



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

Aisha and Abhaya

Visual Story

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The story of *Aisha and Abhaya*

Access at the Royal Opera House



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Attending a performance at the Royal Opera House Linbury Theatre



We are going to see a performance in the Linbury Theatre at the Royal Opera House.

We can get into the building using two different entrances.



Bow Street Entrance



Piazza Entrance

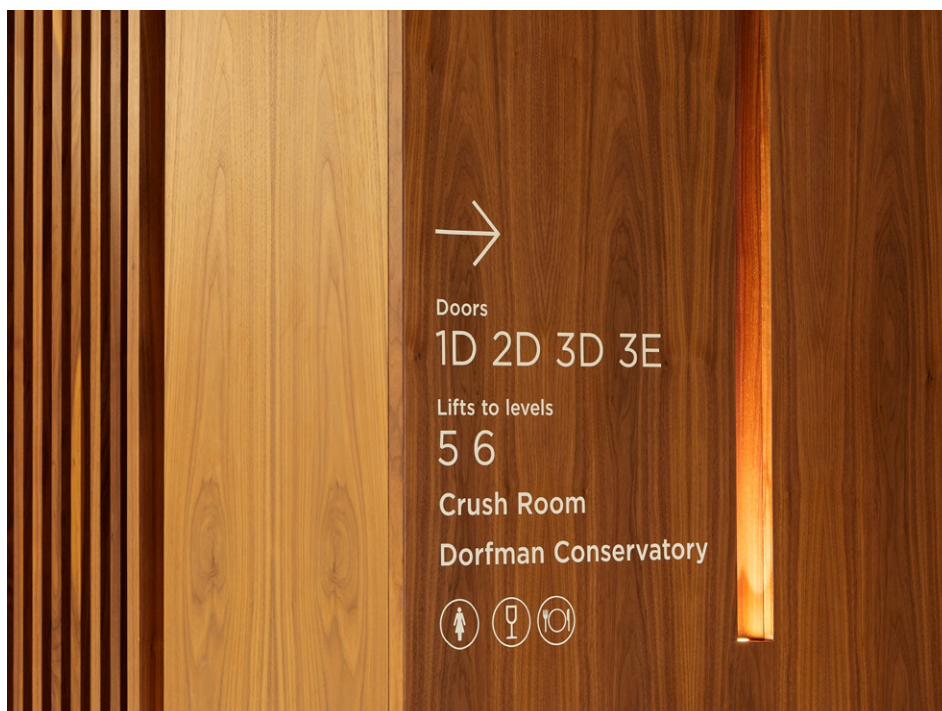
A performance is like watching a movie on the TV at home, except it's a lot bigger.

There is a big stage, with people called actors, singers and dancers. They are wearing costumes. There are bright lights and loud music. There are lots of other people who are also watching the performance, called the audience.

When we are going into the Royal Opera House, we will see a security guard. They may ask to look inside our bags.



The Royal Opera House has signs on the walls and pillars to help us find where we need to go. We can look out for these signs.



If we have any questions or are unsure what to do or where to go, we can ask the people who work at the theatre. They are called ushers.

Different members of staff wear different uniforms, but they all wear green lanyards with name tags around their necks.



We may already have our tickets, as paper tickets or e-tickets, or we may want to collect them at the Box Office in the Ground Floor Foyer. If we are collecting our tickets from the Box Office, we may have to wait in line for our turn.



Before we go to see the performance, we can buy a programme from an usher that will tell us all about the show.

It will tell us which actors, musicians, singers and dancers are in the performance, and show us some pictures of the rehearsals and some more interesting information about the story.



The performance we are seeing is in the Linbury Theatre.

The Linbury Theatre is downstairs. We can get there using these stairs from the Ground Floor Foyer or by going in the lift.



Before going into the theatre, we can leave our bags and coats at the cloakroom in the Linbury Foyer.



At the cloakroom a member of staff will take our bags and coats and give us a ticket. When we want to get them back again, we give them back the ticket and they will give us back our bags and coats.

