

ALMEIDA THEATRE

Access Information Pack



The Line of Beauty

Based on the novel by Alan Hollinghurst

Adapted by Jack Holden

Directed by Michael Grandage

Contents

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

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The Production

Overview

The Line of Beauty follows a young gay man called Nick Guest as he finds his way in London in the 1980s (between 1983 and 1987). He navigates Thatcherism, the complexities of class divisions and the AIDS crisis in his pursuit of beauty, connection and belonging. When we first meet him in the play, he moves to London to lodge in the home of his Oxford University friend Toby. The father of the household is a newly elected MP for Thatcher's government. Whilst living with them, Nick must keep a close eye on the wellbeing of his friend's sister - Cat. He also starts to date for the first time, and finds himself through love, exploring the very different worlds that co-existed in London in the 80s.

Content Guidance

The Line of Beauty contains:



**Flashing light
including strobe**



Haze



Loud music



**Smoking and
drug-taking**



Depictions of sex



**Racist and
homophobic language**



References to suicide, self-harm, HIV & mental illness

The Production

Performance Conditions:

Relaxed Environment Performances

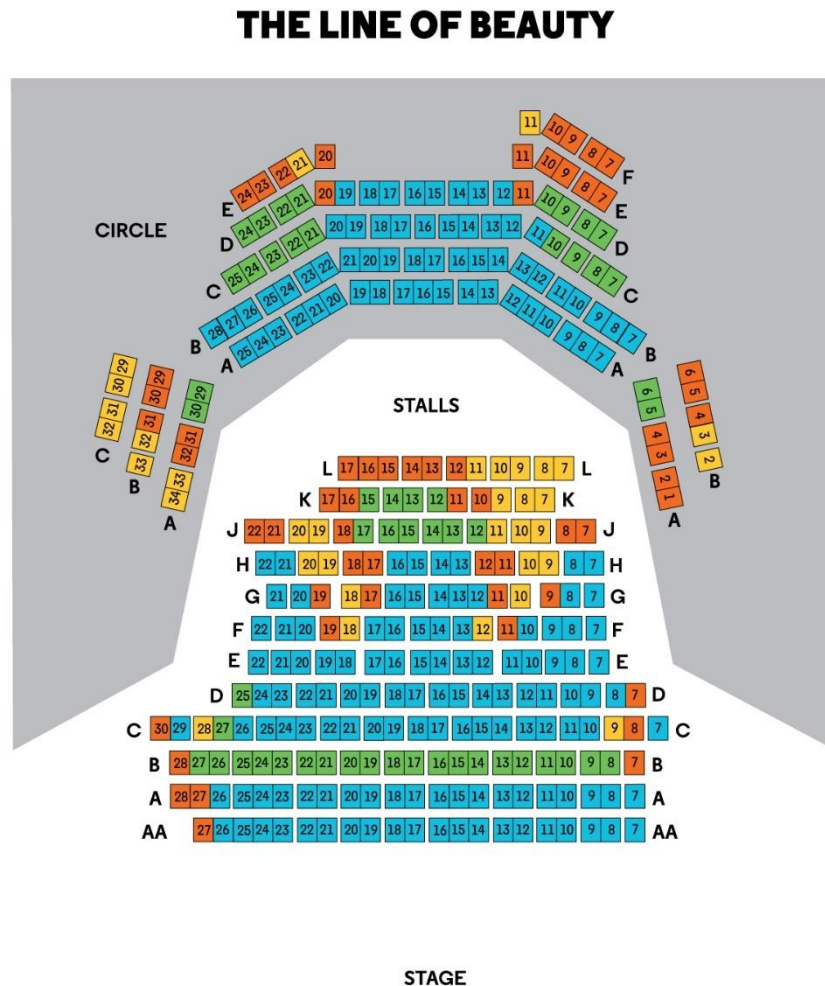
The duty manager will make an onstage announcement before the performance to explain what a Relaxed Environment performance is. They will explain:

- 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.



Seating

In this production, the seating in the stalls is arranged in long rows of approximately 20 seats with aisles at either end of rows. Further seating is available in the circle level above.



Running time and interval

The performance runs for approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes. The first half is 1 hour and 5 minutes followed by a 20-minute interval and the second half is 1 hour.

What Happens in the Play?

The Set

The setting is a skeletal outline of a grand, white-panelled room, with solid white corner columns and a substantial ceiling cornice defining the space. There are no walls or ceiling, leaving it open at the back and sides. The glossy black floor is tiled in large diamond shapes. Throughout the play, furniture is used to depict the different locations. For example, there is a dining room table to depict the Charles' family home and there are sun loungers for the house in the South of France.



