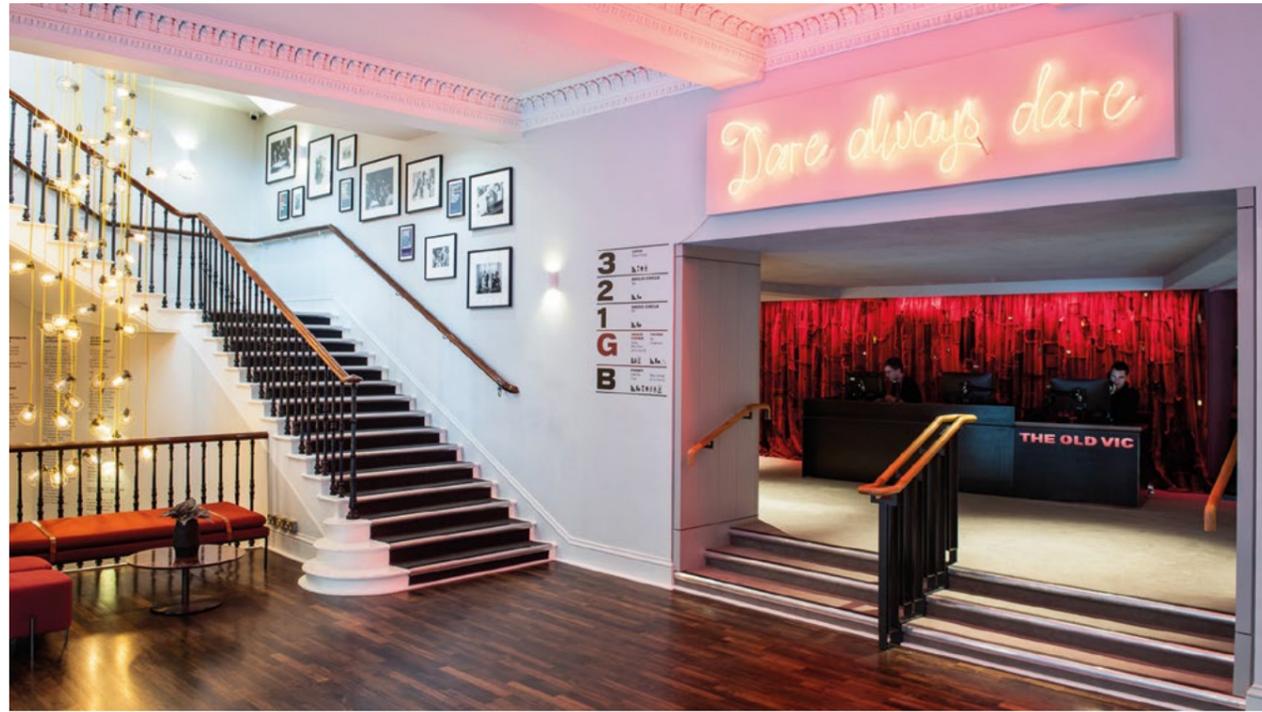
There are dropped curbs leading onto this entrance via the pedestrian crossing:



This is the lift exit:



**This is the foyer:**



When you arrive, for your security, you may have your bag checked.

The Box Office is in the inner foyer — it is straight ahead of you if you enter via the the lift, or round to the left if you are coming from the front entrance. It is wheelchair accessible from the Waterloo Road entrance. We have a cloakroom that you can use if needed, which is on the right as you come through the front entrance.

This is a member of the Security team — they will check your bag when you arrive:



This is a member of the Front of House team — they will check your tickets and show you to your seat:



This is a member of the Box Office team — they can help you if you can't find your e-ticket:

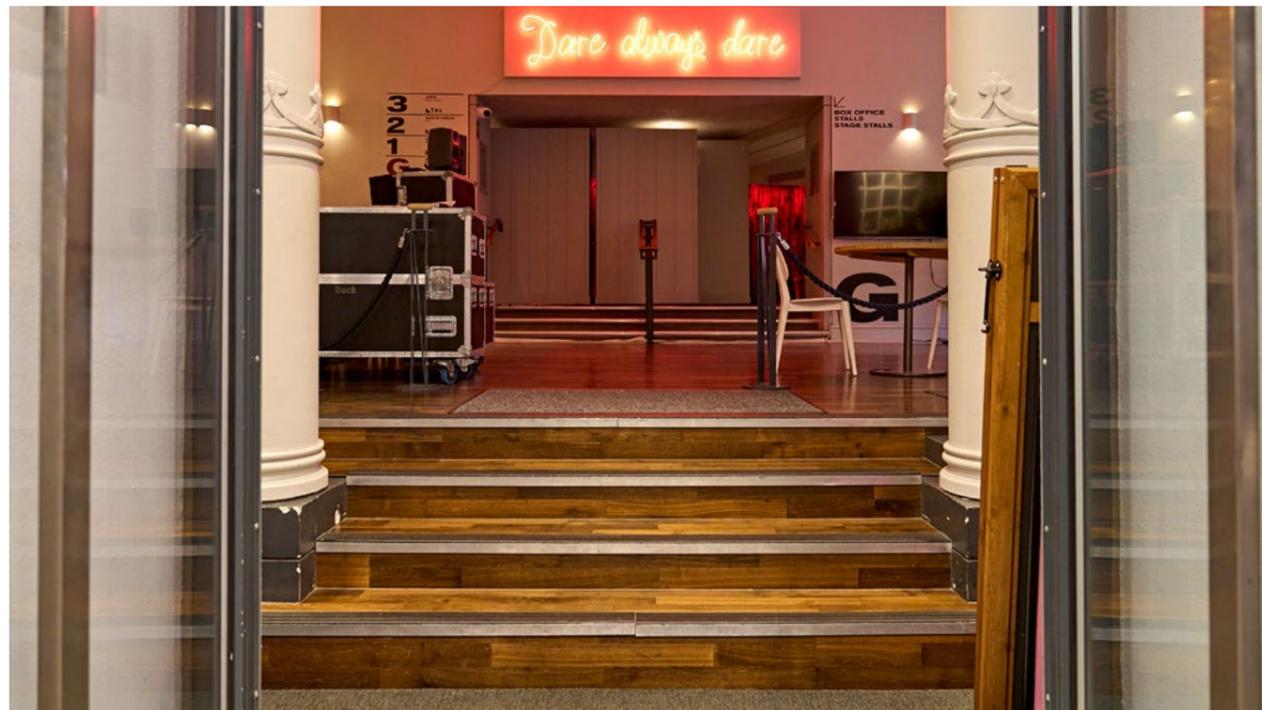


# FOOD AND DRINK

This is the foyer bar:



