

YOUR DAYBILL

Text Only Version

Blindness

Australian Premiere / Australian Exclusive

Donmar Warehouse

With the voice of Juliet Stevenson

Based on the novel by Jose Saramago

Adapted by Simon Stephens

Directed by Walter Meierjohann

23 Feb – 20 Mar 2022 / Queen's Theatre

Arts Projects Australia presents the critically acclaimed Donmar Warehouse production of *Blindness*.

A socially distanced sound installation based on the novel of the same name by Nobel Laureate José Saramago, with the voice of Juliet Stevenson.

Duration 1hr 10 mins, no interval

Warnings Contains themes of sexual assault and psychological trauma. Extended periods of complete blackout, strobe and bright flashing lights in close proximity to visitors and loud noises. Recommended for ages 15+

Donmar Warehouse

Arts Council England / Fundação Jose Saramago / Arts Projects Australia

Supported by the UK/Australia Season Patrons Board, the British Council and the Australian Government as part of the UK/Australia Season.

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This daybill includes:

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CREATIVE TEAM

Original Creative Team

Based on the novel by **José Saramago**

Adapted by Simon Stephens

Directed by Walter Meierjohann

Sound Designers **Ben and Max Ringham**

Designer **Lizzie Clachan**

Lighting Designer **Jessica Hung Han Yun**

Production Consultant **Professor Hannah Thompson**

Resident Assistant Director **Sara Aniqah Malik**

Australian Creative Team

Producer **Daniel Vorrasi**

Production Manager Mark Muller

Lighting & Creative Associate Sue Grey-Gardner

Sound Associate & Technical Manager Luke Hill

Production Supplier Leko Novakovic (Novatech Creative Event Technology)

Installation Operators & Stage Management **Lucy Mitchell, Chanel Duval** and **Deb Shaw**

ABOUT THE SHOW

As the lights change at a major crossroads in a city in the heart of Europe a car grinds to a halt. Its driver can drive no more. Suddenly, without warning or cause, he has gone blind. Within hours it is clear that this is a blindness like no other. This blindness is infectious. Within days an epidemic of blindness has spread through the city. The government tries to quarantine the contagion by herding the newly blind people into an empty asylum. But their attempts are futile. The city is in panic.

The multi-award-winning creators conceived this innovative story as a sound and light installation. It's experienced through headphones, in socially-distanced pairs, under dramatic glowing lights. With a gripping narration by Juliet Stevenson, Adelaide's Queen's Theatre will become the theatrical epicentre of a society sent into freefall by a pandemic.

BIOGRAPHIES

Juliet Stevenson

Voice of the Storyteller/Doctor's Wife

Juliet Stevenson is one of Britain's leading actors. Her most recent theatre credits include *The Doctor* - for which she won the Critics' Circle Award for Best Actress and is currently nominated for the Olivier Award for Best Actress, *Mary Stuart, Hamlet* (Almeida/West End); *Wings, Happy Days* (Young Vic). Juliet won the 1991 Olivier Award for Best Actress for her performance in *Death and the Maiden*, and has been nominated a further five times.

Juliet has received five BAFTA nominations for her work on screen. Her films include *Truly, Madly, Deeply* - Evening Standard Film Award for Best Actress; *Bend it like Beckham*; *When did you last see your Father?*; *Being Julia*.

Juliet's latest television work includes *Riviera* and *Out of her Mind*, a comedy series with Sara Pascoe. Her other credits include *One of Us* and *The Enfield Haunting*, and she appeared as a series regular in *Atlantis* and *The Village*. She was awarded the CBE in 1999.

Simon Stephens

Writer

Simon Stephens is an Olivier and Tony award-winning playwright. His theatre credits include *Fortune* (Metropolitan, Tokyo); *Maria, Rage* (Thalia, Hamburg); *The Threepenny Opera* (NT); *Fatherland* (MIF 2017/Lyric Hammersmith/LIFT Festival 2018); *Heisenberg* (West End); *Obsession* (Barbican/Toneelgroep, Amsterdam); *The Seagull*, *Hérons*, *Morning*, *Three Kingdoms*, *A Thousand Stars that Explode in the Sky*, *Punk Rock* (Lyric Hammersmith); *Carmen Disruption* (Deutsches Schauspielhaus/Almeida); *Nuclear War*, *Birdland*, *Country Music*, *Bluebird* (Royal Court); *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time* - Olivier and Tony Awards for Best New Play (NT/West End/Broadway); *A Doll's House* (Young Vic/West End); *Sea Wall* (Bush); *Harper Regan, Port* (Royal Exchange, Manchester/NT); *On the Shore of the Wide World* (Royal Exchange, Manchester). He has also written for film, television and radio.

Simon is a professor at the Manchester Writing School at Manchester Metropolitan University and Artistic Associate at the Lyric Hammersmith.

Walter Meierjohann

Director

Walter Meierjohann was Artistic Director of HOME from 2013 to 2018 and International Associate Director at the Young Vic in London. At the Young Vic, his productions included the European premiere of *In the Red and Brown Water* by Tarell McCraney and *Kafka's Monkey*, which toured to Sydney, Melbourne, Athens, Paris, Tokyo, Istanbul, Taipei and New York. The production, which starred Kathryn Hunter, also showed in HOME's 2015 opening season, with Hunter reprising her lead role.

