

ALMEIDA THEATRE

Access Information Pack



Christmas Day

By Sam Grabiner

Directed by James Macdonald

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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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The Production

Overview

Christmas Day follows siblings Tamara and Noah, who live with Noah's partner Maud, in a guardianship building somewhere above the Northern Line in London. The action takes place on Christmas Day in 2025, when their father Elliot arrives unexpectedly, and they prepare to share a quiet meal together. As the day unfolds, a series of surprise entrances, rising political tensions, and unresolved family dynamics create an atmosphere of instability. Tamara's ex-partner Aaron joins them for dinner, sparking emotional and political conflicts centred on Jewish identity, the Israeli Palestinian conflict, and intergenerational trauma.

Arguments escalate, secrets are revealed, and the group's relationships fracture. A tenant unexpectedly brings a dying fox into the room, shifting the day further into chaos. Later, Noah spirals into a distressed state and Maud tries to comfort and care for him.



Content Guidance

Christmas Day contains:



**Blood and
entrails**



Dead animal



Loud sound effects



**Drug-taking and
alcohol**



**Kissing and
references to sexual
activity**



**Explicit language,
antisemitism and
antisemitic slurs**



Male nudity



**Wretching and sound
of vomiting**



**References to intergenerational trauma, abuse,
bereavement and discussions of the Holocaust,
pogroms, the Israeli Palestinian conflict and war
crimes, including violence against children**

The Production

Performance Conditions:

Relaxed Environment Performances

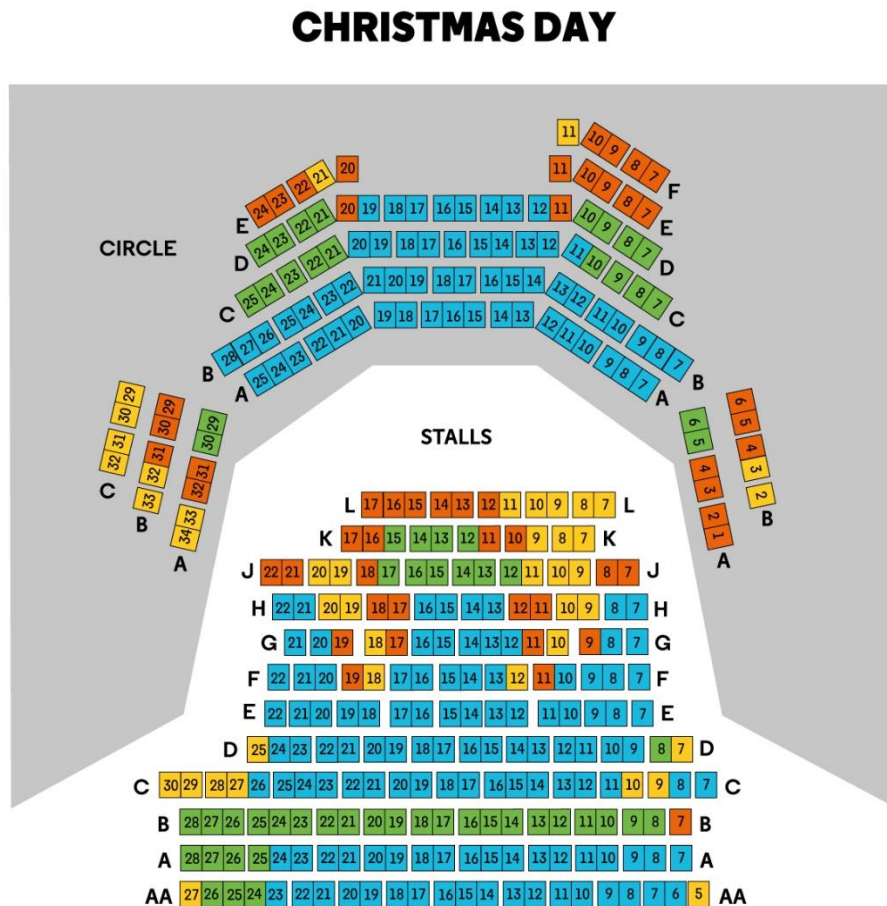
The duty manager will make an onstage announcement before the performance to explain what a Relaxed Environment performance is. They will explain:

- 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. There is no step free access to the Circle.