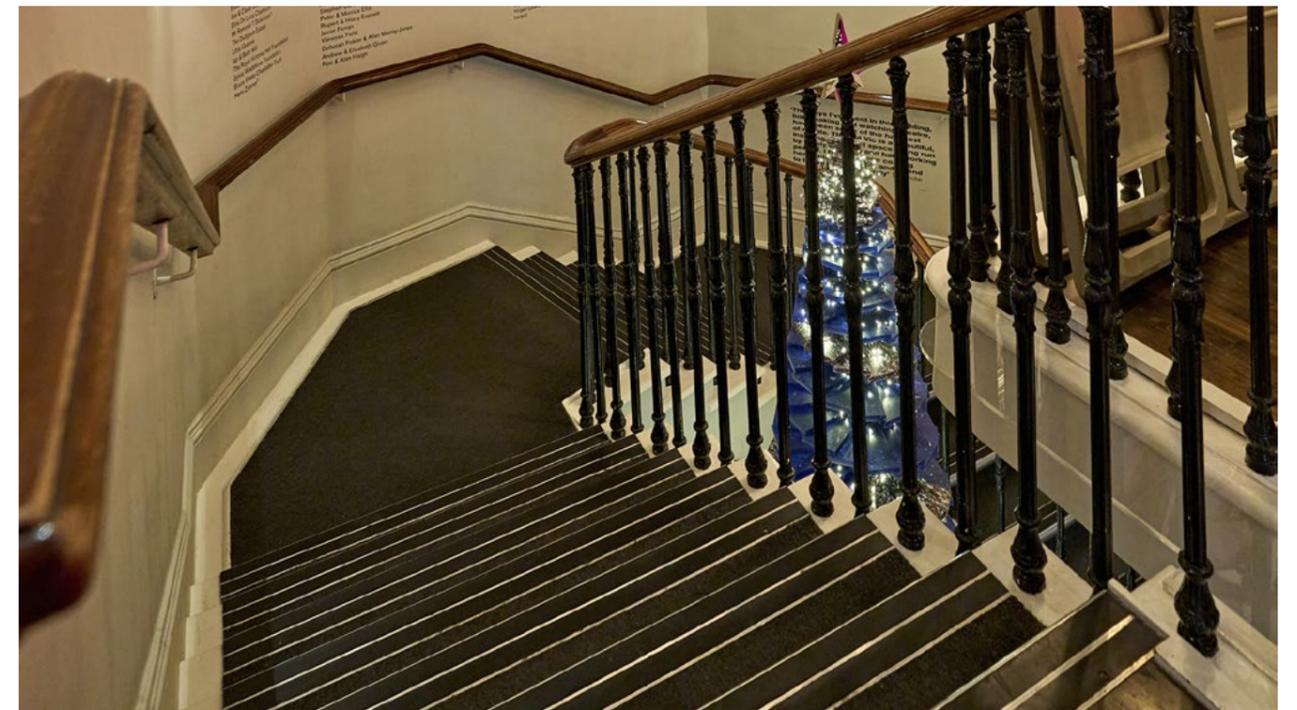
This bar is open from one hour before the performance, serving drinks and snacks. There are four steps to this bar. This is what the steps look like:



This is our basement bar and cafe, Penny:



This bar is open from one hour before the performance, serving drinks and snacks. It is wheelchair accessible. You can reach Penny bar and cafe via the lift or down 19 steps from the foyer. This is what the steps look like:



This is the Dress Circle bar, named The Borthwick, on level two:



This is the Baylis Circle bar on level three:



There are 29 steps to this bar. This is what the steps look like:



There are 49 steps to this bar. This is what the steps look like:



From an hour before the performance starts until the end of the show, both the Dress and Baylis Circle bars are open. On the day, you can order a pre-show drink (only those over 18 can purchase alcohol).

# TOILETS (BASEMENT)

In all toilet blocks there are hand dryers and paper towels to dry your hands. For Relaxed performances, the hand dryers in all toilets will be turned off.

In the Penny bar and cafe on the basement level there are two toilet blocks, one wheelchair accessible toilet and one gender neutral toilet. Please choose the toilet that feels most appropriate for you. There is lift access to these toilets.



This toilet block contains 11 cubicles only. This includes one baby change cubicle and one accessible cubicle, also known as an ambulant toilet:



This is the second separate toilet block which contains seven urinals and two cubicles, one of which is an accessible toilet, also known as an ambulant toilet:



This is the wheelchair accessible toilet which also includes baby change facilities:

This is the separate gender neutral toilet with an enclosed sink:



# BAYLIS CIRCLE TOILETS (FLOOR THREE)

On the Baylis Circle level on the third floor there are two toilet blocks. Please choose the toilet that feels most appropriate for you. There are steps to these toilets:



This is the second separate toilet block. This contains a block of eight urinals, with one cubicle that is also a baby change:



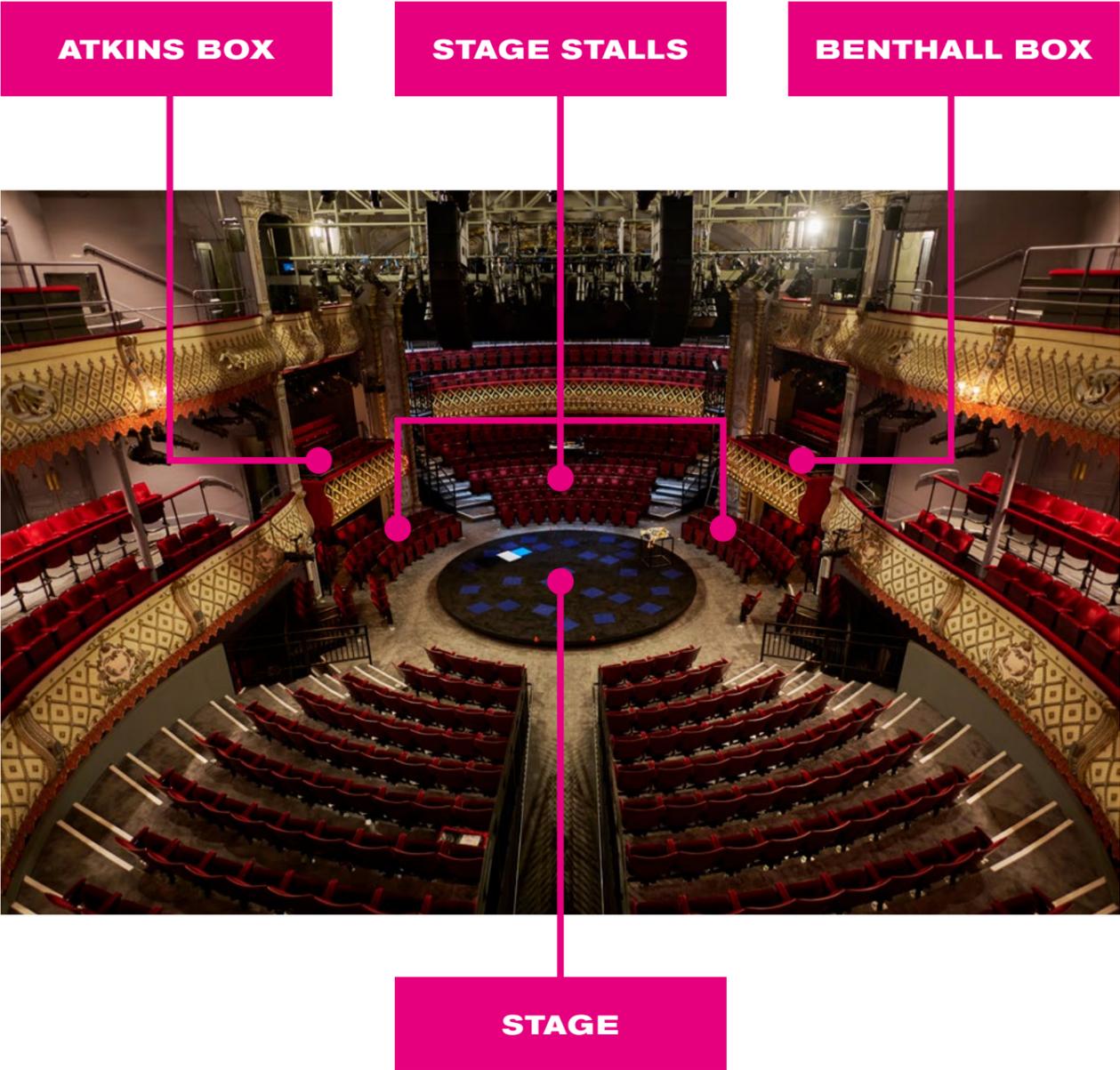
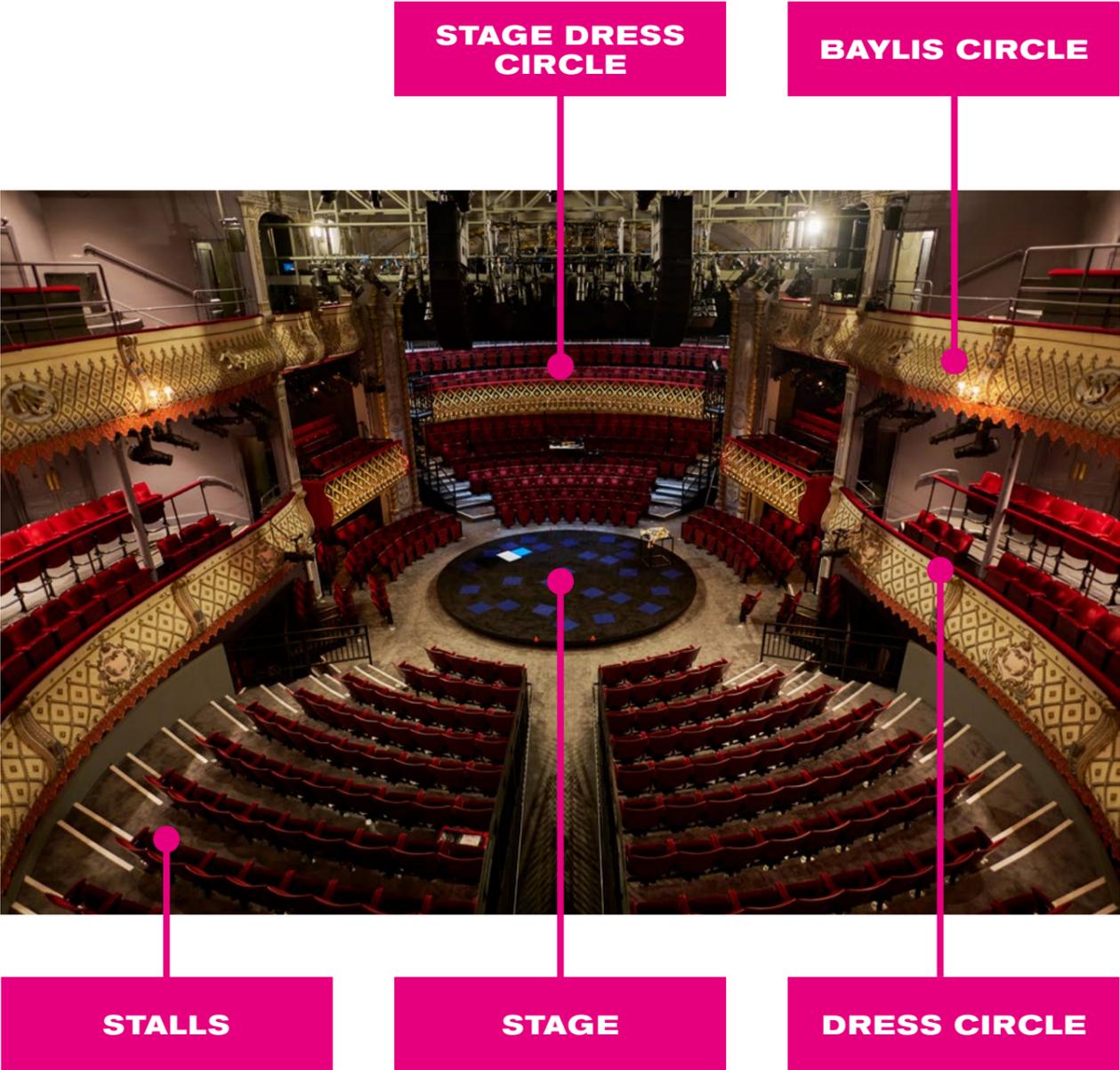
This toilet block contains 12 cubicles only. This includes one baby change and one accessible toilet, also known as an ambulant toilet:



# FINDING YOUR SEAT

When you are ready, you can go into the auditorium where the show takes place and find your seats. Your ticket will tell you which section, row and seat you are in. Ushers will be stationed at each entrance to help you find your way. The auditorium will be full of people when the show starts.

