

Camp Siegfried Audio Introduction

Welcome to this audio introduction to **Camp Siegfried** by Bess Wohl, directed by Katy Rudd.

The Audio Described performance will take place on Monday 18 October. The introduction will start at 7.15pm and the performance itself at 7.30pm. The performance lasts 90 minutes, and please note, there is no interval. It will be described by Ruth James. These notes will take about six minutes to listen to. The touch tour will take place at 5pm. Please call 0344 871 7628 or email access@oldvictheatre.com for further information.

The play is advised for ages 16 and above. It includes occasional strong language, adult content and sensitive subject matter including sex and masturbation, child exploitation and abuse, homophobia, radicalisation, antisemitism and themes of racism and racial violence. There is a single gunshot during the play and theatrical haze and smoke is used, as are blackouts between scenes.

Fifteen minutes before the performance starts, we will repeat an edited version of these introductory notes live, so that you can listen to them through the headsets in the auditorium. We will be able to give you an update if there have been any last-minute changes to the production, and this will also give you an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the headsets.

The theatre journalist Alex Soloski writes in *The Guardian*: In May 2020, the playwright Bess Wohl rented a house in Bellport, Long Island, a bayside village an hour or two from Manhattan. This was during the early months of the pandemic, when Wohl found herself running an impromptu summer camp for her three young children. With what little downtime she had, she began to Google the history of the area, becoming curious about a nearby town called Yaphank.

In the 1930s, Yaphank hosted summer camps for German-American youth who dressed in brown shirts and jackboots. They marched along Adolf Hitler Street and Goebbels Street, greeting one another with cries of 'Heil Hitler'. Flowerbeds were planted in the shape of swastikas.

Camp Siegfried closed its doors 80 years ago. But as Donald Trump's re-election campaign intensified, the mid-30s didn't feel so far away. 'That really scared me,' Wohl says. 'Like, this is still completely here – the feelings that led to that camp are still present.'

The set of Camp Siegfried is deceptively simple. A black screen cuts off almost half the height of the proscenium arch. Below it, the playing area, a black floor, is only around four metres deep. In the front at the centre a section about a metre square protrudes slightly forward and can rise in a low platform.

At the back of the space is a screen of slender vertical wooden slats that meet the bottom of the black screen at a height of about four metres. The slats are of varying widths and there are uneven spaces between them where lights sometimes shine through. They convey the woodland setting of the camp and at times of celebration a string of fairy lights is hung across them. Later in the play the slats vanish and colours appear on a giant screen in their place.

The actors bring in the few props and these will be described as they appear.

The play is set in 1938, and there are two characters, a teenage girl and boy, who are only identified as Her and Him. They are both white.

The girl is lightly built, almost elfin, with dark brown wavy hair worn in a plait, either pinned up at the back of her head or allowed to hang down her back. She has wide dark eyes and thick brows. She is dressed in a round necked, long sleeved top striped in shades of grey-brown. A row of little buttons runs down the front and a glimpse of white undershirt peeps from the neckline. Her skirt is pink calf length cotton with little tuckpleats at the front below the waistband. She wears stout black lace ups with white ankle socks. When doing physical work around the camp, the girl wears a sleeveless silky top in a pinkish brown with black calf length trousers. She occasionally betrays her timidity with downcast eyes, and her fingers twist together as she speaks.

The boy is a picture of Aryan health, tall and athletically built, strong-jawed and green-eyed, with dark blond hair cut short and brushed to one side. He dresses in the uniform of Camp Siegfried, a military style adopted by the Hitler Youth. His shirt is brown, worn with the collar open and the sleeves rolled up to his elbows. There's a narrow brown leather strap diagonally over his right shoulder, attached to a thick black leather belt. His black shorts are knee-length, and he wears calf-length white socks, along with heavy black boots. He has a confident stride and is adept at the camp's typically masculine tasks.

Cast and production credits

Her is played by Patsy Ferran and Him by Luke Thallon

Writer Bess Wohl

Director Katy Rudd

Set & Costume Rosanna Vize

Lighting Rob Casey

Sound Ian Dickinson for Autograph

Video Tal Rosner

Movement Rachel-Leah Hosker

Casting Jessica Ronane CDG

Voice Charlie Hughes-D'Aeth

Dialect Rebecca Gausnell

Associate Set & Costume Anisha Fields

Associate Lighting Lucía Sánchez Roldán for Ammonite

Baylis Assistant Director Jasmine Teo

Our next Audio Described performance is **A Christmas Carol**, Jack Thorne's adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic Christmas story.

A Christmas Carol will be Audio Described on Friday 10 December. The Touch Tour time is not yet confirmed.

An Audio Described Relaxed Performance will take place on Saturday 11 December at 1pm.

Relaxed Performances are specially designed for people who prefer a more informal environment.

- You can make noise during the show.
- If you sit in the Stalls, Dress Circle or Baylis Circle you can come and go from the auditorium if you like.
- The lights in the auditorium will be kept on so it doesn't get too dark.
- We also make small changes to the lights and sound so that the show is more comfortable for you. There will be some lighting effects in this production but there is no repetitive flashing in the show.
- If you'd like a break from the show there will be several chill out areas in the foyer.