

A View On Access – The audio described performance and touch tour of The Ferryman at the Gielgud Theatre, Shaftsbury Avenue, London on Thursday March 15th 2018

Touch tour – 5.30 pm Introduction 7.15, Audio description started at 730pm

Click [here](#) for the Audio.

Audio description from Ruth James and Veronica Hicks for Vocal Eyes

The Ferryman is an ambitious 3 hour play by Jez Butterworth and directed by Sam Mendes that transferred from the Royal court theatre after becoming the fastest selling show in theatre history receiving harmonious critical acclaim.

It's certainly not hard to believe due to the sheer scope and creative execution of the script to stage and that comes apparent very quickly.

Set in Northern Ireland in 1981, The Carney family prepare for the annual harvest and a traditional evening of celebration and feasting but this is disrupted by a chain of unexpected events that take the audience on a thrill ride of different moods and emotions.

The touch tour which began at 5.30pm was a sumptuous affair where a party of 8 were led on stage by theatre staff and describers Ruth and Veronica. We were met by some of the cast who each introduced themselves and described their characters and then accompanied us around the set answering questions along the way, The set itself was a combination of kitchen, dining room and lounge and must be one of the most detailed I've even been witness to. It was so good I could have lived in it, The Kitchen was jam packed with every utensil imaginable as well as cereal packets and products from the period plus a functional hob and oven that is used to cook actual food during the performance.

The set had a large dining room in the centre with a connect 4 game and an ashtray full of cigarette stubs in that were a talking point during the tour. There was also a lounge area with arm chair and book cases full of appropriate items for the setting.

Being able to tour the set feel and touch the contents and ask questions to the crew and cast was such an invaluable experience for the whole party and helped build up in pictures in the mind of everything that was about to unfold on stage later on.

The touch tour lasted about 30 minutes then tea coffee and biscuits were laid on where all involved could relax a while before the performance. The theatre staff were excellent and couldn't be more attentive or helpful before, during and after the performance and helped with guide dogs, getting tickets from the box office, toilet visits and getting drinks and refreshments.

We were all supplied with a headset and shown how to use it. The introduction to the play began at 6.45 with duties falling to Veronica for the intro and first part with Ruth taking over the reigns and describing the 2nd part .The introduction provided a detailed overview of all physical elements that would play an important part in the drama and gave a clear insight and understanding.

The description from Veronica and Ruth of Vocal eyes was first rate delivering a well prepared script that really did help in illustrating all the action unravelling in front of us in a professional, confident and entertaining manner.

The Ferryman is one of those unique theatre experiences that doesn't come around too often with something for everyone – action, drama, conflict, comedy and twists in the tale and from a production point of view is very creative and experimental with a cast of over 20 that includes quite a few children, live animals and food cooked and eaten on stage to give a sense of real life events and believability.

It comes highly recommended and the access performance could not have been improved in any way, it was one of the best I've attended.

Check vocaley.es.co.uk for further information of audio described performances in the West End.