

Welcome to this introduction to ***American Psycho***, with book by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa; music and lyrics by Duncan Sheik, based on the novel by Bret Easton Ellis, directed by Rupert Goold.

The audio described performance is on Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> of February at 2pm with a touch tour at 12pm. The production lasts for approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes including an interval and will be audio described by Jenny Stewart Cosgrove and Miranda Yates.

**Please note** - this production includes depictions of violence, including towards women; alcohol and drug use; homophobic, ableist, misogynistic and strong language; sexual content; and references to suicide. It also includes bright flashing lights throughout, as well as strobe, occasional light directed onto the audience, haze, latex, blood, guns/gunshots and loud, sudden sounds, and the smoking of e-cigarettes.

American Psycho is a musical thriller, set in Manhattan during the Wall Street boom of the late 1980s. Production information tells us ...

***Patrick Bateman has it all – looks, money, style and status. Engaged to the beautiful Evelyn Williams, he is about to win the prestigious Fisher account for his investment bank and celebrate by dining at Dorsia. But there’s another side to his life that Patrick keeps secret. And people – including those closest to him – keep disappearing...’***

The action takes place on a large rectangular platform approximately ten metres long and six metres wide, about a metre higher than the first rows of the stalls seating, which wraps around it on three sides. This creates an immersive environment where the performers often move along the front row to access the stage by two sets of steps, one on either side at the front. Often leaving the same way as well as occasionally jumping down off the sides.

The brick wall at the back of the space has a large circular tunnel-like opening at the centre, framed by a chunky brick border. This curved opening is as wide as the platform

and several metres in height, and acts as another entrance into the space, appearing as both a darkened gateway and a black void.

The smooth floor of the platform is pale and functions as a vast projection surface. Locations are created through a combination of minimal furniture, lighting and projected imagery. A concealed trap a couple of metres square in the centre of the floor towards the back can open via a lift mechanism, allowing key items and people to rise into view and then disappear again.

Bateman's office is indicated by a sleek glass desk paired with a black leather executive chair. His apartment is suggested by a black leather button-back designer armchair with chrome legs and a matching footstool. A bright yellow taxi seat big enough for two, signals a cab ride through downtown New York. Two tall yellow lockers indicate a changing room at a private gym. Two pairs of dark red velvet theatre seats, one on either side of the tunnel opening suggest a Broadway auditorium.

At other moments, tall console-style tables illustrate other locations, each just over a metre high and roughly half a metre square. The tables have slender metal legs and an opaque glass tops that can glow from within with a soft, diffused light. The tables are mounted on discreet casters, and glide easily across the space and can be used singly or clustered together to suggest different locations.

Lighting and projection do much of the storytelling. Stark geometric patterns sweep across the floor, as grids, chequerboards, line patterns and the angled suggestion of light through windows. The space is frequently washed in bold, saturated colours – like electric blue and vivid red, and moments of disorientation or mental fragmentation are indicated by chaotic grainy pixelation. The enlarged letters of branding-style graphics flash across the surface, reinforcing the slick consumer world the characters inhabit. We briefly escape Manhattan's hard edges and head to the coastal haven of the Hamptons. Here the stage is washed with a vivid sky blue, blending to sunny yellow, with fluffy white clouds drifting across its surface.

The tunnel gap at the back is often lined by a curtain of narrow vertical lights – when these are pulled back they reveal a black metal framework of squares that are lined by

further lights that spill forward out onto the platform and surrounding audience. There's also a narrow horizontal band of light that stretches across the brick wall, on either side of the tunnel opening.

There is an ethnically diverse cast of 17. Eight women and nine men. The design and costumes worn in the production reflect the period of the 1980s.

When we first meet Patrick Bateman, we view the blurred silhouette of his athletic physique through an opaque glass shower screen. Patrick is a white man, around 6 feet tall with a handsome sharp featured face and penetrating hazel eyes. His square jaw is shaved baby smooth, and his dark hair is cut into a short back and sides and tossed at the front into a precise side parting. He stands poised, feet firmly planted, arms hanging comfortably at his sides. Bateman narrates his story directly to us. He remains calm and coldly detached throughout, curious and perplexed about the behaviour of those around him. He describes aspects of the suit he's wearing, an exquisite designer suit, black and single-breasted. He teams it with a cloud-grey, silk shirt which he wears unbuttoned at the collar. And he wears black socks and shiny black leather loafers.

Bateman is accompanied by an ensemble of singers and dancers who march through the aisles of the auditorium before joining him on stage. There are 16 members of the ensemble, who play other characters in Bateman's life. When we first meet them, the ensemble is dressed uniformly in silk trenchcoats of black, white or dove grey. The men have neat, short hair and smooth-shaven skin. The women are beautifully made-up, hair is styled in sharp, high ponytails, or sleek waves to the collar, or cut close to the sides. All wear sunglasses.

