

August in England- Audio Introduction

Welcome to this introduction to August in England by Lenny Henry

The following introduction includes information about August in England plus descriptions of the set, the performer and the costume. This audio introduction is available as a Word document and an audio file.

The show was co-directed by Daniel Bailey and Lynette Linton and premiered in April 2023 at the Bush Theatre. Audio Described Performances will take place on Saturday 20th May at 2.30pm and Thursday 25th May at 7.30pm. The live audio description will be given for the Bush Theatre by Koko Brown.

Written and performed by Lenny Henry, August in England explores a life impacted by the Windrush scandal.

In his playwriting debut, the celebrated actor and comedian brings his vast talents onto the stage in this intimate one-man show. Set in modern day Great Britain, we're introduced to August, a man who is charming, flawed, and has the gift of the gab. Between his three kids, devoted wife-to-be, and part-ownership of a fruit and veg shop, August Henderson is proud of the life he has built since landing in his beloved West Bromwich. So, when faced with deportation to a country he has no memory of, he isn't prepared to go quietly. He is ready to tell his own story.

This production will take place in the Holloway Theatre where, for this performance, the space will be in a 'thrust' arrangement, meaning the seats are arranged on three sides of the stage. In the middle block of seating there is a walkway, separating the front two rows from the rest of the audience, where the performer sometimes walks while telling his story.

The piece is set in August's living room and, although he takes us to other times and locations, the set itself stays the same. The living room is open to us on three sides with a large wall running along the back - the wallpaper is off-white with brown vertical stripes, but is clearly old, greying and worn at the edges. On the back wall hangs some family portraits, two Christian fabric wall hangings and an illustration of Bob Marley on the Jamaican flag. On the floor, the length and width of the stage is filled with a bright, red carpet.

Inside of the room, on the left side of the space there is a dark brown, wooden unit with some Vinyls, a shelf with a pile of letters, a small cupboard with a latch, a silver hi-fi system, a Jamaican flag and a classic 90's turntable on the top. In the centre, there is a red leather armchair, with matching footstool and on the right there is a golden bar cart with a shelf of clear tumblers and an array of Spirits on the bottom - Wray & Nephew, Hendricks, Disoronno etc.

The only character in the piece is August Henderson. He is a tall, Black man in his sixties with dark brown eyes, a wide nose and a cheeky smile that is framed by a grey and black beard. Throughout the piece he wears a blue suit, Flat Cap, a purple Paisley tie and black dress shoes with red socks.

Throughout the piece, as August retells stories, he embodies other characters through voice, physical movements and gestures. Sometimes he talks directly to us

and, at the very beginning of the show, a few members of the audience are offered an alcoholic drink from him. (Please note: You can accept it if you'd like it! It is a single, 25ml shot of rum. Feel free to say no if you don't fancy it though.)

During the piece there are moments of projection on the back wall. This grainy, CCTV-style footage shows a Black man, wearing a white t-shirt and dark trousers, sitting, standing or walking around a room.

The Creative Team for **August In England** is

Windrush Consultant, Amelia Gentleman

Company Stage Manager, Chloe Wilson

Co-Director, Daniel Bailey

Dramaturg, Deirdre O'Halloran

Sound Design and Composition, Duramaney Kamara

Video Design, Gino Ricardo Green

Voice and Accent Coach, Hazel Holder

Lighting Designer, Jai Morjaria

Co-Director, Lynette Linton

Costume Supervisor, Malena Arcucci

Set and Costume Designer, Natalie Pryce

Production Manager, Pete Rickards

Movement Director, Shelley Maxwell

Assistant Stage Manager, Sophie Haliburn

This show contains flashing lights, a moment of bright white light, a moment of complete darkness, loud music and haze throughout.

This show also contains: strong language; references to violence; themes of colonialism, grief and illness; discussion of racism; discussion and depiction of deportation, immigration enforcement and incarceration.

The running time is approximately 1 hour 30 minutes.

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

This is the end of the audio introduction to August in England by Lenny Henry.