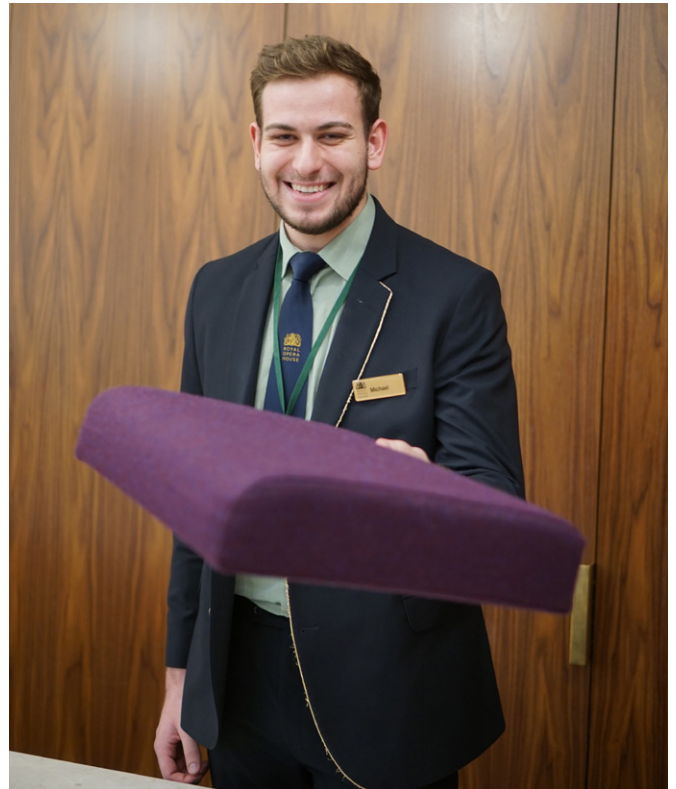


At the cloakroom, we can borrow some things to help us enjoy the performance.

If we have a hearing impairment, we can borrow an Assisted Hearing Facility to help us hear the performance.

If we cannot see the stage because there are people sitting in front of us, we can ask for a booster cushion.

We can also borrow ear defenders and fidget toys or sensory devices.



We might have to wait for the door to the theatre to open. While we are waiting there will be other people waiting too and the room might be very busy. People may be sitting at tables or buying food or drink at the bar. We will hear an announcement or a bell telling us it is time to go and find our seats.



As we are going into the theatre an usher will ask to see our tickets.
They will scan our tickets with a machine. The machine will shine a light
on our tickets, and it will make a beeping sound.



Inside the theatre there will be lots of seats on different levels. We can go to these levels using the stairs or the lift on the right hand side of the theatre. The levels are called the Upper Circle, Circle, and Stalls.

We cannot choose our own seats. The writing and numbers on our tickets tell us where we must sit. If we need help to find our seats, we can ask an usher and they will show us.

There will be people we don't know sitting in seats around us. They are here to see the show too.



When the performance is about to start, we will hear another bell. Then the lights in the theatre will be turned down and the room will become darker.



If we look at the stage, we may see musicians getting ready. They will all play a note on their instruments together to make sure they are in tune. Sometimes a person will come onto the stage to introduce the performance. If there is a conductor, they will come out and join the musicians. When this happens, people in the seats around us will clap their hands to welcome them. If we don't like this noise we can cover our ears or wear ear defenders.



When we are sitting in our seats, we need to keep our feet down and our hands to ourselves.

During the performance we need to sit quietly so that we don't disturb the people around us, and everyone can enjoy the show. We may see or hear something on stage that makes us feel happy or sad. We can laugh or feel sad if we want to.

We must turn off our mobile phones and leave them off during the performance. We can use a fidget toy or sensory device as long as it doesn't have lights or sound.



If we need take a break or go to the toilet, we can leave the theatre quietly. We can use the Linbury bar or foyer to take a break from the performance. We can move around this space if we need to and we can talk to each other. We can also see what is happening in the performance on the TV screen on the wall. If the TV screen is not on, we can ask the usher to turn it on for us.



We can follow signs or ask an usher to help us find the nearest bathrooms. There are accessible bathrooms available if we need to use them.

The bathrooms can get very busy. There is one door to go into the bathroom and another door to come out.



When we have finished our break we can tell an usher. The usher will tell us when we can go back into the performance. We must go back in quietly.

