

ALMEIDA THEATRE

Access Information Pack



81 (Life)

Co-Created by Rhianna Ilube with 81 local people

Creative Direction by Dani Parr and Stephanie Bain

In partnership with All Change and Cardboard Citizens

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This document is a visual guide to support your visit to the Almeida Theatre. There are three sections:

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About the Almeida Theatre

How to get here

The Almeida Theatre is on Almeida Street in Islington. The postcode is N1 1TA. It is a large, white concrete building and it is situated halfway up the road.

The outside of the theatre looks like this:



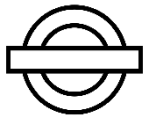
Journey to the theatre

The nearest underground stations are **Angel** on the Northern line or **Highbury & Islington** on the Victoria line, and London Overground.



You can find more information on our website here:

almeida.co.uk/your-visit/getting-here/



Highbury & Islington Station to Almeida Theatre

This is what **Highbury & Islington** station looks like outside.



Follow the path out of the station to the right onto Upper Street.
The theatre is about 1 kilometre down the road on Almeida Street.

On your journey down from Highbury, you will pass these **landmarks**:

This is Union Chapel.
It is near bus stop G.



If you don't want to walk, you can get buses 4, 19, 30 or 43 and get off at St Mary's church - bus stop N – for the theatre.

This is where Upper Street
crosses Islington Park Street
and Canonbury Lane.

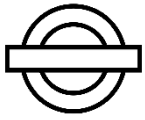


This is Islington Town Hall.



This is what Almeida Street
looks like as you arrive at the
theatre.





Angel Station to Almeida Theatre

This is what **Angel** station looks like outside.



From Angel station, turn right onto Upper Street and cross the busy road at the pedestrian crossing.

Continue along Upper Street for about 1 kilometre.

The theatre is on the left on Almeida Street.

On your journey down from Angel, you will pass these **landmarks**:

This is the main bus stop across the road from Angel station – bus stop Y.





If you don't want to walk you can get buses 4, 19, 30 or 43 and get off at bus stop P, opposite St Mary's church.

This is Islington Green.



This is St. Mary's Church.



This is what Almeida Street looks like as you arrive at the theatre.



About the Almeida Theatre

Information about the theatre

You can watch a video tour of the building on our website here:

<https://almeida.co.uk/your-visit/access/>

Inside the main entrance of the theatre, there is a foyer where people can wait. This is what the foyer looks like.



It can get quite busy here before the start of the play.



When you arrive, the front of house team will greet you.



There are lots of staff available in the building if you have questions or if you would like directions to your seats. They are very happy to help you.

Almeida Theatre staff wear black t-shirts with white writing.




If you need help with your ticket, you can speak to the box office team. It can be quite noisy at the box office, and you may have to wait in a queue. Their desk looks like this.



If you have a digital ticket, you can find it in your email inbox, and it will look like this.

**ALMEIDA
THEATRE**

81 (Life)
BSL Interpreted & Relaxed Environment



Performance date
Fri 22 Aug

Start time
7:00 PM

Section	Row	Seat
CIRCLE	F	12

Please use on street entrance


Mr Al Meida

Order No: 1137734

£ 0.00 **Ticket type:** Complimentary

Latecomers may not be admitted
[Click here to read our full terms and conditions](#)

Box Office **020 7359 4404**
Almeida Theatre, London N1 1TA
almeida.co.uk



Arts Council
ENGLAND

The Front of House assistants will scan your ticket as you enter the auditorium.



The entrance to the stalls is via the ramp to the right of the foyer.



The entrance to the circle is on the outside of the building located to the right of the main entrance.



There is step-free access to the foyer and stalls. There is one accessible toilet at the back of the foyer.

This is the café and bar, where you can buy hot and cold drinks and food.





If you have any questions or feel worried about your visit, please do contact us at access@almeida.co.uk or call our box office on 020 7359 4404.

Opening Hours

You can find our Box Office opening hours on our website here:

<https://almeida.co.uk/your-visit/booking-information/>

The Almeida Café & Bar opens two hours before every performance and remains open until 11 pm, with the kitchen closing 30 minutes before the show starts.

