Welcome to this audio introduction to **Leave Taking** by Winsome Pinnock at The Bush Theatre. The production is directed by Madani Younis, and the audio described performance will be at 2.30 on Saturday June 9th. There will be a touch tour at 1.30. The performance lasts for approximately 2 hours with an interval of 20 minutes

Leave Taking is described as ‘*a beautifully observed, moving account of a second generation immigrant family navigating the familial conflicts between generations and cultures.’*

It was first performed at the Liverpool Playhouse Studio on 11 November 1987 and has been performed a total of four times since including a production at the National Theatre in 1994. In her 2018 introduction to the playscript, Winsome Pinnock tells us

*‘I was told that it was the first play written by a black British woman to have been produced there. I also learned that it was the first time that a black woman writer and director, namely Paulette Randall, had worked together at that theatre*.’

In the small intimate Bush theatre the audience is seated in raked seating on all four sides of the rectangular performance area. The cast enter and leave between the banks of seats. The floor of the playing area is worn, dark wood, one section of the floor is a few inches lower than the floor around it and so creates a hardly noticeable shallow pit.

The introduction to the performance tells us

*In Deptford, Del and Viv are soul-sick. Del doesn’t want to be at home – staying out late, 3pm-the-next-day late, is more her thing. Viv scours her school books trying to find a trace of herself between their lines.*

*When Enid takes her daughters to the local ‘obeah’ woman for some traditional Caribbean soul healing, secrets are spilled. There’s no turning back for Del, Viv and Enid as they negotiate the frictions between their countries and cultures.*

*Two generations. Three incredible women.* Leave Taking *is one epic story of what we leave behind in order to find home.*

 The set for the performance is minimal and represents the homes at different times of both **Mai,** a Jamaican, Obeah practitioner, and **Enid,** a Jamaican immigrant**,**  and her 2 British born daughters: **18** year old Del and **17** year old Viv. When we take our seats, placed in opposite corners of the playing area are two chunky black wooden cubes about 2 feet square. There are also two similar oblong blocks standing on the floor of the playing area opposite each other. The oblongs are about four feet long by two feet deep. These blocks are multi functional during the performance, being used as seating, tables and at times opened to reveal they are also cupboards. The long side of one oblong is open and a storage shelf is just visible inside. The only other furniture is two simple metal framed chairs with wooden seats and backs.

 A small, vivid orange cushion lies on an oblong box. Near this a tray with white kettle and bright yellow mugs stands on a cube. In the opposite corner an assortment of objects stands on the other black cube: a small, dark figure, playing cards, the remains of a squat white candle, a lighter, a square wooden tray holding a collection of tiny bottles. A substantial paperback book lies face down.

The first character we meet is **Mai,** Mai is a petite, birdlike figure. Her jet black hair is close cropped and she has bright, dark eyes. She wears loose grey jeans, held up with a brown belt, the bottoms rolled up Her her blue baggy shirt tucked into her jeans. Mai has a heavy gold ring on her wedding finger and large earrings. Her bare feet and thrust into loose fitting sandals giving her a slightly, shuffling gait. Her spectacles are perched on top of her head.

**Enid** arrives to visit her for a consultation bringing her daughters. Appearances are very important to Enid. She .is a statuesque, smartly dressed woman in her 40s, a matriarch. Her short dark hair is stylishly cut and her make-up discreet. She first appears wearing a beige and cream check jacket with a box pleated salmon pink skirt and pristine white blouse. She wears discreet silver earrings and her shoulder bag matches her skirt. On her feet she wears well- polished, flat tan shoes.

Enid’s daughters are chalk and cheese. Her younger daughter**, Viv** is 17. She is a studious young woman, a high achiever with a serious demeanour. Her dark eyes are watchful. Viv wears her dark curly hair fastened back in a tight bun on the back of her head with a parting running across her head. She wears faded blue jeans and worn black trainers, with a navy waterproof jacket

**Del** is a rebellious, 18 year old wild child, there is a defiant, dis-satisfied glint in her eye and she slouches, sullen. Her hair is short shaped into the back of her neck and worn in a multitude of tiny braids radiating from a side parting. Bright red clips are tucked into her hair. Del wears a red bomber jacket over a mustard coloured crop top with silver buttons. Her grey cropped trousers stop short of her heavy black DMs and black socks. Her trousers are held up with a silver belt and there are large silver hoops in her ears.

The final character we meet is long term friend of the family **Brod** referred to by the girls as Uncle Brod. Brod is a slight bundle of energy in his late 40s with a michievious glint in his eye. His head is shaved and he has a neat grey goatee beard and moustache. His eyes twinkle behind his spectacles.

Brod wears a loosely fitted cream linen suit with a crisp striped shirt and neatly tied striped tie. He is loose limbed and snake hips.

Cast and Creatives

Enid is played by **Sarah Niles**

Del and Viv her daughters are played by **Seraphin Beh** and **Nicholle Cherrie**

Mai, a Jamaican Obeah is **Adjoa Andoh**

And Brod is by **Wil Johnson**

Leave Taking is designed by **Rosanna Vize**

Movement director is **Lucie Pankhurst**

Sound design and orginal music is by **Ed Clarke**

Lighting design is by **Rajiv Pankhurst**

Associate Director is **Omar Elevian**

Leave Taking is directed for **The Bush Theatre by** Madani Younis