Walter has worked extensively in Germany and the UK at theatres including: the Barbican; Liverpool Playhouse; Nottingham Playhouse; The Curve, Leicester; Residenztheater, Munich; Staatsschauspiel, Dresden; Schauspiel, Graz; and Arena, Berlin, for Peter Stein's Faust Ensemble and Impulse Theatre Festival. Prior to joining the Young Vic, Walter was Artistic Director of Neubau at the State Theatre of Dresden. In opera, he has assisted the late Klaus-Michael Grueber in his productions of *Aida* (Nederlands Opera, Amsterdam) and *Don Giovanni* (Ruhrfestspiele).

Ben and Max Ringham

Sound Designers

In 2019, Ben and Max Ringham, together with writer Ella Hickson, created *ANNA* - a headphone-based show at the National Theatre. They are co-creators of the immersive theatre company

Wiretapper and associate artists with the Shunt Collective. Four-time Olivier Award nominees, last year they were awarded the H-100 2019 Award for Innovation in Theatre and Performance. Recent credits for the Donmar include *Teenage Dick*, *Berberian Sound Studio* and *Belleville* and their other recent theatre credits include *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Pinter at the Pinter* (West End); *Betrayal* (West End/Broadway); *The Seven Ages of Patience*, *Pass Over* (Kiln); *Ugly Lies the Bone*, *Tartuffe* (NT); *Pygmalion* (UK Tour); *Party Skills* (Shoreditch Town Hall); *The Meeting* (Chichester); *Machinal* (Almeida); *Love and Information* (Sheffield Theatres); *Gloria* (Hampstead). Other composition and sound design work includes *Frida Kahlo - Making Herself Up* at The V&A, *Mirror Maze* and *Room 2022* with Es Devlin, *Rembrandt - The Late Works* at The National Gallery, *The Inspection Chamber* for Alexa, BBC Research and Development.

Lizzie Clachan

Designer

Lizzie Clachan is a renowned theatre and opera designer and was one of the co-founders of the Shunt Collective in 1998. Her previous work at the Donmar includes *Far Away* and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Other recent theatre includes *A Number* (Bridge); *The Son* (Kiln/West End); *The Nico Project* (MIFI/Melbourne Festival); *Rutherford & Son*, *Absolute Hell*, *As You Like It*, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, *Treasure Island*, *Edward II* (NT); *Cyprus Avenue* (Royal Court/Abbey, Dublin/Public, NY); *Yerma* (Young Vic/Armory, NY); *Life of Galileo*, *Macbeth*, *A Season in the Congo* (Young Vic); *Tipping the Velvet* (Lyric Hammersmith); *The Skriker* (Royal Exchange, Manchester); *Carmen Disruption* (Almeida); *The Forbidden Zone* (Perner Insul, Salzburg); *All My Sons* (Regent's Park Open Air); *Ibsen Huis* (Toneelgroep Amsterdam/Avignon Festival).

Lizzie's opera credits include *Mask of Orpheus*, *Orphée*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Orpheus and Euridice* (ENO), *Nixon in China* (Staatsoper Hannover); *Jenůfa* (Amsterdam National Opera); *La Traviata* (Theater Basel/ENO); *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Teatr Wielki, Poland/Festival d'Aix en Provence); *Le Vin Herbé* (Staatsoper Berlin); *Bliss* (Staatsoper Hamburg).

Jessica Hung Han Yun

Lighting Designer

Jessica Hung Han Yun is a multi award-winning lighting designer specialising in installations, theatre, dance and festivals.

Jessica's recent theatre credits include *The Last of the Pelican Daughters* (Complicité/Edinburgh/Royal & Derngate); *Fairview* (Young Vic); *Snowflake* (Kiln); *Mephisto [A Rhapsody]*, *Dear Elizabeth*, *The Human Voice* (Gate); *Equus* - Knight of Illumination Award 2019 and Off West End Award for Best Lighting Design (Theatre Royal Stratford East/West End); *Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner*, *Pah-La* (Royal Court); *Forgotten* (Theatre Royal Plymouth/Arcola); *Hive City Legacy* (Roundhouse with Hot Brown Honey); *Cuckoo* (Soho); *Nine Foot Nine* (Bunker); *Becoming Shades* (Vaults Festival 2018).

ABOUT THE COMPANIES

Donmar Warehouse

UNITED KINGDOM

The Donmar Warehouse is a 251-seat, not-for-profit theatre in Covent Garden, London, led by Artistic Director Michael Longhurst and Executive Director Henny Finch. Their mission is to bring together a wide variety of people in their intimate warehouse space and elsewhere to create, witness and participate in thrilling, world-class theatre.

The Donmar has won more than 100 awards in its 29-year history, with highlights of the programme including founder artistic director Sam Mendes' productions of Cabaret (with Alan Cumming) and The Blue Room (with Nicole Kidman). Michael Grandage (Artistic Director 2002-2012) brought notable productions of Othello with Chiwetel Ejiofor and Ewan McGregor, and Red with Alfred Molina and Eddie Redmayne. Josie Rourke (AD 2012-2019) brought Tom Hiddleston in Coriolanus, and a trilogy of all-female Shakespeare plays directed by Phyllida Lloyd. Current Artistic Director Michael Longhurst's inaugural 2019-20 season focused on important stories, thrillingly told, and included new play by leading writers including Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Alice Birch and Mike Lew.

Arts Projects Australia

AUSTRALIA

Since its establishment in 1997, Arts Projects Australia (APA) has produced, presented and toured over 180 international contemporary arts events with presenting partners in Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. APA is the event manager and producer of WOMADelaide and Illuminate Adelaide.