The theatre is currently configured In The Round, where the seats are arranged around all sides of the circular stage.



## Stalls Seating

If your seats are allocated in either the Stalls or Stage Stalls, you can enter the auditorium via the doors on the ground floor. You can check your seat number against the signs by each door to find the closest entrance. This is what the left and right entrances to the Stalls look like:



If you require step-free access to the Stalls, you will need to enter the theatre via the Waterloo Road entrance and take the lift up to the Stalls. You can then enter the auditorium through the central doors which lead to an aisle and step-free seating on all sides of the stalls. This is what the wheelchair accessible central aisle looks like:



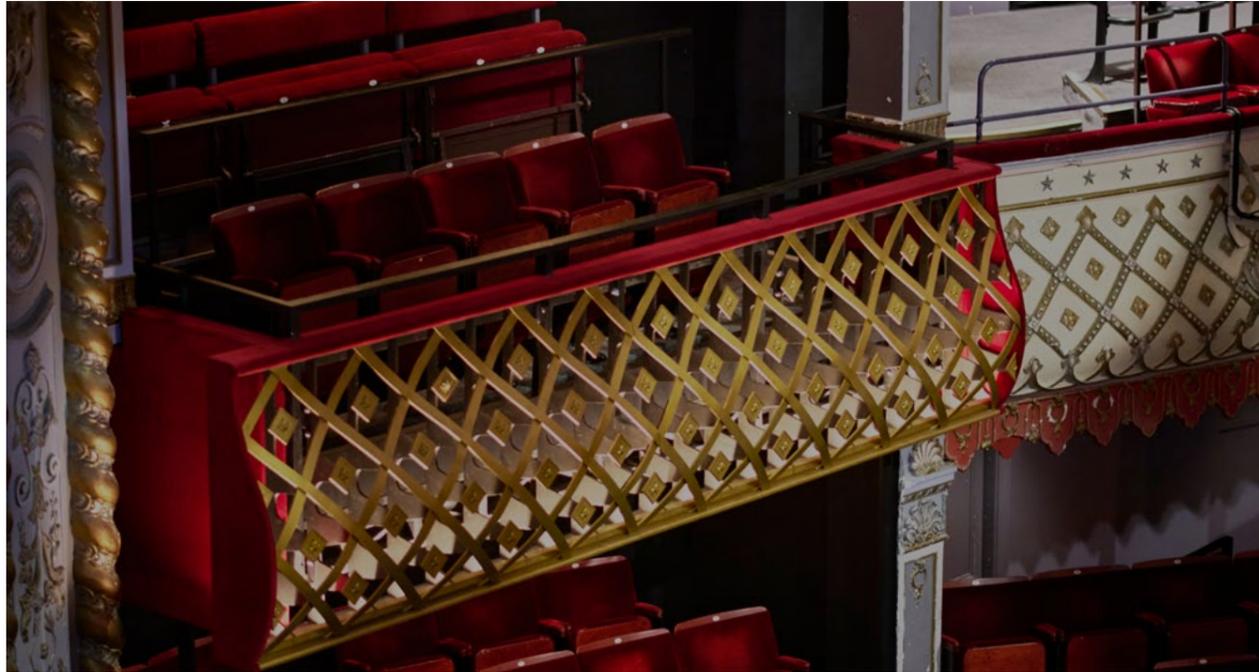
As the stage is placed in the centre of the Stalls, you may notice the actors walking past you through the aisles to enter the stage.

The nearest toilets from the Stalls are on the Basement level, which have step-free access via the lift.

## Dress Circle

If your seats are in the Dress Circle, you will need to enter the auditorium on floor one. There are two entrances to the Dress Circle, with seat numbers listed by each door.

If your seats are in either the Atkins or Benthall box, you will also need to enter through these doors. The door on the left will lead you to the Atkins box and the right to the Benthall box. This is what the Atkins and Benthall boxes look like:

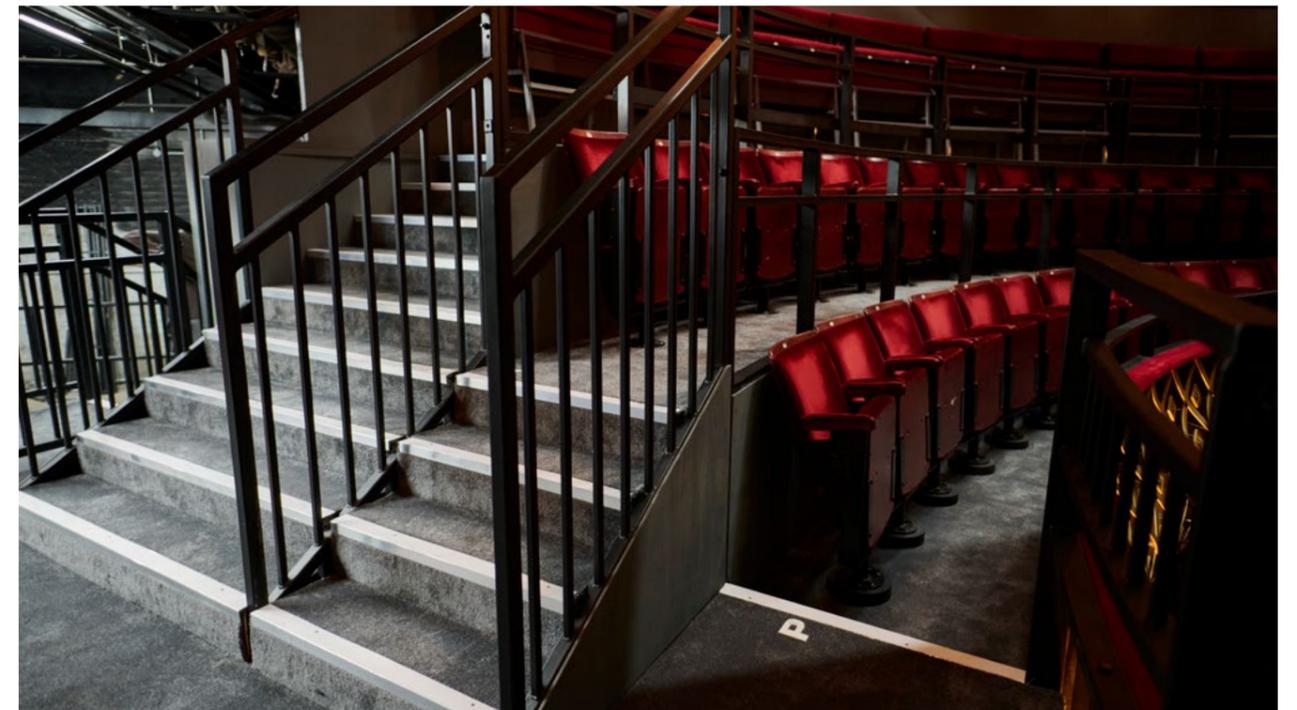
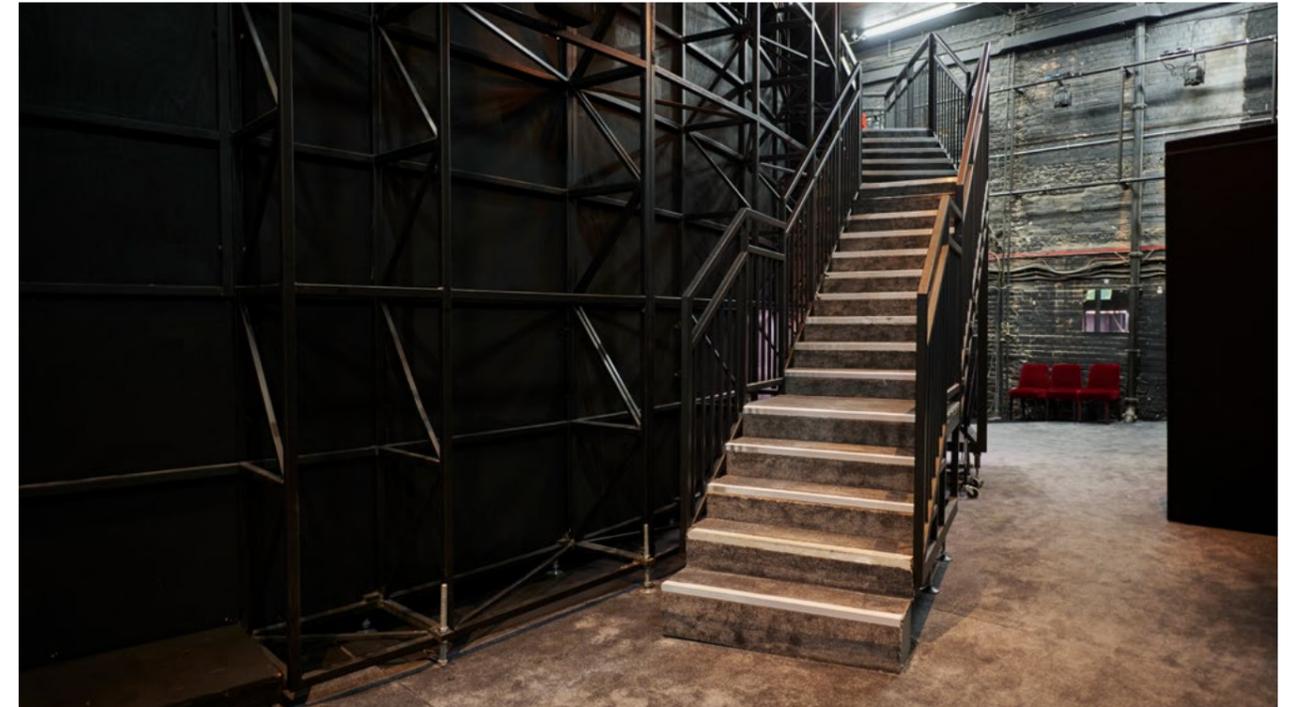


The nearest toilets for those sat in the Dress Circle, Atkins and Benthall boxes are on the Baylis level on floor three.

If your seats are in the Stage Dress Circle, you will need to enter the auditorium via the left and right Stalls entrances on the ground floor. These seats are on the opposite side of the stage as you enter the auditorium. There is sloped flooring which leads around the left and right sides of the stage towards the Stage Dress Circle. You can check your seat number against the signs to find the easiest route. This is what the route towards the Stage Dress Circle looks like:



There is a staircase behind the Stage Dress Circle that leads you to your seats. There are 21 steps leading up to row P, 25 to row Q and 30 to row R in the Stage Dress Circle. This is what the steps look like:



The nearest toilets for those sat in the Stage Dress Circle are on the Basement level.

## Baylis Circle

If your seats are in the Baylis Circle, you will enter the auditorium on floor two. The nearest toilets are on the Baylis level on floor three.

There is bench seating on both sides of the Baylis Circle, which looks like this:



# WHAT IS A RELAXED PERFORMANCE?

Relaxed performances are designed for those who benefit from a more informal theatre environment.

- You can make as much noise as you like during the show
- During the performance you may come and go from the auditorium as you please
- Some lights will be kept on in the auditorium so it doesn't get too dark
- If you'd like a break during the show, there is a chill out area in Penny bar and cafe, where noise will be minimal. There is also a chill out area in our Dress Circle bar but this may have some surrounding noise.

The next half of this pack provides more details on what happens in the production.



# MUSIC & SOUND

In between each scene, music is played on piano and stringed instruments.

Muffled gunshots can be heard from the hunt taking place in the grounds of Sidley Park. These are sound effects rather than real gun shots.

In scene seven, a persistent throbbing noise can be heard from the steam engine, which is being used to drain the lake in grounds of Sidley Park. Later in the same scene, fireworks can be heard off into the distance during the party.

# LIGHTING

The stage is lit by two large ring lights, surrounded by several spherical bulbs which all hang from the ceiling.

Light circulates around the rings, as if in orbit, while the spherical bulbs pulsate with a warm light.

