

Faces in the Crowd

Audio Description Introduction

Welcome to this audio introduction to **Faces in the Crowd** at the Gate Theatre, based on the book **Los Ingrávidos** by Valeria Luiselli. The novel has been translated by Christina McSweeney and directed and adapted by the Gate Theatre's Artistic Director, Ellen McDougall.

In Mexico City, a mother begins writing her novel, but is constantly interrupted. In New York, a woman is haunted by the ghost of a Mexican poet. As the mother tries to remember the faces from her past, the lines between her and them blur, time folds in on itself and ghosts appear everywhere.

The audio-described performance will be on the 6th February 2020 at 7.30pm. Please check with the Box Office for the time of the touch tour. This introduction will be repeated at 7.15pm and has been written by Ruth James.

The play lasts for one hour and twenty-five minutes and contains haze and flashing lights. There is a content warning that this play contains swearing and sexual references. Alcohol is offered to the audience during the show. This production also contains three prolonged blackouts.

As is usual at the Gate, the theatre is in a different configuration. The entrance for this show is through the large door level with the foyer, so that we emerge on the level of the acting space, which we have to cross to reach the seats. The theatre is set out as a long, open space, 15 metres by 6 metres, with rows of black velvet benches on three sides for the audience. Our entrance is set into one of the longer walls, with a couple of rows of benches to the left and a raised balcony with more benches to our right. Opposite us is a single bench, against the other long wall.

In the middle of the single rows are set large, square wooden boxes that contain props and costumes. These are painted grey, as are the floor and walls of the theatre. It's a dusty, matt grey that absorbs any light. A third wooden box is set below the balcony. Beside it is an acoustic guitar on a stand.

In front of the entrance, the space is empty, with a long grey rectangular table to our left, in the centre. The table is 2 metres long and 1 metre wide and is very sturdy, since the actors jump up onto it, walk along its length, or lie on it. At one end is a wooden stool with a beige embroidered cushion on it, and on each side are two wooden chairs. One chair is tall and ladder-backed, painted orange with flowers and patterns, and the other is painted yellow with a brightly embroidered red cushion.

On top of the table, near us, is a small baby monitor. At the far end sits an architect's model of a large, sprawling house with white walls and roofs, still undergoing construction, with loose bits of white plastic wall and tiny green trees lying near it. The model is lit by a white anglepoise lamp and there is a small black transistor radio beside it.

The short wall beyond the table has a window seat below a covered window, with a wooden, slatted blind lowered over it. The window seat holds a metal pot with a small, leafless tree with tiny buds, a small round pot of brown make-up, a microphone and a glass of water. In front is another guitar stand.

The entrance for the actors is at the far left in the long entrance wall.

Locations are suggested by the actions of the actors, by the sound design, and also by the lighting, which illuminates different areas of the space to indicate where we are, either in New York or in Mexico City; in a house, a bar or subway.

We first meet **The Woman**. She is the central character and addresses us directly, inviting us into her life and writing. She first appears amongst us, sitting on one of the wooden boxes. The Woman is in her early 30s, with long dark brown hair tumbling loosely over her shoulders, some of it scraped back into an untidy knot. Her fine-featured face is clear of make-up and she wears a Mexican-style black dress with multicoloured embroidery and white lace on the bodice, with a fringe of black bobbles on the hem. Her tights are bright fuchsia pink and she wears grey fluffy slippers with multicoloured pompoms on them, with thick grey woolen socks. Over the dress, she wears a long, baggy, light-grey knitted cardigan, its wool bobbed and

worn and the pockets dragged down and sagging. In one pocket is a small square notepad, from which she tears pages.

Her son, **The Boy** is next to appear. He's about eight years old, wearing a bright green dinosaur onesie and red and black striped slippers. The Boy has serious dark eyes, and a mop of dark brown hair. He plays inventively, using his toys that he carries in in a bright yellow rollbag. At one point, he assembles a play house with long white metal poles, and at another he quietly plays under the table, linking a wooden road together. The Boy also helps his Mother with her story, becoming a Detective in an oversized black jacket and well-worn brown hat.

The Woman's **Husband** also helps with the story, reading out some of The Woman's notes and roleplaying with her. He's also in his 30s, with greying short dark hair, that's slicked back from his intelligent, open face. The Husband has a lovely, warm smile and wears blue jeans, a white t-shirt printed with an old US advert for Mustang cars and brown leather sandals. He wears large round glasses with tortoiseshell rims as he works on his model, and also has a large expensive-looking watch and a gold signet ring on his right hand.

Next, **Dakota** arrives. She plays guitar and is **The Musician**. She's from The Woman's New York life and is dressed smartly in red cord mini-skirt, a black top patterned with lines of silver studs, grey tights and black DM boots painted with tiny coloured flowers. Her mass of black hair is held back from her oval face with a dark-blue scarf and knotted at the nape of her neck. Dakota watches the action attentively and not only provides the live music but also supplies The Woman with props to aid her story. Dakota is often followed through the room with a soft pink light as she sings and plays.

There are quite a few props used during the production, which are thrown down as they are used, so that once the production is ended, the floor is an obstacle course of abandoned toys, glasses, and other debris.

Cast and Creative Team

Cast

The Woman is played by Jimena Larraguivel

The Husband by Neil D'Souza

The Musician by Anoushka Lucas

The Boy is played by either Juan-Leonardo Solari or Santiago Huertas Ruiz

Creative Team

The Sound Designer is George Dennis

The Lighting Designer is Jessica Hung Han Yun

The Designer is Bethany Wells

The Director and Adaptor is Ellen McDougall

The Translator is Christina McSweeney

The Writer is Valeria Luiselli

If you would like any more information about your visit to the Gate Theatre, please email gate@gatetheatre.co.uk or call the Box Office on Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm on 020 7229 0706. Their website is www.gatetheatre.co.uk. Unfortunately, the Gate Theatre is not wheelchair accessible. There are 20 steps from the street to the foyer. For more information visit their [accessibility page](#).