What Happens in the Play?

Characters

There is a cast of 12 actors. Two of the actors play more than one role.



Nick Guest



Wani Ouradi



Leo Charles



Toby Fedden



Cat Fedden



Gerald Fedden



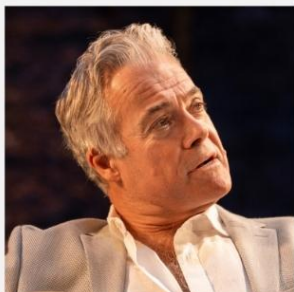
Rachel Fedden



Rosemary Charles



Mrs. Charles



**Derek 'Badger'
Brogan**



**Penny Kent/
Sophie Tipper**



**Peter Mawson/
Ricky**

Sensory Overview

Lighting and Sound

Transitions between scenes feature a mixture of composed classical and lively 80s pop tunes. Lighting and sound levels are generally consistent throughout, with a few brief blackouts and brighter transitions noted in the scene synopsis below.

Thematic Content

The play covers sensitive themes that include self-harm, struggles with mental health, mentions of porn addiction, homophobia, the AIDS crisis, physical illness and death. The play also includes hard drug use and scenes of consensual sexual activities, including anal sex and the foreplay to an intended threesome.

The production is naturalistic in style and there is no audience participation or interaction with actors remaining in the playing area of the stage and only using onstage entrances and exits.

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

Plot Synopsis

Act I, Scene 1 - Kensington Park Gardens - Nick Arrives

Mention of self-harm.

Nick arrives at the family home of his friend from Oxford University, Toby Fedden. It has been pre-agreed that Nick will be the lodger there and he is welcomed warmly by the family. Nick is told that he will be expected to keep a close eye on his friend's sister, Cat, who struggles with her mental health and has a history of self-harm.

Loud pop music in the transition to next scene.

Act I, Scene 2 - The Chepstow Castle - Leo and Nick's First Date

Nick goes on his first date with Leo Charles at a gay-friendly pub. After a shy start, they hit it off and plan to find somewhere private to have sex.

Act I, Scene 3 - The Residents' Garden

Sexual content to include a depiction of anal sex.

On Nick's suggestion he and Leo plan to have sex in the residents' garden of his new lodgings. Before they start, they are interrupted by a friend of the Feddens' household, Badger, who is also a neighbour. After convincing Badger that they have a right to be there, Nick has his first sexual experience up against a compost heap.

Loud pop music in the transition to next scene.

Act I, Scene 4 - Kensington Park Gardens - Cat's Episode

Suggestion of a threat to self-harm where a large kitchen knife is held but not used.

Cat and Nick are alone in the Feddens' house discussing their romantic pursuits. Cat starts to experience an escalation in the condition of her mental health. At one point, Cat leaves and then returns with a knife. She explains what her mental health crisis feels like.

Loud pop music in the transition to next scene.

Act I, Scene 5 - Pete's Shop

Implied AIDS diagnosis. The scene hints that Pete may have AIDS though it is never mentioned directly.

Leo introduces Nick to his ex-boyfriend, Pete, who runs a shop on Portobello Road. Inside the shop, we discover more about the history between the two ex-partners and it is revealed that Pete's health is declining. Nick's friend Toby and his girlfriend also visit the shop and Nick has to orienteer the awkward introduction of Leo as his boyfriend.

Loud music in the transition to next scene.

Act I, Scene 6 - Hawkeswood - The Birthday Party

Mentions of drug use (cocaine).

At Toby's 21st birthday party, Nick re-connects with his old university friend Wani.

Loud pop music in the transition to next scene.

Act I, Scene 7 - Leo's Place - Meet The Family

Mention of alcoholism.

Nick is invited to dinner at Leo's house, where he meets his mother and sister. During dinner they discuss religion and the power of art - inspired by a religious print on the sideboard of the Charles' home.

Loud classical music in the transition to next scene.

Act I, Scene 8 - Kensington Park Gardens - A Saturday Afternoon 13 For Dinner

An assumption of sexual assault and an instance of racism towards an offstage character.

The Feddens are preparing to host a dinner party of 13 people. During the scene, we hear about Sophie's new acting role and Cat's new boyfriend Marcus. Cat leaves to go on a date with Marcus but soon returns in a hysterical state after their breakup. The group is shocked by her return and tension rises between Badger and Nick over how to handle the situation.