The auditorium opens 30 minutes before the performance begins – you are welcome to take your seats from then.

The Production

Content Guidance

81 (*Life*) contains:



Flashing lights



Haze



Loud music



**Audience
participation**



**Sudden loud
noises**



An open flame



**Discussions of
grief & loss**



**Emotional
confrontation**



**Themes of homelessness, housing
insecurity, mental health challenges,
loneliness and exclusion**

The Production

Performance Conditions

Relaxed Environment

All performances of *81 (Life)* will have Relaxed Environment conditions.

This means that:

- The house lights will remain at a low level throughout the performance.
- Audience members are free to make noise, move about or come and go, to take breaks and access the facilities as needed.
- If you need to step out of the auditorium for a break, there is also a TV monitor in the foyer to watch the performance from so you don't miss **any** of the action.

Other Access Performances

- **Audio Described:** Sat 23 Aug 2pm (Touch Tour 12pm)
- **BSL:** Fri 22 Aug 7pm
- **Captioned:** Sat 23 Aug 2pm

What Happens in the Play?

The Set

Dominating the centre of the space is a circular platform about eight metres in diameter, raised about fifty centimetres from the stage floor. A metre wide walkway wraps around it. At the back the walkway is the same height as the platform, before sloping gently down to where it's level with the audience seating at the front of the stalls. Behind the platform, enclosing the space at the back is a tall wall, about eight metres high that follows the curve of the platform.

At the right and left sides of the space is a variety of seating used in the production, including sofas, bean bags and benches. Often this is where the company enter and leave from, and it's also where they may sit as observers when not involved in the immediate action.

The company wear everyday clothing in a broad colour palette that ranges from more muted tones to vibrant bold colours, reflecting the changing seasons and emotions.

Performance Format

The performance begins with a Prelude followed by 4 Acts. The Prelude and final Act are performed by the whole cast with Acts 1 to 3 performed by each of the 3 groups. There is a 20-minute interval between Acts 2 and 3. The production is around 2 and a half hours in duration.

What Happens in the Play?

Sensory Overview

If you are affected by any of these elements, you are welcome to take breaks at any time.

Sensory Triggers

- Sudden / loud noises: At approx. 15 minutes there's a loud thunder effect, and at 30 minutes there's a loud helicopter. There's a lot of energetic direct address and music throughout, but nothing too sudden or loud.
- Lights: there aren't really any flashing lights, but a lot of sudden lighting changes, especially in 'How to Choose?'. Nothing extreme, especially as the house lights are on at a low level.
- Open flame: 1 hour into the second half, about 10 minutes before the end. It's a flame bowl in the centre of the stage.
- Haze: during the pre-set, very mild.

Content Warnings

- Mental health challenges, loneliness, and exclusion – this is thematic throughout, particular in the 'How to Join?' section
- Discussions of grief and loss, including letting go of loved ones or dreams - at the beginning of 'How to Let Go' the character Louisa tells Ash about her mum dying after she cared for her
- References to physical and emotional hardship
- References to memory loss – 10 minutes into Act I, a member of the Forum says, 'one day I won't remember who I am, or what I've done'
- References to homelessness and housing insecurity
- Moments of emotional confrontation
- Occasional audience participation: audience members are given optional invitations to contribute to the performance.

Plot Synopsis

ACT 1: How to Begin? – Performed by All Change

A late-night secret gathering in the park.

Summary: Act 1 begins in the park at night. Members of the Forum arrive one by one, unsure if they are in the right place or time, but gradually recognise each other and welcome the audience into their gathering. Though hesitant at first they come together and form a circle, bracing themselves against an invisible force. They declare that they have come to let go of the past, to begin again, and to find hope.

The group imagine throwing things out that are no longer needed, from personal clutter to politicians. The mood shifts into reflections on memory, ageing, and starting anew. Energy builds as individuals make commitments, from small acts of courage to larger visions of change. One Forum member, Prem, begins to dance, and is slowly joined by others, culminating in a chant of renewal.