Running time and interval

The play unfolds over 3 Acts and runs for 1 hour and 50 minutes without an interval.

What Happens in the Play?

Setting

The play is set in a single, large room inside a disused industrial building now used for guardianship living. The space feels worn and improvised, with peeling paint, exposed wiring, patched-up windows and a mixture of fluorescent lighting giving it a slightly harsh, makeshift atmosphere. Around the room are every day, mismatched items - an office table and chairs, a cluttered kitchenette area, a tall Christmas tree, and various bits of stored junk - creating a lived-in but chaotic environment. Overall, it's a functional, slightly ramshackle space evocative of an old plant room that's been adapted into a place where people can gather.

Style

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

Stalls – Audience Entrances

As well as the usual stalls entrance, some audience members may enter via a lobby to the left of the stage. This area is designed to look like part of the guardianship building inhabited by the characters, giving the entrance a slightly immersive quality before leading into the auditorium.

What Happens in the Play?

Characters

Noah and Tamara - brother and sister

Elliot - their father

Maud - Noah's partner

Aaron - Tamara's ex-partner

Wren and Sphinx - fellow tenants

Felix - a drug dealer



Elliot



Tamara



Noah



Maud



Aaron



**Wren, Sphinx
& Felix**

Sensory Overview

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

Lighting and Sound

Sound

- Repeated loud bangs from a faulty heater (multiple scenes)
- Deep floor vibrations from passing Northern Line trains (Acts 1–3)
- Sudden mechanical or metallic sounds
- Abrupt power cuts (start of Acts 2 and 3)

Lighting

- There are moments of sudden shifts between dark and bright lighting. Some scenes take place in prolonged low light, including candlelit sequences. Brief flickering light accompanying the train vibrations.

Thematic Content

Themes of Trauma & Mental Distress

- References to intergenerational trauma
- Characters experiencing emotional breakdowns
- Themes of abuse, bereavement, and identity conflict
- Emotionally intense family conflict including raised voices, arguments, emotional outbursts

Historical References

- Discussions of the Holocaust, pogroms and mass killing, antisemitism, the depiction of political and ethnic conflict including discussion of Israel and Palestine, war crimes, including violence against children

Graphic Content

- Onstage handling of stage blood (Act 3)
- Handling of theatrical entrails (Act 3)
- Depiction of a dying fox brought into the space (Act 2)
- References to injury, skulls, and war-related harm

Sexual Content

- Kissing and brief sexual behaviour (Act 2)
- Full nudity from behind in a washing/cleaning scene (Act 3)
- Mentions of sexual activity, unwanted sexual attention

Substance Use

- References to - alcohol and heavy drinking, microdosed mushroom drops, drug dealing, marijuana

Environmental Sensory Qualities

- At times the room becomes warm and oppressive due to the heater
- Darkness during power cuts
- Sudden entrances that may startle
- One scene features loud eating sounds as characters consume a Chinese meal with enthusiasm, including gorging-style noises.
- As a result of the above, one character also wretches and then vomits in the sink at the back of the stage (facing away from the audience)
- Use of latex (rubber gloves) and fur (taxidermy fox)

Strong Language

- Frequent strong language including derogatory language and swearing.
- Antisemitic, Islamophobic, and anti-Black slurs, as well as racialised and dehumanising language relating to Jewish, Arabic, Palestinian, and other ethnic or religious groups. These references appear both in historical storytelling and in contemporary arguments between characters. Some of this language is spoken without immediate challenge.

Character Portrayal and Interpretation

- Some audience members may interpret aspects of Wren's behaviour as neurodivergent. These traits arise from performance choices and the character's altered state, rather than representing a specific neurodivergent identity.

Plot Synopsis

ACT 1

1.1 Elliot and Noah

This scene contains antisemitic language, mentions of drug use, and loud, abrupt sounds.

On Christmas Day 2025, Elliot visits his children, Tamara and Noah, at the guardianship where they live. Whilst waiting for Noah in the next room, he begins telling a story about a famous Jewish sage imprisoned in Russia, but the room's central heater repeatedly bursts into loud life, startling him. As he continues, Elliot describes a guard who questioned the sage about God and uses antisemitic language; before he can finish, Noah enters and accidentally scares him again. Elliot tries to ask Noah why he chose to live in a guardianship, but Noah dodges the question and mentions that Jack - now going by the name Aaron, Tamara's ex who moved to Tel Aviv - will be joining them for dinner.