Act I, Scene 9 - Kensington Park Gardens - Leo & Nick Indoors

Reference to the fetishization of race alongside reference to a homophobic slur and graphic description of sexual activity.

Nick brings Leo back to the Feddens' house after their date and tension soon rises between them as Leo challenges Nick about the level of commitment he is offering.

Loud classical music in the transition to next scene.

Act I, Scene 10 - The Lady

Features drug use - cocaine. The final moment of the scene involves a large flash of light to black out - to mimic a camera flash.

During the 25th wedding anniversary of Gerald and Rachel Fedden, tensions run high as Margaret Thatcher is expected to make an appearance. Through the heightened charge of the evening, an offer of a cocaine-fuelled tour of Europe to explore beauty is made by Wani to Nick.

Loud pop music at the end of the scene into the INTERVAL

INTERVAL

Loud pop music at the start of Act 2

Act 2, Scene 1 - The Manoir

Partial nudity - actors performing in speedos and bikinis.

The Feddens, Wani, Badger and Nick all enjoy their holiday at the Manoir in France. Cat challenges Badger on his relationship with money.

Loud pop music in the transition to next scene.

Act 2, Scene 2 - Uncle Lionel

Mentions of death, AIDS, anonymous sex, porn and drug use and homophobic attitudes towards the AIDS crisis.

As the group are relaxing after dinner a phone call comes to interrupt the evening. News of the death of Uncle Lionel ripples through the group and provokes tension between Badger,

Nick and Wani as they discuss the AIDS crisis and the rights of the gay community. Nick confides to Cat about his relationship with Wani and shares intimate details of their life together.

Act 2, Scene 3 - Ogee Office - The Line Of Beauty

Depiction of drug use (cocaine) and sexual foreplay, with the inference to a threesome. Mentions of porn, death, details of illness and the AIDS crisis. Homophobia is discussed through the lens of Leo's religious mother.

Nick invites a stranger, Ricky, back to Wani's property for the purpose of having sex with them both. Once introduced to each other they engage in foreplay. Once Wani and Ricky have left, Nick is confronted by Leo's sister, Rosemary, who informs him of the death of Leo. Through discussion about Leo, Nick is given details of Leo's life since he was with him and the suffering he endured leading up to his death. At the end of the scene, he collapses in tears.

Loud music and flashing lights to replicate camera flashes in the transition to next scene.

Act 2, Scene 4 - Kensington Park Gardens - The Beginning Of The End

Mentions of mental health challenges.

Nick returns to the Feddens' house to find that there is paparazzi outside the home with a crisis looming on the horizon. Gerald has kept his seat in the election but there is a story that will soon break about his involvement in financial indiscretion. Rachel tries to rally Nick and Cat and instruct them not to speak to anyone.

Act 2, Scene 5 - The Fuck Flat

Cat drags Nick to Badger's flat where they discover that Gerald is having an affair.

Loud rhythmic music in the transition to next scene.

Act 2, Scene 6 - Ogee Office - Wani's News

Themes of illness and AIDS, with a kaposi sarcoma lesion revealed. Death alluded to. Reference to drug use (cocaine).

Nick and Wani see the magazine they have been working on for the first time. During this scene Wani reveals that he has AIDS and will be returning to his family home to be looked after.

Loud classical music in the transition to next scene.

Act 2, Scene 7 - Kensington Park Gardens - Fall Out

Use of gay slurs and homophobic ideology. Shouting and heightened emotion.

Nick returns to the Feddens' house where he is challenged by the members of the household in relation to stories that have broken in the newspapers linking the Feddens to gay sex and AIDS through his relationship with Wani. He is rejected by the family, with Gerald demanding that he leave the house that day.