In the final scene, the lights are lowered slowly closer to the stage.



# CHILL OUT AREA

During the show you might feel that you need to take some time out. If you do, that's fine; find an usher and let them know. Ushers will be wearing t-shirts with The Old Vic logo on. They will take you to the chill out space where you can relax and return to the show when you feel ready.

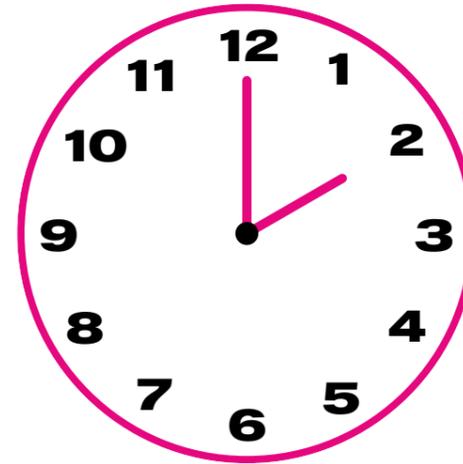


# DURING THE SHOW

The performance starts at 2pm. The first part of the show is about one hour 20 minutes long. There is then a 20 minute break, also known as an interval. The second part of the show is about one hour 10 minutes long.

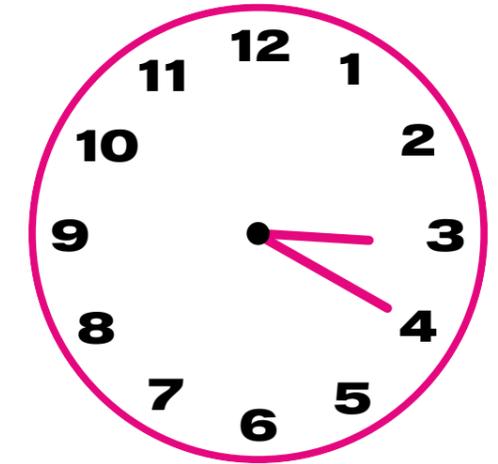
## Part One

The first part of the show will start at 2pm.



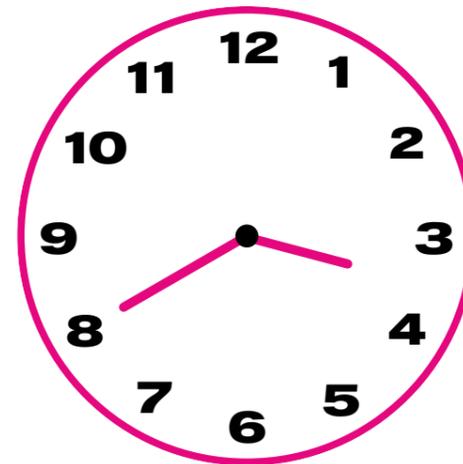
## Interval

This will last 20 minutes and then Part Two will begin.



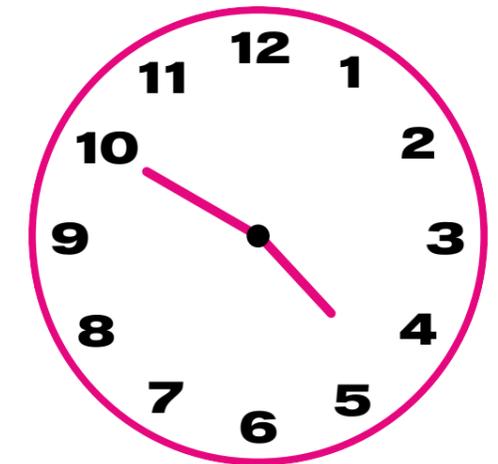
## Part Two

The second part of the show will start at 3.40pm.



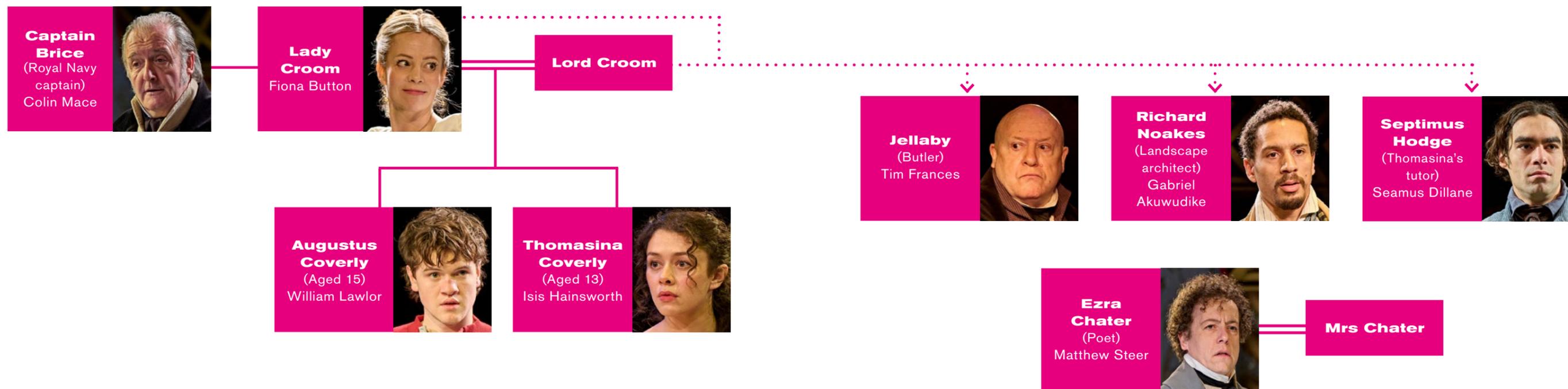
## The end

The show will finish at approximately 4.50pm.



# CONNECTING THE CHARACTERS

## SIDLEY PARK, DERBYSHIRE 1809



## SIDLEY PARK, DERBYSHIRE 1993



### KEY



Married



Siblings



Employees

# THINGS TO NOTE

## Watch out, spoiler alert!

Below are some of the more sensitive elements of the play that you may want to be aware of. If you would like more detail, you can read on for the *Arcadia* story in full.

### On stage smoking

In scene two, Hannah Jarvis smokes a cigarette. These are herbal cigarettes, so you may notice a smell in the auditorium while they are in use.

### Physical attack on stage

In scene five, Hannah slaps Bernard after he claims that Chloë seduced him.

