**Red Pitch - Audio Introduction**

Welcome to this introduction to Red Pitch by Tyrell Williams

The following introduction includes information about Red Pitch plus descriptions of the set, the performers and the costume. This audio introduction is available as a Word document and an audio file.

Red Pitch is a coming of age story about what it means to belong to a place. The play follows lifelong friends Omz, Bilal and Joey as they play football in Red Pitch, like they always have. Beyond their football pitch, local shops are closing, old flats are being demolished as new flats shoot up. Some residents struggle to stay while others rush to leave.

Directed by Bush Theatre’s Associate Artistic Director, Daniel Bailey (also known for his work on The High Table), this new play tells a powerful story about gentrification or regeneration and the impact of this relentless change on London’s communities.

Tyrell Williams’ fast-paced and sharp-edged play asks “When a small football pitch has been a home from home, a place you’ve laughed, fought and forged friendships, what happens when it’s under threat?”

The play is set in the present-day on Red Pitch, a local football pitch in South London.

For this production, the space will be in an ‘in-the-round’ arrangement, meaning the seats are arranged on all four sides of the stage. All audio descriptions will be given from the viewpoint of Block B.

Blocks A, B and C are normal, dark grey, seats whereas Block D is similar to football stadium seats. In rows of four sit blue, plastic chairs with no armrests that are fixed to the ground by metal poles. Block D is surrounded by a grey brick wall with stains, graffiti sprawled over it and make-shift markings of a goal. In the middle of this seating bank there is a walkway which leads to the unseen estates and streets surrounding Red Pitch. This walkway is used as an entrance and exit throughout the play with the actors ritualistically double tapping the cage as they leave. Block B also has a red painted, half-metre tall handrail with metal mesh on it that runs along the entirety of the front row.

In the centre of the seating blocks is a large, grey area with rough markings of a football pitch on the floor which span the full length and width of the space. These lines were once bright white but have been worn-away over time.

Most of the story takes place during the daytime and the space is warmly lit, with lighting that spills into the front rows, as well as a spotlight that points directly down in the centre of the space. During the party, while Afrobeats music plays, white, purple, blue, pink and orange lighting flashes and pulses to accentuate the atmosphere and party energy.

Occasionally, throughout the play, there is a bright white light that beams from the back, right-hand side into the middle of the space.

Bilal Amaral, played by Kedar Williams-Stirling, is an athletic, driven 16 year old dark skinned Black boy with a bright smile, high cheekbones and dark brown eyes. He’s 5 foot 10 and wears his hair in cornrows that start at the front of his hairline and, following his head shape, curve toward the nape of his neck. Most of the time he keeps his hair covered under a Black silk durag.

At the beginning of the play Bilal wears an electric Blue t-shirt with light grey Nike tracksuit bottoms and white Nike football trainers. During the party he wears a grey long sleeve top, light blue distressed denim jeans, and black Huarache trainers. Later on he wears a tight-fitting, long sleeved top that shows off his lean, muscular frame, the same grey tracksuit bottoms and white trainers as before. In the final scene he adds a matching grey, top with a zip down the middle to complete the look.

Francis Lovehall plays 16 year old Omar Richards, affectionately nicknamed ‘Omz’ by his friends. Omz is a cheeky but kind-natured, dark skinned Black boy with warm brown eyes, thick lips with a deep cupid's bow and a black moustache that connects to a short, tidy beard. Omz, the ‘fun-sized’ member of the trio, is the shortest, by only a few inches, but holds his own with his friends. His hair is in thick twists that hang about 6-inches long from his head. There’s about an inch of regrowth which is sometimes hidden under a black backwards baseball cap.

Omz wears charcoal grey Nike trackie bottoms with a matching long-sleeved Nike top and a maroon t-shirt which just peeks out the bottom. This is paired with red and white football socks and black trainers that have been well worn. This outfit is repeated throughout.

During the party he wears his baseball cap, a black t-shirt, tan chinos and a slightly large yellow, black and brown patterned jacket with white Air Force 1’s. He accessorizes with a small black cross-body Nike bag and an out of character Gucci belt.

Completing the trio is Joseph, or Joey, Sesay who is played by Emeka Sesay. 16 year old Joey is a confident, dark skinned Black boy with large, bright eyes, a wide smile and a gap between his front two teeth. He is clean shaven and has a super short undercut with thick, tidy twists that hang about 3 inches from the top of his head which are occasionally covered with a black silk durag. As the tallest of the trio, you can usually find Joey playing goalkeeper during kickabouts.

When we first see Joey training with his friends he’s wearing a navy blue, long-sleeved Adidas athletics top, light blue jeans and fresh black Nike Air Max 90’s. A little later he pairs his long-sleeved top with matching Adidas trackie bottoms and

fluorescent Orange football trainers. Underneath he wears a bright yellow t-shirt with electric blue sleeves.

During the party Joey wears a black letterman jacket with a large LA Lakers logo on the back and smaller logos on the chest and sleeves. He also wears plain blue jean and black Nike Air Max 90’s. At the end of the piece Joey wears a navy blue, Nike 2-piece tracksuit with a wide, white stripe that runs down either side and his fluorescent Orange football trainers.

Most of the time the boys train with a brand-new, fluorescent Orange football but occasionally, usually when he’s alone, Omz plays with a slightly deflated and worn-out white football. All the boys carry black Nike or Adidas backpacks with them, which hold their phones, shin pads and other sports gear, except for when they’re partying.

In alphabetical order, the Creative Team for Red Pitch includes;

Lighting Designer, Ali Hunter

Set and Costume Designer, Amelia Jane Hankin

Director, Daniel Bailey

Dramaturg, Deirdre O’Halloran

Movement Director, Dickson Mbi

Assistant Stage Manager, Emily Mei-Ling Pearce

Deputy Stage Manager (Book Cover), Freya Jefferies

Casting, Heather Basten CDG

Company Stage Manager, Kala Simpson

Fight Director, Kev McCurdy

Sound Designer, Khalil Madovi

Costume Supervisor, Megan Rarity

Assistant Director, Monaé Robinson

Production Manager, Tabitha Piggott

Writer, Tyrell Williams

Production Dramatherapist, Wabriya King

The venue would like to share the following content warnings.

During Red Pitch there is Strong language throughout, Scenes of physical violence, Verbal descriptions of violence and blood, References to sex References to excessive alcohol consumption, Discussion of physical illness, medical diagnosis, medication and disability, Discussion and depiction of being a young carer, Discussion of ageing and death, References to and discussion of protest, Discussion of gentrification, Depiction of intense physical exercise, Moments of direct address and one moment of light audience interaction.

In relation to Light and Sound, there are Loud sounds (including high frequency sounds and consistent ambient noise of construction), Loud music (including low frequency bass sounds), Flashing lights (including sustained moments of strobe), Intermittent moments of darkness, Moments where lights point towards the audience (particularly blocks A and C) and Haze effects throughout.

For more information about the venue or what you can expect when attending the show, please visit Bush Theatre’s website: bushtheatre.co.uk

Red Pitch lasts approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes with no interval.

This is the end of the audio introduction to Red Pitch recorded by Koko Brown.