During the performance there will be an interval. This is a little break where people can go to the bathroom and have a move around. During this time, we can talk to each other.

We can choose to stay in our seats or have a break and a move around. During this time the bathrooms and the Linbury bar will be busy. If it's too busy, we can go to the terrace upstairs where it is quieter.



During the break we can buy a drink or a snack at the bar, get a free cup of water at the water station beside the bar, or buy some ice cream from the vendors.

We cannot bring any food or drinks into the theatre with us.



There will be an announcement to tell us the break is nearly over and that we need to go back into the theatre for the second part of the performance. Sometimes if it's a very long performance there will be more than one interval.

At the end of the performance and sometimes during it the people sitting around us will clap their hands, shout and cheer to show that they have enjoyed the performance. They might even stand up to show that they really enjoyed it. If we want to, we can join in and clap our hands and cheer too.

At the end of the performance the actors will all come out on stage and take a bow. If the noise is too loud, we can cover our ears or wear ear defenders.



When the performance is finished the lights will be turned back up and the room will become brighter again. Everyone will be leaving the theatre at the same time and they will be talking to each other. It might be loud and busy. We will have to wait our turn to get out of our seats and leave the theatre. This will take a few minutes.



Aisha and Abhaya

Introduction

Aisha and Abhaya are two sisters. Their homeland has been destroyed by war, so they go on a difficult journey to a new land.

The story is told both through short films and live dance. Sometimes there is a film playing on a screen while the performers dance on stage. We can choose which part we want to look at.

This show is suitable for ages 11+. It contains scenes of violence and war. There is loud music throughout.



Relaxed performance

There is a relaxed performance of *Aisha and Abhaya* on Thursday 6 February at 1pm.

Everyone is welcome to attend. This performance has been modified to be more accessible for neurodivergent people, people with learning disabilities, sensory and communication impairments, mental health issues or dementia.

There will be a more relaxed approach to making noise during the show and coming in and out of the theatre.

Information about the performance

Running times

The show is approximately one hour long. There is no interval.

Approximate timings:

Journey (film) – 13 minutes

City (dance) – 27 minutes

Before (film) – 5 minutes

Death (dance) – 9 minutes

Spirits (film) – 4 minutes

Leaving the theatre during the performance

We can leave the theatre any time we need a break. We can go back in whenever we feel ready. Sometimes an usher will help us wait for a good time to go back into the theatre so we don't disturb other people who are watching the performance.

If we need a break, we can go to a chill-out space in the Linbury Foyer just outside the theatre and in the Taylor Learning Rooms for the Relaxed Performance only. We can ask an usher to show us where to go.

Flashing lights and loud noises

The performance will include moments of darkness and bright lights, and some loud sound effects and music. The Relaxed Performance will have a quieter level of sound effects and the lights in the theatre will remain on but dimmed throughout the performance. There will not be any strobe or flashing lights.

There will be loud music playing through speakers. We might hear the people around us making noises or moving around. We can cover our ears or use ear defenders or ear plugs if we want to. We will be given ear plugs by an usher while we are waiting to go into the theatre.

If we need more information or have questions about the lighting, music and sound effects used in this show, we can contact the box office by email **boxoffice@roh.org.uk** or telephone **+44 (0)20 7304 4000**.



Aisha and Abhaya characters

There are seven dancers who play characters in the show. They dance together in a big group, or in pairs, or on their own.

The dancers wear tight costumes. Some of the costumes have beads and ruffled fabric on the sides. The costumes are grey and brown colours. Aisha and Abhaya wear brown costumes and the Orphan King and Orphans wear grey costumes.

In the short films, Aisha and Abhaya wear detailed, tall headdresses and lots of jewellery. Their grandmother wears a beautiful, yellow dress.

Aisha and Abhaya



Orphan King



Orphans



The story of Aisha and Abhaya

The lights in the theatre turn off and the stage is dark. We hear the sound of waves crashing in the sea, water moving and someone coughing. The sounds get louder and we see a large screen on the stage. The screen shows a short film called JOURNEY. The film is partly reflected on the stage and the seats.



In the film, we see churning water and the two sisters swimming. They swim to the shore and crawl onto the beach.