### Gun shots

Muffled gunshots can be heard in scenes one, two and six from the hunt taking place in the grounds of Sidley Park. These are just sound effects rather than real gunshots.

### Dead animals

In scene six, Septimus presents a dead rabbit to Jellaby. It is intended as a gift for Thomasina, as she likes rabbit pie. This is just a prop rather than a real rabbit.

### Changes in time

*Arcadia* jumps back and forward in time, between 1809 and the 1993. The action remains in Sidley Park across these two periods, so the set and the props remain the same. In the final scene, the earlier timeline jumps forward to 1812 when Thomasina is almost 17. In this final scene, both timelines play out at the same time. Augustus Coverly, who we meet in 1812 and Gus Coverly from 1993 are played by the same actor.

## Get in touch

If you would like any information on exact timings of when these things take place, please let us know at [access@oldvictheatre.com](mailto:access@oldvictheatre.com) or call **0344 871 7628**.

# ARCADIA STORY

## PART ONE

All the action in *Arcadia* takes place in the study room of a stately home in Derbyshire called Sidley Park. The story jumps back and forth across two timelines, the first in 1809 and the second in 1993. The play takes place on a circular revolving stage, which slowly rotates regularly throughout the performance.

### Scene One

The play opens in 1809, where we meet 13-year-old **Thomasina Coverly** in an algebra lesson with her tutor, **Septimus Hodge**. Septimus is reading a poem, *The Couch of Eros*, by **Ezra Chater** who is a guest at the house. Thomasina has heard rumours that his wife, **Mrs Chater**, was found in 'carnal embrace' in the gazebo the night before. She asks Septimus what carnal embrace means, who reveals that this refers to sexual intercourse. Thomasina is disgusted by his biological description.

The house has a large garden, which is being re-designed by **Richard Noakes**, a landscape gardener with a passion for wild, romantic gardens. His design includes plans for a hermitage, which is a small dwelling or hut. Thomasina tells Septimus that it was Mr Noakes who was in carnal embrace with Mrs Chater.

Ezra Chater is convinced that it was in fact Septimus who was seen in carnal embrace with his wife and so he challenges him to a duel. Septimus admits that he did have relations with Mrs Chater but deflects Ezra's demands by complimenting his poetic talent and promises to write a positive review of *The Couch of Eros*. Mr Chater is flattered and inscribes Septimus' copy of *The Couch of Eros*.

Mr Noakes arrives and hears this exchange, just before Lady Croom and her brother, Captain Brice, arrive to speak with Mr Noakes. Lady Croom is unhappy about Noakes' plans to replace the traditional designs with a romantic wilderness.

A hunting party arrive at the house — the group includes the famous romantic poet and Septimus' school friend, Lord Byron.

Thomasina delivers Septimus a letter from Mrs Chater, which he places into his copy of *The Couch of Eros*.

### Scene Two

The room and items remain the same, but we are transported forward in time to Sidley Park in 1993. **Hannah Jarvis**, a historian and academic, enters wearing modern clothing.

**Chloë Coverly**, a young aristocrat, escorts the academic **Bernard Nightingale** into the house. Chloë mentions that Hannah has just published a best-selling book about Caroline Lamb, the British aristocrat and novelist who had a highly publicised affair with Lord Byron in 1812.

Bernard asks Chloë if she can avoid telling Hannah his real name, so instead Chloë agrees to call him Mr Peacock.

**Valentine Coverly**, a mathematics academic and Chloë's older brother, enters looking for the house game books, which he is using to research grouse population for his PhD.

Bernard compliments Hannah on her Caroline Lamb book and introduces himself as a fellow academic. He professes to be interested in a little-known poet named Ezra Chater. He shows Hannah a copy of *The Couch of Eros*, formerly owned by Septimus with the inscription from Ezra Chater. He asks Hannah if she knows anything about Septimus Hodge or Ezra Chater from her Sidley Park research.

Hannah's research is also focused on the Regency period — she is writing about a hermit who lived in the grounds of the house. Hermits were individuals hired to live in solitude on the estates of wealthy landowners in the 18th century, their dwellings are known as hermitages. Hannah mentions that the hermit was suspected of genius but was likely a lunatic and that he died surrounded by hundreds of pages of maths proofs.

Chloë enters, brings the game books to Valentine and accidentally calls Bernard 'Mr Nightingale'. Hannah realises that Bernard is the Bernard Nightingale who wrote a bad review of her book in the newspaper.

Now his identity is revealed, Bernard comes clean about his true motives. He has three letters that were discovered in his inscribed copy of *The Couch of Eros*, which he believes provide evidence that Lord Byron shot and killed Ezra Chater at Sidley Park before fleeing the country. He thinks Byron wrote two critical reviews of Chater's work and that Chater then challenged him to a duel. Hannah is unconvinced by this.

Chloë returns and suggests that they invite Bernard to the family garden party as Hannah's guest. Hannah rejects this idea and Chloë says she will invite him herself. She tells Hannah that her younger brother, **Gus Coverly**, is in love with her.

### Scene Three

Returning to 1809, Thomasina's Latin lesson with Septimus is interrupted by the butler, **Jellaby**, who delivers a letter to Septimus from Ezra Chater once again requesting a duel.

Thomasina wants to talk to Septimus about her new mathematical ideas about geometry. She doesn't understand why all the equations she maps in her geometry lessons make straight lines and curves. She thinks that God must have more complex equations to map shapes in nature and so she aims to plot the equation for a leaf.

Once Septimus is alone, Captain Brice and Mr Chater arrive to confront him. They demand that Septimus either apologises or accepts the duel with Mr Chater. They are interrupted by Lady Croom who has come to find a copy of *The Couch of Eros* for Lord Byron, as he wants to write about it. She takes Septimus' copy of the book which, unknown to her, has the three letters regarding the duel hidden between the pages.

Septimus declares that he is tired of Mr Chater and will duel and kill him.

### Scene Four

Back in 1993, Hannah has found Thomasina's old maths exercise book and asks Valentine to look at it. Valentine explains that Thomasina is using an iterated algorithm to draw graphs — this involves repeating the same mathematical instructions over and over. Valentine is also using an iterated algorithm in his PhD work on grouse populations.

Hannah finds a note from Thomasina saying that she is working on a new geometry of the natural world. Valentine is surprised by Thomasina's claim, as this kind of mathematical thinking has only been around for the previous 20 years.