1.2 Maud Enters

Mentions of heart dysfunction.

Maud, Noah's girlfriend, comes in and accidentally startles him making him jump. Noah struggles to breathe for a few moments. Elliot suggests that he has an inherited heart condition.

1.3 Tamara Enters

Loud sound, physical vibration, loud noise, light flickering, mentions of paedophilia, pogroms, drowning and mass slaughter of a Jewish community in Russia.

Elliot continues the story of the sage's answer, but a sudden, earthquake-like vibration interrupts him and knocks him to the floor. Tamara enters, startling him, and Noah explains the vibration comes from the Northern Line beneath the building, the heater also roars back to life. Tamara is surprised to see Elliot and upset about the Christmas decorations Noah and Maud put up, insisting they should honour their Jewish heritage by having a Chinese meal instead, which they've already ordered. Elliot finishes the story, explaining the sage believed God asked Adam where he was to give him a chance to confess - but the tale ends in a pogrom that destroys the sage, his followers, and the local Jewish community. Elliot then shares that he has started therapy at his girlfriend Sarah's suggestion, Noah and Tamara are shocked, and when Tamara says she's proud, Elliot suddenly cries.

1.4 Wren Enters

Loud vibration.

Wren, one of the guardianship tenants, unexpectedly crosses the living room and heads outside, surprising Noah, Tamara and Maud, who thought they had the building to themselves for the day. He returns with a food delivery, smiles at their gathering, and goes back to his room. A train rumbles past, shaking the building, and Elliot heads to the toilet.

1.5 Noah, Tamara and Maud

Mention of the holocaust, cancer, loud noise, air pollution, mentions of sexual activity, and death.

Tamara and Noah talk about how Elliot has changed since meeting Sarah, Noah says he'd never seen his father cry, while Tamara insists Sarah has "evil energy."

Noah adds that Elliot has been sending him podcasts about healthy sexuality, including discussions of anal sex. The heater blasts loudly again, and Maud worries it might be toxic and give them all cancer one day. Tamara lights candles, and Noah suggests they do a Christmas quiz until Aaron arrives.

When the buzzer sounds, Noah goes to let Aaron in. Tamara, nervous about seeing him, retreats to her room. When Noah returns, Maud reminds him they were meant to talk, but he walks away, she then leans towards the heater, leaves the room, and the heater erupts into noise once more.

1.6 Aaron, Sphinx, and Tamara

Aaron arrives, and Sphinx appears on the stairs, telling him he spent the previous night with someone in the guardianship before commenting on how strange it feels to be alone on Christmas Day and wandering off. Tamara then enters and sees Aaron for the first time in three years, overwhelmed, she asks about his flight and whether he needs anything, while he simply smiles.

ACT 2

The transition to Act 2 is represented by a power cut that suddenly turns the lights off for about 10 seconds. However, there are a dozen or so lighted candles on the table.

2.1 Aaron, Elliot, Tamara, Noah, Maud, and Felix

References to antisemitic violence and discrimination, loud noise, racist language, noisy overeating, graphic descriptions of injuries and death, and descriptions of nudity.

They sit to eat, and Aaron shares a memory from his early days in Tel Aviv: watching the sunrise on the beach with new friends, all eventually entering the sea naked, a moment that felt transformative for him. Tamara begins a prepared speech about the Jewish experience of Christmas in the diaspora — historically a dangerous day marked by rising antisemitic violence — and argues for solidarity between today's Jewish communities and oppressed groups worldwide. The speech creates tension, but they move on to Christmas crackers, the heater blasts again, Maud tells (and then retracts) a disturbing story about deadly crackers, and Aaron invents a Bracha before they pull them.

They eat quietly until full, a train shaking the room. Noah eats too fast, jokes he might vomit, and Tamara accuses him of lacking sincerity, hurt, he insists otherwise. A drug dealer, Felix, mistakenly enters looking for ketamine, and they send him away. Noah tries to prove his sincerity with a story about a medieval Jewish miracle whose ritual was slowly forgotten across generations, leaving only the story itself, he says this reflects how he feels. Maud shifts the topic by asking Aaron about life in Tel Aviv, but before he can answer, Wren enters.

