Yvette

Welcome to this audio introduction to Yvette at The Bush Studio. The audio described performance will be on Saturday 1 June at 2.30 and runs for approximately 55 minutes with no interval. Yvette is written and performed by Urielle Klein-Mekongo. Urielle is a writer, theatre maker, singer-songwriter and performer. Yvette is her professional debut as a writer and she first performed it at Edinburgh Fringe in 2017 winning 5 star reviews. In her foreword to the printed play Urielle tells us of Yvette:

*“ The show is laced with the comedy found in the struggle of a young girl trying to understand who she is. Trying to live up to a false interpretation of what she should be set against everything around her; friends, family, the media. Everything that informs her growth and understanding is warped by her need to seek answers from others”*

The performance mixes spoken word, garage remixes and vibrant original songs . Urielle as the character Yvette remains on stage throughout

Please note that this play touches on themes of colourism, bullying and sexual abuse which some audience members may find triggering if you would like more information please speak to box office.

The production also contains very loud discordant noises accompanied by brightly flashing lights. This marks the end of one scene and the beginning of the next

When we enter the small intimate space of the studio theatre we face the interior of the neat, well kept flat which Yvette shares with her mother. On the left a wooden door leads in from outside. The door is painted a dark mustard yellow. A letter box is set into the lower half of the door and there is a yale lock on one side. 12 small panes of glass are arranged in 4 rows of three and are divided by wooden glazing bars . The door is set in a frame, attached to it, at a right angle is a narrow section of panelled wall. It stands about 6 feet high and is about 2 feet wide. It’s painted white. An old fashioned wooden coat rack is tucked into this space. Its circular, about 5 feet high and at the top branches into six large hooks arranged in a circle around the wooden stem of the structure. A man’s brown trilby hat hangs one of the hooks. A grey jacket, part of a two piece suit hangs on a wooden coat hanger on a lower hook. On this level there’s also a silky black bomber jacket printed with a design of small brightly coloured flowers.

Toward the front of the stage on this side is a microphone on a stand. At floor level, below it is a loop pedal. During the performance Urielle steps out of character and uses this to create garage remixes, layering tracks to blend spoken word, poetry and music into the narrative

On the right of the stage is a sparkling white, claw foot bath which represents the bathroom of the flat. A white bath towel is draped over the edge. The bath is free standing angled towards us. The other end of the bath is partially screened by 4 interlocking panels about 5 foot high which are arranged around it. Set into the panels are small panes of glass of varying size some are clear glass and others are opaque. The frames of the panels and the glazing bars are painted white.

We first meet Yvette as a 13 year old on the brink of puberty. She is brown skinned with an expressive round cheeked face and enormous dark eyes which flash and sparkle as she tells her story. She wears her school uniform: a pleated, knee length, grey skirt worn with a rather rumpled white school blouse, the sleeves pushed up to her elbows. Her school tie is diagonally striped maroon and bottle green interspersed with an additional narrow cream stripe. She wears it knotted at the neck. Two or three buttons below the knot she tucks it into the front of her blouse. During the performance she changes items of costume as appropriate to the scene, these changes are described as they happen on stage.

When she talks to us her expression can change in an instant from innocent wide-eyed schoolgirl just at the point of pushing boundaries and noticing boys to petulant, disgruntled teenager living a life which spans the culture of her school life with the demands of the traditional culture of her home life represented by her mother. She has an enormous infectious smile which transforms her face in an instant and gives her a disingenuous air. During the performance Yvette will sometimes inhabit other characters as she speaks of them.

She sometime becomes her mother both physically and vocally. Now she adopts a strong accent, standing feet firmly planted wide apart, one hand on her hip, her face crumpled into a disapproving frown and her chin thrust forward. She emphasises her words with forceful gestures particularly a fiercely wagging finger and sucks her teeth to signal disapproval.

Yvette is directed by Gbolahan Obisesan (obi ses an)

Designer is Giorgia Lee Joesph

Lighting Designer Azusa Ono

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