Welcome to this introduction to *The Arrival* by Bijan Sheibani. The audio described performance in the main house at the Bush Theatre will be on Saturday 21st December.

There will be a touch tour at 1.30pm, these short introductory notes will begin at 2.20 and the performance itself at 2.30. It lasts for approximately one hour and ten minutes. There is no interval. The performance will be described by Di Langford.

The Arrival is a taut family drama about obsession, betrayal and the human need to belong. It contains some strong language.

The production takes place in the theatre’s main house with the audience sitting on all four sides. Four large concrete pillars support the roof of the theatre. In the central space between the pillars stands an empty circular platform about six metres in diameter. It is low enough to be stepped up onto from floor level. There is still enough room for the performers to move around it. The platform is able to revolve which can give the impression of movement or the passing of time. As we enter the auditorium the platform is flooded with a cold blue light and during the action different locations are simply suggested through changes in lighting and sound effects. Props are minimal and include chairs and bicycles and are introduced during the action. Smaller props including back packs, a mobile phone or a glass of beer, are mimed by the performers.

Scene changes are marked by music which at times will be too loud for you to hear any description. However, the simple staging and sound effects, transport us easily to a bar or a flat, or outside to a street or the countryside. When significant, the dialogue usually makes clear where the scene is taking place.

There are two actors who play brothers born about five years apart. However, despite being related they seem to know very little about each other - their situations become clear during the action.

The brothers are half Iranian. Theyounger of the two, **Tom,** is around thirty. He’s tall and lean and a little edgy with a slightly anxious expression. His dark hair is slicked back and caught into a pony tail. Tom has very dark eyebrows, and a slight beard and moustache. He wears a casual beige tee shirt, slim navy jogging bottoms and white trainers. Tom is physically fit. His wary expression changes to enthusiasm when he discusses a favourite subject or offers advice.

Tom’s older brother **Samad** is around thirty five. His black hair is short and a little curly and he has a slight stubble. He is also casually dressed in a grey tee shirt, navy jeans and navy sneakers with white soles. He is stocky and carrying a little more weight than his brother. At first he seems nervous and occasionally twists his hands into the bottom of his tee shirt. Once he has overcome his initial anxiety he seems more at ease. He smiles more than his brother.

When we first meet them both men seem unsure. At the beginning they stand well apart on the platform, facing each other, but keeping close to the edge. They seem rather tentative. Both use expansive hand gestures to express themselves as if they are reaching out towards each other. Gradually they begin to edge around the perimeter of the platform, still facing but still apart. Eventually they are able to draw physically closer. As they become more familiar with each other they relax more but there is always an underlying tension between them.

Tom is played by Scott Karim and his brother Samad by Irfad Shamji

The set and costume design is by Samal Blak

Lighting design by Oliver Fenwick

And sound design by Gareth Fry

The Arrival was written and directed by Bijan Sheibani