2.2 Wren Enters

Blood, injury, half-nudity (male lower back).

Wren enters from upstairs, topless. Aaron mocks his appearance. Wren gives them an incoherent speech about care and kindness. When he turns his back to them, he reveals a bleeding gash, but none of them offer to help him. Wren puts on a coat and goes outside.

2.3 Wren's Exits

A mention of a genocide, a mock Hebrew accent, drug use (microdosed psilocybin mushrooms), racism, loud vibration, derogatory language towards Palestinian people, mentions of a bomb shelter, mentions of the holocaust and Auschwitz, antisemitism, pogroms, graphic description of militarist violence against children, loud hitting of a metal heater, shouting, and depiction of vomiting.

After Wren leaves, Tamara mocks Aaron's Tel Aviv story, imitating an Israeli accent, Aaron ignores her and takes some mushroom drops. She ends by claiming Israel adopted "Germany's genocide culture," prompting Elliot to slam the table. Aaron and Elliot flare with anger as Noah tries to intervene. Elliot asks if Tamara wants "an Arab to come out of a tunnel and murder her," and when she challenges why Jewish deaths matter more to him, he refuses to answer, Aaron bluntly says they just do.

Tamara vomits, then returns as Elliot delivers an emotional speech insisting, "It's ours," recalling sitting with his mother watching tanks roll past - a memory that, for him, confirms the necessity of a Jewish state. With no sofa, he lies on the floor as the heater roars back to life, now hotter and constant.

Aaron and Tamara continue fighting, she cites the Kabbalah story of divine light scattered across the world, while he accuses her of building her identity on trauma and clinging to victimhood, calling it a form of privilege. She breaks down, saying the Jewish people are "the bad guys now," and she doesn't want to be one. She urges Aaron to cry about the Holocaust, Noah interrupts, asking if they believe in God. A train shakes the room.

Noah confesses that antisemitic moments sometimes make him feel closer to God through his Jewishness, and that he struggles with the shift from Jews as oppressed to Jews as oppressors. He describes the image of a child violated by a soldier, ending with: "Killing us didn't work, but turning us into them did."

Elliot stands and strikes the heater four times with a golf club, it crashes to a stop. Felix re-enters, lost again, and Maud and Noah go out to help him find his address.

2.4 Tamara, Aaron, and Elliot

This scene contains kissing and a description of sexual intercourse.

Elliot falls asleep, and Tamara and Aaron break into relieved laughter after their argument. Aaron apologises for how their relationship ended, Tamara reassures him, and they kiss. She asks him to hold and squeeze the back of her neck, they kiss again, and he jokes that she tastes of vomit, making them both laugh. Elliot wakes without them noticing. As they continue kissing, Aaron lifts Tamara up and lays her on the desk at the back of the room.

2.5 Noah and Maud Enter

Shouting, adultery, sexist comments, the destruction in Gaza, bombs, and a mention of Jewish refugees from Europe in the 20th century.

Maud and Noah are shocked to discover Tamara and Aaron kissing. Maud repeatedly tells Aaron it isn't right, and Tamara suspects there is something she doesn't know. Eventually, Elliot tells her that Aaron is engaged. Aaron confesses

that he is engaged to a woman in Israel and they will get married next year in Haifa.

Elliot asks Maud if she was ever in New York and comments on her body. Elliot then announces that Sarah, his partner, is pregnant and that he is moving to New York with her. Noah and Tamara are in shock. When Noah tries to object, Elliot stops him and tells Maud the story of his mother's refuge from Poland when she was a child. He says they fled before the war and thought they were on their way to New York, but they were instead boarded in England. Tamara describes a cartoon she saw that pictures a mother and daughter in a bombed-out building in Gaza.

2.6 Wren Enters

A dying animal and a loud abrupt noise.

Suddenly there are two loud kicks on the door. Maud opens it and Wren enters with a dying fox in his arms. He lays the fox on the table.

ACT 3

The transition to Act 2 is represented by a power cut that turns the lights off for about 10 seconds. Wren blows out the candles that are on the table.

3.1 Noah and Aaron

Graphic description of a war crime, description of the IDF's actions in Gaza, a mention of marijuana, and a reference to animal killing.