The unity is abruptly broken by the sound of a helicopter overhead. The group scatter, leaving the pledge of a ‘Collective Year of Action’ hanging in the air.

ACT 2: How to Join? – Performed by Cardboard Citizens

Six living rooms in Islington.

Summary: Act 2 begins with the ‘Gogglebox Ensemble’, six households across Islington watching television over six weeks. The TV watchers move through a sequence of popular programmes — baking shows, zombie thrillers, *Titanic*, wildlife documentaries, local news, and reality TV. Each builds to a “ping” moment of shared reaction before dissolving. Gradually the ensemble disperses, and attention settles on the sofa with Anya and Happy.

Happy tells Anya that after seven years of weekly routines they want a change. The conversation builds until Happy leaves, and Anya is alone. Time stretches as she drifts in and out of her living room, haunted by fragments of Happy’s voice, before finally crying out in frustration.

At this point, the Islington Community Forum appears, beginning with Clay who introduces himself and a Welcome Committee whose chaotic greeting is followed by a rush of Forum members and more introductions. The Forum presents a group of Hobbyists whose stories of horoscopes, salsa dancing, puzzles and music, illustrate how pastimes become pathways to connection.

Anya doubts her ability to meet new people, so the Forum responds with stories of friendships being formed: strangers bonding on a walking tour, at a bus stop, and through shared moments of chance. Finally, Anya is shown the story of three lifelong friends across decades, meeting on a magical bench that transforms into their sofa as adults.

Overwhelmed, Anya says she has had enough. Clay returns to check in with her, and after admitting the Forum has been helpful, Anya sends him away. Alone again, she flicks the television on and off and decides that she must get out. Act 2 closes with Anya poised for change.

INTERVAL

ACT 3: How to Choose? – Performed by the Islington Community Group

A glitzy TV gameshow studio. – **Moment of audience participation – flashing lights, loud music and build of emotional tension**

Summary: After the interval, Act 3 begins with Anya's living room suddenly transforming into a bustling television studio. The Forum take on roles as contestants, crew and audience, while a flamboyant host welcomes everyone to *The Game Show*. Lights flash and music blares.

In the first rounds contestants perform silly tasks and quizzes, winning trivial prizes while the Forum cheers them on. Anya watches from the sidelines, amused but cautious. As the gameshow atmosphere builds the audience to join in with their responses and to vote.

The games begin to take on a sharper purpose asking contestants to make choices that reveal their values or highlight social inequalities, raising questions about belonging and responsibility.

Anya is pulled into the action and becomes a contestant, facing questions and tasks that are increasingly personal. The Forum encourages and pushes Anya on, and she tries to keep up.

The final rounds become intense and chaotic, forcing Anya to face her own doubts and decide whether to retreat into safety or take a risk.

Act 3 ends with Anya at a threshold of transformation, poised to begin again.

ACT 4: How to Let Go? – Performed by the Whole Cast

Highbury Fields – Onstage fire ritual - Moment of audience participation

Summary: A year has passed. We return to Highbury Fields, where Louisa and Ash strike up a conversation about the choices they've made since the game show. Nearby, Anya and Happy reunite and reflect on their friendship, the changes in their lives, and what they've missed. Both pairs discover mysterious notes tucked away by their benches, with prompts to write, and they begin to do so.

The Forum gathers in the park for their one-year anniversary. They greet each other and recount the successes and struggles of their initiatives across Islington. They agree that their final focus must be on letting go. Notes have already been left around the park, ready for this closing ritual.

The company reassembles in the park as the audience are welcomed into a communal ceremony led by the Forum. They acknowledge the difficulties of holding on to regret, fear and doubt, and invite everyone present to take part in a ritual of release. Audience and cast members are asked to write something they wish to let go of on small pieces of paper. Music and song accompany as notes are gathered and placed into a fire cauldron. Out of the flames comes new notes containing messages of hope, wisdom and prompts for living. These are distributed to both performers and audience, and then read aloud. The play ends as cast and audience share in a final moment of hope and transformation.