Bernard enters from the library. He has found a first edition copy of Lord Byron's work with a pencilled-in verse criticising Chater's poetry. Bernard sees this as further proof that Byron was at Sidley Park and killed Chater. Hannah points out that he doesn't have evidence to prove that Byron wrote those lines. Valentine tells Bernard that he knows Byron was at the house because he is written into the game book, which keeps a record of everything that was shot during the hunts at Sidley Park. Bernard leaves to retrieve the book.

Hannah continues to push Valentine to explain why he is unsure about Thomasina's mathematical discoveries. He tells her that Thomasina's workings are so vast that they would require a computer to run at such a big scale. It would have taken Thomasina a huge amount of time to run these calculations with just pencils and paper alone.

## PART TWO

### Scene Five

We start in 1993, Bernard is delivering his lecture on Byron to Valentine, Hannah and Chloë. He plans to speak to the press about his discovery. Hannah interrupts his lecture to show Valentine a letter that she has found, which gives more information about the hermit.

Hannah and Valentine pull out all the holes in Bernard's argument, but he continues to defend his theory. Bernard aggressively tells Valentine that the world is improved by poets and philosophers, not scientists. He challenges Valentine to explain the need for his grouse research.

Bernard tells Hannah that she should come with him to London. She interprets this as an invite to his lecture, but instead he suggests that she should come to have sex with him. Hannah declines and says goodbye to Bernard, but he says he'll be returning for the garden party as Chloë's date. Hannah slaps Bernard after he claims that Chloë seduced him.

Hannah and Valentine take a closer look at the letter Hannah found, which details the mathematical work of the hermit. The description suggests that the hermit was trying to disprove a law of physics, known as the Second Law of Thermodynamics, but Valentine queries this possibility for the theory hadn't been discovered yet. Hannah suspects that Septimus Hodge was the hermit as they share the same birth year and leaves determined to find proof.

## Scene Six

Back in 1809, Jellaby discovers Septimus arriving from the garden with two pistols. He had been waiting for the duel, but Mr Chater and Captain Brice did not show up. Jellaby reveals to Septimus that Lady Croom was looking for him during the night. He also describes how Mr and Mrs Chater, Captain Brice and Lord Byron all left after Lady Croom discovered Mrs Chater leaving Lord Byron's room in the middle of the night.

Lady Croom arrives and confronts Septimus about the letters he wrote to herself and her daughter, Thomasina. These letters were intended to be read if he died in the duel. The letter to Lady Croom is a love letter with graphic descriptions of her body. Lady Croom threatens to fire Septimus and reveals that she knows that he had an affair with Mrs Chater, who she caught in the night with Lord Byron.

Jellaby returns with a letter for Septimus from Lord Byron. Lady Croom, fearing the content of Byron's letter, tells Septimus it is improper that he receives a letter from someone no longer welcome in her house. Lady Croom invites Septimus to join her in her sitting room later that evening. Septimus then burns the letter from Byron.

Captain Brice is due to sail to the island of Martinique. He has employed Mr Chater as a plant gatherer to continue his affair with Mrs Chater, who will accompany her husband.

## Scene Seven

Throughout scene seven, the two timelines run alongside each other at the same time — the action across each century remains distinct while happening in the same space. The characters are unaware of the presence of those in the opposing time period. The Regency timeline has moved forward to 1812.

In 1993, Chloë shows Valentine the newspaper headlines announcing Bernard's claim that Byron shot Chater. The planned garden party is that evening. Everyone, apart from Hannah, is dressing up in Regency costume.

Hannah spots the beautiful, intricate digital images on Valentine's computer, known as fractals. He tells her that he made them by inputting Thomasina's set of mathematical instructions repeatedly through his computer, thousands of times more than she would have been able to in 1809. Hannah believes that this proves that Thomasina was a genius, ahead of her time and that Septimus later became the hermit. Valentine denies this as he thinks she would have been famous if this was true. Hannah reveals that Thomasina died in a fire on the night before her 17th birthday.

In 1993, Valentine explains the Second Law of Thermodynamics to Hannah. He tells her that Thomasina couldn't have been working on this as nobody knew about it at the time.

In 1812, Thomasina's older brother, **Augustus Coverly**, disrupts the lesson by telling Septimus that he knows his secret. Thomasina confesses that she told Augustus that Septimus kissed her in exchange for teaching her to waltz. He says that it wasn't a proper kiss.

Lady Croom arrives and tells Septimus about her new dahlia sent from her brother, Captain Brice, who has now married Mrs Chater. At the same time, Hannah finds an entry in a garden book that states Mr Chater discovered a new dahlia in Martinique but then died of a monkey bite there. This confirms that he didn't die in a duel with Byron.

Thomasina draws a diagram explaining the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Lady Croom asks Septimus if he understands her and he confesses that he doesn't. Lady Croom tells Thomasina that her lessons with Septimus are now over and that she will be married soon.

In 1993, Bernard arrives back at the house and Hannah reads him the game book entry that proves that he was wrong about Byron shooting Ezra. Bernard is humiliated by her new discovery. Hannah is going to expose him with a letter in *The Times* the next day.

Valentine enters, drunk, and tells Hannah that he has worked out that the diagram Thomasina made was of heat exchange, confirming that her thinking was well ahead of her time. Chloë enters upset — her mother caught her having sex with Bernard in the hermitage.

In 1812, Thomasina and Septimus are waltzing and kiss again. She tells him that she will wait for him in her room, but he refuses to go. She asks to waltz again before she goes back to bed.

In 1993, Gus finds Hannah alone and gives her a drawing of Septimus and a tortoise. This confirms to Hannah that Septimus is the hermit as a previous article talked about the hermit keeping a tortoise for company. Gus gestures to Hannah to dance with him. The final image of the show is Thomasina and Septimus dancing together, alongside Gus and Hannah who are also dancing.

# ENJOY THE SHOW



If you have any questions about your visit, please contact Danny, our Head of Front of House Operations:

**[danny.krohm@oldvictheatre.com](mailto:danny.krohm@oldvictheatre.com)**

Danny Krohm, Head of Front of House Operations

For more information visit

**[oldvictheatre.com/visit/ov-access](https://oldvictheatre.com/visit/ov-access)**

or call **0344 871 7628**

## **The Old Vic**

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[oldvictheatre.com](https://oldvictheatre.com)

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