The fox's body is now in a bin bag, and Noah and Aaron are alone. Noah looks up what to do with the body and mentions a story he read about a child who

killed a duck and gave it to his grandmother. He tells Aaron to leave before Tamara returns. As Aaron puts on his coat, he tells Noah he isn't a bad person - it's England that makes him feel like one. Noah offers to call him an Uber, but Aaron instead tells a story about Dan Shea, a Londoner he befriended in Tel Aviv who serves as a reservist in the IDF. After getting high at Aaron's flat, Dan told him that as an army driver he once rolled over a skull with his Jeep. When Noah asks how that makes him feel, Aaron says he feels neutral and grateful.

3.2 Maud and Tamara Enter

When Maud and Tamara enter, Aaron tries to speak to Tamara, but she ignores him. Aaron leaves.

3.3 Aaron leaves

Including antisemitic comments.

After Aaron leaves, Tamara tells Noah that he is not truly Jewish. She says that his father is quarter Jewish and that his mother was originally a protestant and that she did not convert formally. Noah is surprised as he describes Aaron's mother as the most Jewish person he knows; he uses antisemitic comments when talking about her.

3.4 Elliot Enters

Elliot enters after having a shower. He puts on his coat and thanks them for the dinner. When he is about to leave, Tamara asks him if she can join him, and he agrees. Tamara and Elliot leave, and Maud goes out to lock the outside door behind them. Noah stays alone in the room.

3.5 Noah and Maud

Blood, entrails, nudity, an antisemitic comment, a mention of death, child abuse and violence against children, mental illness, holocaust denial, reference to sexual activity, physical tussle, strong language and shouting.

Noah turns off some lights, opens the bin bag with the fox's body, smells it, and reaches inside. When he pulls his hand out, it's bloody, on the second reach, he lifts out entrails and presses them to his forehead, smearing blood over his face, arms, and shirt.

Maud enters, screams, and rushes to fill a bucket, but when she tries to clean him, Noah pushes her away. She asks whether his grandmother was really a Holocaust survivor, since Elliot said she left Poland before the war, Noah provocatively suggests the Holocaust perhaps didn't happen. Confused and distressed, Maud forces him upright to clean him, and they struggle until he pushes her off. She accuses him of being terrified of her, then angrily insists she can see when he lies and that it drives her to want to gouge out his eyes, moments later she apologises, saying she's exhausted by "this f*** Jew stuff."

She asks Noah to come closer and remove his clothes. Standing by the Christmas tree, she bags his blood-soaked clothing, telling him her mother died on Christmas and describing her abusive, mentally ill behaviour, the day she died, and an online sexual chat she'd been having just before hearing the news. Noah removes everything, including his underpants, and stands naked with his back to the audience while Maud washes him with a wet towel and wraps him in a blanket.

A train rumbles past, the room vibrates, the lights cut out, and the Christmas tree briefly flickers before going lights snap to black and the play ends.

Lights brighten as the actors return to take a bow and then leave.

Sound Plot

Time	Description	Notes
2 mins	Elliot is surprised by the heater coming on suddenly and screams	Loud vocal reaction
4 mins	Elliot is surprised by Noah's entrance and screams loudly	Loud vocal reaction
5 mins	Heater comes on	Mechanical sound
9 mins	Noah screams, surprised by Maud's entrance	Loud vocal reaction
11 mins	The sound of a tube train underneath the ground	Starts as low rumble. Gradually building until very loud
25 mins	Door buzzer	Medium volume / grating
40 mins	Heater turns on	Medium volume / Mechanical sound
43 mins	Tube train underneath the ground	
52 mins	Tube train underneath the ground	
56-58 mins	Elliot bangs the table and repeatedly shouts	Loud vocal reaction
1 hour 2 mins	Heater comes on	Mechanical / Sudden / Loud
1 hour 7 mins	Noah hits the heater with a spanner	Loud / metallic
1 hour 13 mins	Elliot repeatedly heats the heater with a golf club	Very loud / metallic
1 hour 23 mins	Noah screams in reaction to seeing Tamara and Aaron together	Loud vocal reaction

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:



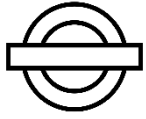
Journey to the theatre

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.

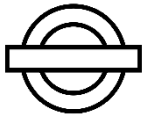


This is Islington Town Hall.



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 in 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.