As Bateman sets to work in his office, we meet **Jean**, his secretary. In her early 20's, Jean is a petite white woman with long, straight, light brown hair, worn down at the back and caught up away from her heart shaped face with two combs. She is naturally attractive and her make-up is understated, her blue eyes gazing at the world from behind large glasses with tortoiseshell frames. Jean's demeanor is humble and plain. When we first meet her, she is dressed plainly, for work in iron grey culottes, to just below the knee, with white sneakers and a long-sleeved pale grey blouse. When next

we meet her, at Bateman's instruction, Jean dresses a little more stylishly in a fawn pencil skirt and high heels, with a cream and grey striped blouse, though she maintains her down-to-earth nature.

At the office Bateman engages in the first of many instructive and revealing banter sessions with his 4 male colleagues: **Craig McDermott; Tim Price; David Van Patten** and **Luis Carruthers**. All are the same, or similar age to Batemen. All are muscular and handsome, and competitive in their demeanour. They all wear tailored black trousers, teamed with suit jackets in different styles and colours over shirts and ties, all wearing loafers.

**Van Patten** is a tall black man with a steady direct gaze. His black hair is braided close to his head in rows that finish at the nape of his neck. His jacket is a dark grey woven fabric, and he wears it with a black shirt and a silver and black striped tie.

**Price** comes across as the most manic, the most driven of the pack, perhaps fuelled by excessive chemical assistance. He's a tall white man with a slim athletic physique. He wears a cloud grey jacket with a slate grey shirt and matching tie.

**Luis** is an East Asian man with a chiseled jaw and jet-black neck length hair, often slightly separate from the others, more of a watchful observer than dominant. He wears a sage green shirt, diamond patterned tie and a grey and white plaid jacket.

**McDermott** is a card-carrying member of the alpha-male group, with dark, tousled hair, that's side-parted with a slight quiff. His mocha-coloured jacket has a faint, cream pin stripe and he wears it over a pristine white shirt with a cream and grey tie.

At an exclusive restaurant the party is attended by a young, beautiful waitress. She presents each of them with a handheld mike to take their orders. Although each of Bateman's pack might like to think of themselves as its leader, each of them is outshone by **Paul Owen**, who's a cut above the others, singling himself out by dressing in a black and white, houndstooth sports-jacket, with black trousers. His matching tie is held in place by a glinting silver tiepin. His fair slightly curly hair is pushed away from his handsome face in a neat side parting and he readily flashes a white, straight-toothed

smile in order to ease his way.

Bateman is in a relationship with **Evelyn**, a slim, attractive businesswoman in her own right. Also, in her late 20's, Evelyn is the female equivalent of the male 80s yuppie. Her dark auburn hair is styled into perfect waves that fall to the collar and frame her beautifully made-up face which often carries a vacant yet satisfied look. She's fixated on designer acquisition, wanting to see and be seen in exclusive fashion and locations.

Initially she wears a figure hugging, short black strapless dress, with a square front bodice and swagged material tied across the hip in a large bow. She accessorizes with an ostentatious gold and pearl choker and bulbous gold earrings; the look finished with black stilettos.

Evelyn's friend, **Courtney**, is a slim, black woman of similar age and is also beautifully made up. Her long dark hair tumbles in waves down her back, the front caught up and away from her face. Courtney's more of a socialite than a businesswoman. She wears a skintight tube dress with a halter neck and a striking fabric pattern of red and black, and teeters about in her stiletto heels.

At a dinner thrown by Evelyn, we meet Bateman's younger brother Sean, and his mother, Mrs Bateman.

**Sean** is a student-type, dressed in baggy black trousers and sneakers, with a grey hoodie worn open, and over a rock band T-shirt, his outfit finished with a beat-up black leather jacket. He's in his early 20's muscular and handsome, if slightly disaffected and depressed, hunched un-socially listening to music on his Walkman headphones.

**Mrs Bateman**, their Socialite mother, is in her early 50's, with a coiffed helmet of dyed blonde hair. She hides her aging eyes behind large, dark-tinted glasses and drinks a little faster than others. Unable to compete now with the younger, more striking women around her, Mrs Bateman dresses conservatively, but still opulently in 2-piece Chanel tweed suits in black or teal with gold buttons, matched with bulbous gold earrings.

Bateman and his entourage, still in their suits, visit a club. The ensemble now as clubbers dressed in a variety of risqué, 80s club gear - all in black, fishnets, sheer tops

over bandage style bras, lace, fingerless gloves and high waisted trousers slit to the hip on the outside of each leg, flashing glistening, sweat covered limbs as they dance. The choreography has the ensemble moving in sharp, snappy, synchronisation, often not syncopated, instead, stepping and gesturing, on the pounding beats of the eighties songs that pump loudly keeping them on a frenzied treadmill of continuous motion.