The sisters are exhausted from their journey. Aisha has a small memory box. It is very precious to her and she holds it carefully.



The sisters make a shelter out of the remains of their boat. Aisha opens the memory box. She watches a small golden figure dancing inside. Abhaya closes the box and the sisters lie down to sleep.



They are woken up by the noise of a party and follow the sounds to a forest clearing. They discover a group of orphans and the Orphan King dancing around a camp fire, drinking and celebrating. Abhaya joins in with the celebrations but Aisha is cautious. The dancing continues into the night and becomes more lively.



In the morning, we see the aftermath of the party. The group wake up and stumble around the forest clearing. One of the orphans goes to the toilet in the campfire and another is sick when they wake up. Aisha and Abhaya are given warm coats and sturdy boots and everyone packs up the camp.



They all set off on a long walk across mountains, fields and forests. Some of the orphans try to take the memory box but Aisha gets it back.



They eventually reach a big walled city. Everyone walks inside. Aisha follows behind and we watch her walk through a long tunnel.



While the film is playing, we can see some people standing still behind the screen on stage. They are the dancers performing in the show.



When the film finishes, the screen opens like a curtain and disappears so we can see the stage. The dancers start to move their arms and slowly they start to dance. Behind the dancers, there is a large curved screen that shows a video of a tunnel.



The dancers move together in a group, and we see the Orphan King raise his arms very high. The lights above the dancers pulse to the beat of the music.

The wide screen shows lots of small yellow lights. It looks a bit like a city at night time. The music becomes louder and more repetitive.

The Orphan King dances on his own in the middle of the group.



Two dancers move to the front of the stage and dance together. They shout and move very close together.



They rejoin the rest of the group.

The panels at the side open and some of the dancers pose in the openings like statues. The dancers are moving much faster and the music is louder.

The screen turns dark while the dancers move back together. Some of the dancers hold Abhaya around her neck.

On the screen, a large shimmering gold figure slowly stands up and starts to dance.

The dancers leave the stage through the side panels. Only Abhaya is left. She dances by herself and then leaves the stage too.



The screen shows a short film called BEFORE. It shows some of Aisha and Abhaya's past. We see the sisters enjoying family time with their grandmother. Their grandmother gives Aisha the memory box. The sisters dance with their grandmother.



They hear the sounds of shouting and danger approaching from outside. Their grandmother tells Aisha and Abhaya to hide in a cupboard as armed gunmen come into the room. The gunmen point their guns at Aisha and Abhaya's grandmother.



One of the gunmen uses the back of his gun to hit Aisha and Abhaya's grandmother on the head. She falls to the ground. He hits her several more times. Aisha and Abhaya watch through the cupboard door. They feel scared.



When the gunmen have left, Aisha and Abhaya run to their grandmother on the floor. She is badly hurt. The sisters cry together. Aisha picks up the memory box and they run out of the room. We see their grandmother lying on the floor and snow begins to fall. The snow becomes thicker until we cannot see their grandmother anymore.



At the end of the film, the dancers come back onto the stage from the side. The screen shows an industrial space like an alleyway lit with blue lights.

Gradually, the screen shows more and more people dancing together under spotlights. Some of them are very big, and some are very small. They do the same dance moves as the dancers on the stage.



The screen shows a final film in which Aisha and Abhaya are sleeping in a narrow alleyway. Their grandmother walks along the alleyway towards the sisters. The sisters wake up and the family hug.



They walk down the alleyway together. While they walk, they turn into golden shapes like the dancer in the memory box, and their spirits float up into the sky.

It is the end of the show. The lights go dark then come back on. We can clap our hands to congratulate the performers while they take a bow.



Access at the Royal Opera House

The Royal Opera House offers lots of seating options including wheelchair spaces. There is step-free access around the building including to the restaurants and bars. We can sign up for an Access Membership that gives us assistance and discounts. We can find out more by visiting the page on the Royal Opera House website **www.roh.org.uk/visit/access**

If we need more information or have any questions before our visit to the Royal Opera House, we can contact the box office by email **boxoffice@roh.org.uk** or telephone **+44 (0)20 7304 4000**.

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