

Trainers, Or, The Brutal Unpleasant Atmosphere Of This Most Disagreeable Season : A Theatrical Essay Audio Description Introduction

Welcome to this audio introduction to **Trainers** at the Gate Theatre, written by Sylvan Oswald and directed by Hester Chillingworth.

The play lasts for approximately one hour and 20 minutes, with no interval. Please note that this production contains some partial nudity, haze and flashing lights. The audio-described performance will be on the 17th March 2020 at 7.30pm. Please check with the Box Office for the time of the touch tour. This introduction has been written by Ruth James.

The only rule is to break the rules. In a parallel present, two queer bodies meet in the fallout of a second civil war. In a time of revolution, is love the most radical act? **Trainers** asks what separates us from each other, our bodies, ourselves, and how we might complete each other, exploring the different ways we can be lovers,

activists, humans, and what it takes to train for a revolution.

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, emerging onto a white floor. We cross this to the left to reach a rising bank of tiered black velvet-covered bench seats, with black walls and ceiling around them. These face an open stage composed of several tall steps or platforms of varying heights, placed around and behind a central platform of about seven feet square. The floors, walls and ceiling of the stage area are painted white, and are brightly lit when we enter.

The lowest platform near us is about two feet high and twelve feet wide. The first platform above it is another two feet higher, with another two platforms rising from it until the back wall is reached. A shallow alcove is set into the back wall, about two feet high and seven feet wide. All the platforms are empty, save for the central platform, which is crowded with objects, chosen

seemingly at random. The front row of the objects starts on the left with a mobile and continues to the right with a slim silver laptop; a biscuit tin; two statues of horses – one brass, the other china; an upside-down Exit sign; a plastic container of water; a large tin of paint and finally, another white china statue of a horse, this time rearing up, its mane flowing wildly. Amongst the rest of the objects are a white vase, a picture of Alpine mountains, a huge leaf-blower, a bicycle with a missing front wheel, a plastic bottle of crisp and dry cooking oil, a table and a blue plastic crate containing a jumper and a grey hoodie. There is also a revolving blue office chair and two carpets; one a Persian rug and the other a more modern one, with a geometric pattern. These rugs are rolled up and stand on their ends like tall pillars.

Immediately behind the central platform, hidden from us at first by all the objects, is a narrow pit, about two feet wide and four feet deep.

When we take our seats, the two performers are already seated on a platform high up and near the back wall.

They are **Nando** and **Nicki** and sit chatting and laughing as we arrive. The play concerns, amongst other strands, the lives of two people, one the unnamed narrator and writer of the text and the other a writer and revolutionary called Stephen. The performers switch between the two characters, sometimes speaking together, echoing each others' gestures and movements and sometimes working in opposition, grappling and pushing each other repeatedly in a semi-fight.

Nando is a tall, slender and graceful figure, elegant in black high heels and a long clinging sheath dress of a shiny black fabric which shimmers with metallic green glints as they move. The dress is high at the front, but does up at the back at the neck, leaving a diamond of bare skin. Nando is carefully made-up in a twenties retro style, with bright red lips and their black hair slicked down in small waves around their forehead and tucked up behind in a roll at the neck. **Nicki's** Brunette hair is initially worn in a short ponytail, with a thick fringe, but once down, is a layered mane that flows down below her shoulders. She wears a black dinner

suit, with shiny satin lapels, white socks and clumpy black Chelsea boots. Once the jacket is removed, a black lycra exercise top is revealed, showing off her muscled arms. Nicki has large blue eyes, while Nando's eyes are intensely dark brown. Both have finely delicate features and radiate a vivid intelligence. Nando's gestures are stylized and balletic, underlining and emphasising his words, while Nicki is more definite but restrained in her movements, although sometimes she breaks out in a violent and repeated action.

Initially, the lights remain bright on the stage area, but later, when in a pub for example, neon tubes in the ceiling glow blue, with a pink glow on the walls and a spotlight on the two performers. At another time, the lights glow a bright yellow, making the performers' skin seem almost green, or they flicker blue and white, or dim to a sepia haze.

Cast and Creative Team

Cast

Performer – Nicki Hobday

Performer – Nando Messias

Creative Team

The Stage Manager is Caroline Meer

The Production Manager is Andreas Ayling

The Assistant Director is Myles O’Gorman

The Sound Designer is Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley

The Co-Designers are Naomi Kuyck-Cohen and Joshua Gadsby

The Director is Hester Chillingworth

The Writer is Sylvan Oswald

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 as there are 20 steps from the street to the foyer. For more information visit their accessibility page.