Outside the club, Bateman confronts a homeless man on the street – a shuffling stooped figure wrapped in various layers, on top of which his grubby trench coat is tied with string, a large woolen hat pulled down to his brow.

To keep their bodies in peak condition, Bateman and his colleagues work out at the gym, they are kitted out in the latest 80s gym wear – a variety of crotch bulging shorts teamed with vests and knee-length socks, in a kaleidoscope of garish colours – yellow, green and pink. Most wear headbands, some wear legwarmers. The class is led by a young, dark beauty, who seems almost to be taunting the near-drooling men, dressed in her neon orange leotard, cut high at the hips, exposing her toned buttocks. She demonstrates various pelvic thrusting moves with pink dumbbells in hand.

In an attempt to satisfy his own sexual depravities, Bateman engages a couple of prostitutes. He picks up street worker **Christine**, who wears a bubblegum, pink wig, and bottom skimming short skirt and black leather jacket and black ankle boots. He takes her to his apartment to meet a high-class prostitute **Sabrina**, who is blonde and sits nervously twisting her drink in a stylish black dress and sheer tights patterned with lace flowers. The ensemble slink in wearing flesh-coloured latex tops with sculpted ties and baggy tailored trousers of the same colour.

As Christmas approaches, Bateman, his family and colleagues gather at a cocktail party thrown by Evelyn. The men have discarded their city suits and wear pec-hugging Cashmere tops tucked into high waisted black trousers, only Bateman remains suited, while Luis dons a vivid green Christmas Jumper with a snowflake motif. The women are all in black evening dresses, exquisitely tailored to expose and accentuate their most seductive features. As the drinks, and other substances flow, the scene grows increasingly bizarre, even psychedelic. As Bateman begins to hallucinate Owen turns

up in a white tuxedo, with a white bow tie and shiny white leather shoes, a name badge reading Lloyd glints on the lapel.

As the number of Bateman's victims grows, he's paid a visit by **Detective Kimball**, a mid-height, easy paced, black man in his 60's, balding and bearded, dressed in an inexpensive Fawn, three-piece suit. Whilst conversing with Bateman he pins him with an unflinching gaze.

When Bateman and Evelyn attempt to get away from it all with a visit to The Hamptons, we find the exclusive seaside destination populated by shiny happy people dressed in tennis gear, in white or shades of pastel pink or yellow, with loafers or espadrilles. All beam their dazzling smiles as one rides around on pastel-blue bicycle and another glides by on roller boots.

When Courtney, McDermott, Van Patten and Luis show up at the beach they show off their physiques in high cut bathing suits, tiny trunks or Speedos, their rippling, tanned bodies basking in the sun.

Later, when shopping at the exclusive NY department store Barneys, the ensemble appears each dressed as city dealer in black trousers, white shirts and red braces their heads concealed within black Barneys' shopping bags mounted square on their shoulders.

### **Cast and Production Credits**

Patrick Bateman is played by **Arty Froushan**

Tim Price is played by **Oli Higginson**

McDermott is played by **Jack Butterworth**

Luis is played by **Zheng Xi Yong**

Van Patten is played by **Posi Morakinyo**

Paul Owen is played by **Daniel Bravo**

Jean is played by **Anastasia Martin**

Evelyn is played by **Emily Barber**

Mrs Bateman is played by **Kim Ismay**

Sean Bateman is played by **Alex James-Hatton**

Courtney is played by **Tanisha Spring**

Christine is played by Hannah **Yun Chamberlain**

Sabrina is played by **Millie Mayhew**

Detective Kimball is played by **Joseph Mydell**

Victoria is played by **Asha Parker-Wallace**

Others in the ensemble are **Liz Kamille** and **Samuel J Weir**

The Set Designer is **Es Devlin**

The Costume Designer is **Katrina Lindsay**

The Lighting Designer is **Jon Clark**

The Sound Designer is **Dan Moses Schreier**

The Video Designer is Finn Ross

The Music Supervisor and Vocal Arrangements are by **David Shrubsole**

Musical Director **Ellen Campbell**

The Choreographer is **Lynne Page**

The Vocal Coach is **Mary Hammond**

Book is by **Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa**

Music and Lyrics are by **Duncan Sheik**

The Original Novel is by **Bret Easton Ellis** and the Director is **Rupert Goold**

This is the end of the introduction to American Psycho at the Almeida Theatre. If you have any questions or need further assistance please contact the box office on 020 7359 4404