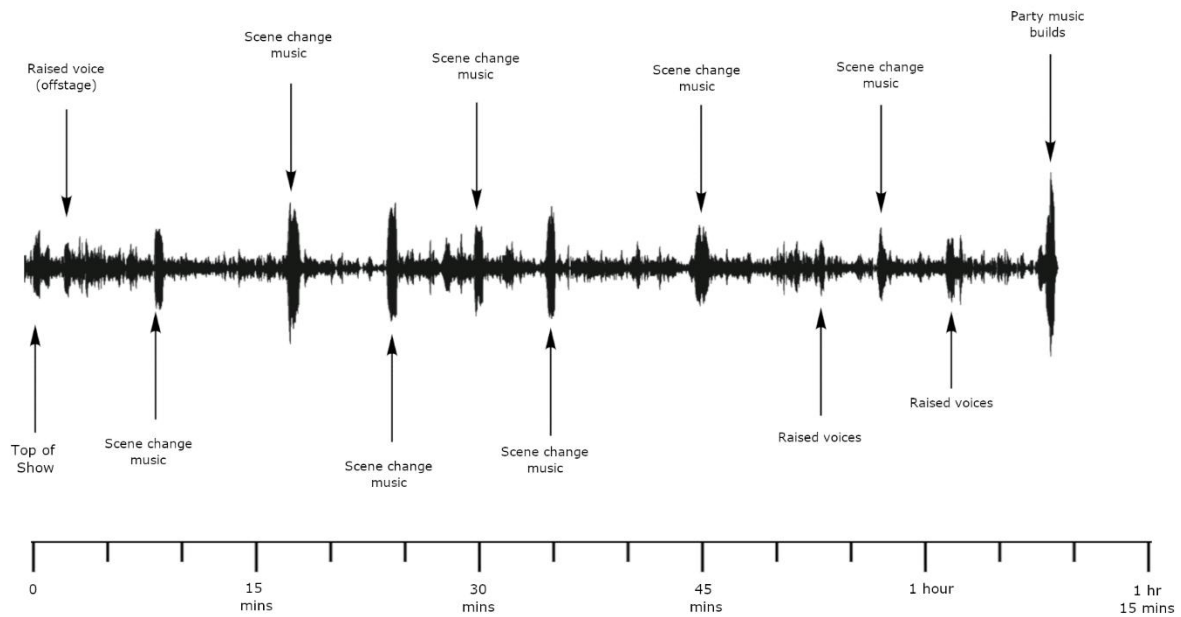
Epilogue - Street (The Same Day)

Nick bumps into Penny whilst standing outside the Feddens' house. They discuss their plans for the future and Nick reveals he is on his way to collect test results from the hospital.

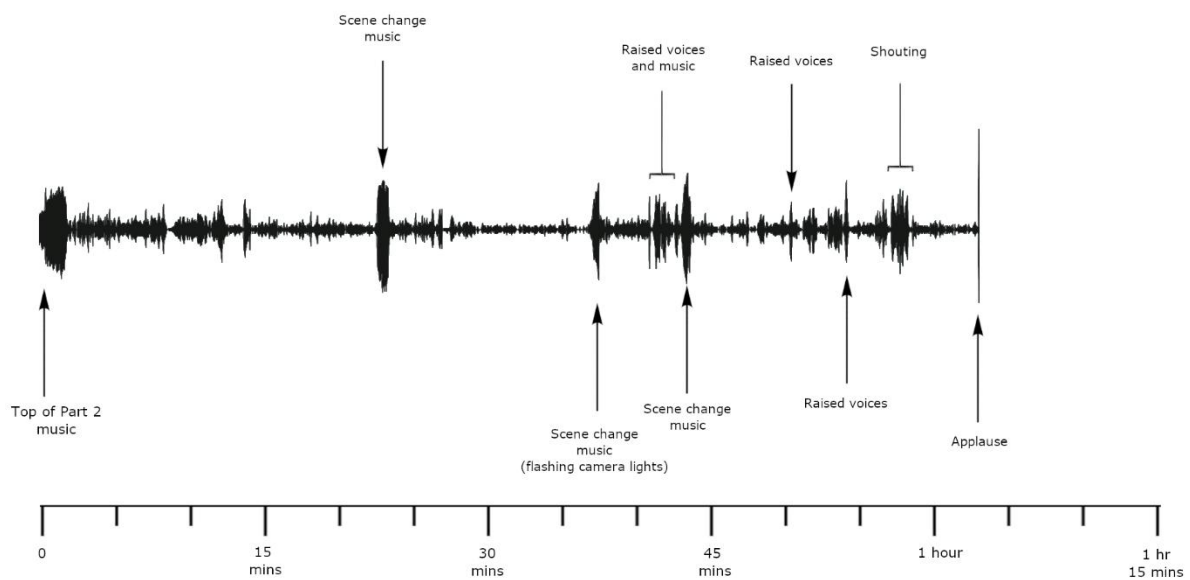
The play ends. The lights fade to black, then brighten as the actors return to take a bow.

Sonic Story

Part One



Part Two



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:



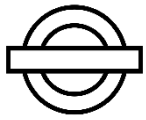
Journey to the theatre

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.

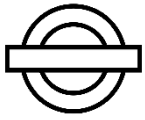


This is Islington Town Hall.



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**

Romans, a novel
Relaxed Environment



Performance date
Wed 1 Oct

Start time
7:30 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



Supported by public funding by
**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.