

National Theatre

Visual Story



by Tanika Gupta
Dorfman Theatre



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

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Production photography by Manuel Harlan

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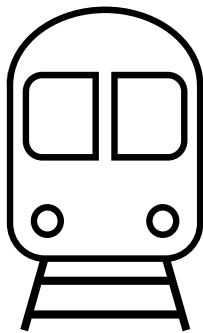
About the National Theatre

How to get here



The National Theatre is a large concrete building on the South Bank in London. It has three theatre spaces called the **Olivier**, **Lyttelton**, and **Dorfman**.

The address is:
Upper Ground, London, SE1 9PX.



The nearest **train** and **underground** stations are:

- **Waterloo**
- **London Blackfriars**
- **Embankment**



The National Theatre has an **underground car park**. There is **free parking** available for **Blue Badge** holders.



More information about getting here is **on our website:**

**[nationaltheatre.org.uk/
your-visit/getting-here/](https://nationaltheatre.org.uk/your-visit/getting-here/)**

About the National Theatre

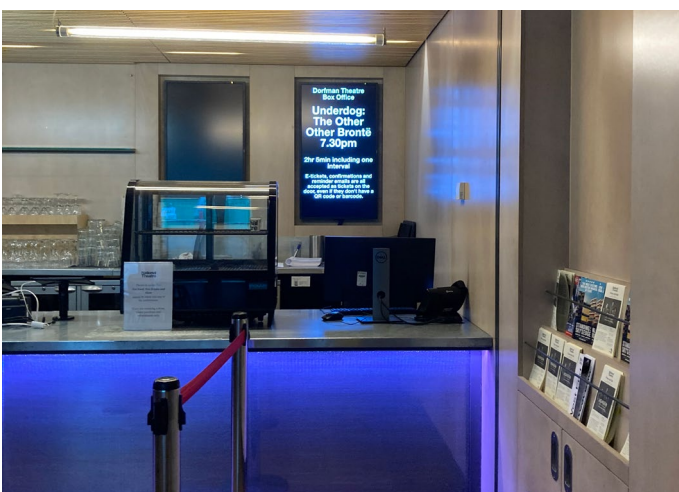
Dorfman Theatre



This production will be performed in the **Dorfman Theatre**. The Dorfman Theatre has **its own entrance**, separate to the National Theatre main building. **The entrance looks like this.**



When you arrive through the main entrance, the **security team** will **check your bag**. You might need to queue for a short time. **The security team will not touch you.**



If you need help with your ticket, you can speak to the **box office team**. Their desk looks like this.

About the National Theatre Dorfman Theatre



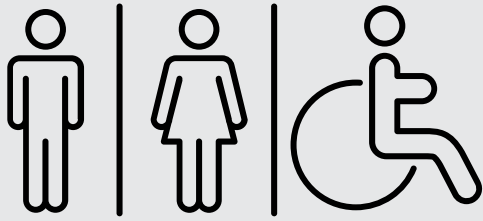
There are accessible toilets in the **ground floor foyer**.



There are lots of staff available if you have questions or if you would like directions to your seats. **National Theatre staff** wear **black t-shirts** with **white writing**.



The Dorfman Theatre has three levels of audience seating: the **pit** (lower level), the **circle** (middle level), and the **gallery** (highest level).



Bathrooms in the areas near the Dorfman Theatre will have **hand towels instead of hand dryers.**



The **access desk** is located in the **Dorfman foyer corridor.**

There are hearing enhancement headsets, ear defenders, fidget toys, and large print cast lists available here.



There is a **ground floor foyer** and an upper foyer. The ground floor can be **busy and loud** before and after the show, and during the interval.

The Production

A Tupperware of Ashes

A Tupperware of Ashes is a **play** written by **Tanika Gupta** and directed by **Pooja Ghai**. This play is a **drama** about family, life, immigration and the Indian spiritual cycle of death and rebirth.

Dates

A Tupperware of Ashes will be performed in the Dorfman Theatre until **Saturday 16 November**.

Length

A Tupperware of Ashes is **2 hours and 30 minutes** long. This includes one **20-minute** interval.

Warning!

The following pages have **spoilers** about the content of the play, the characters and the set.

Please do not take photographs or use your phone during the performance. Cameras and phones may be used in the foyer.



The Production

Content Guidance

A Tupperware of Ashes contains: contains themes of grief, death, cremation, and dementia and Alzheimer's.

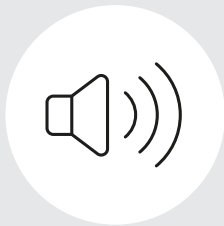
Scents of the sea and incense are used in the foyer and auditorium.



**Bright flashing /
pulsing lights**



Smoke and haze



**Screaming /
shouting and
loud noises**



**Moments of
total blackout**



**References to and
sound effects of
medical conditions
and procedures**



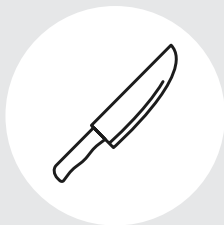
**References
to Abortion**



**Strong and
offensive
language**



**References
to racism**



**Depictions
and threats
of violence**



**References
to Covid and
lockdowns**

What Happens in the Play?

The set



A Tupperware of Ashes is set across multiple places in **London**. The final scene is set at the edge of the Ganges River in **India**.

The stage has a **light blue backdrop** with cable lights and **lines of pulsing lights**. There are **four levels of steps** across the stage, which the cast walk up and down. There is a **wood floor** and a **carpet** at the front of the stage, and a table and a few chairs which create different rooms throughout the play. A **red pathway** around the floor and carpet separates the stage from the auditorium.

What Happens in the Play?

The characters

6 actors play the members of Queenie's family.



Queenie



Ameet
(Queenie's husband)



Indrani
(Queenie's close friend)



Raj
(Queenie's oldest child)



Gopal
(Queenie's middle child)



Kamala
(Queenie's youngest child)

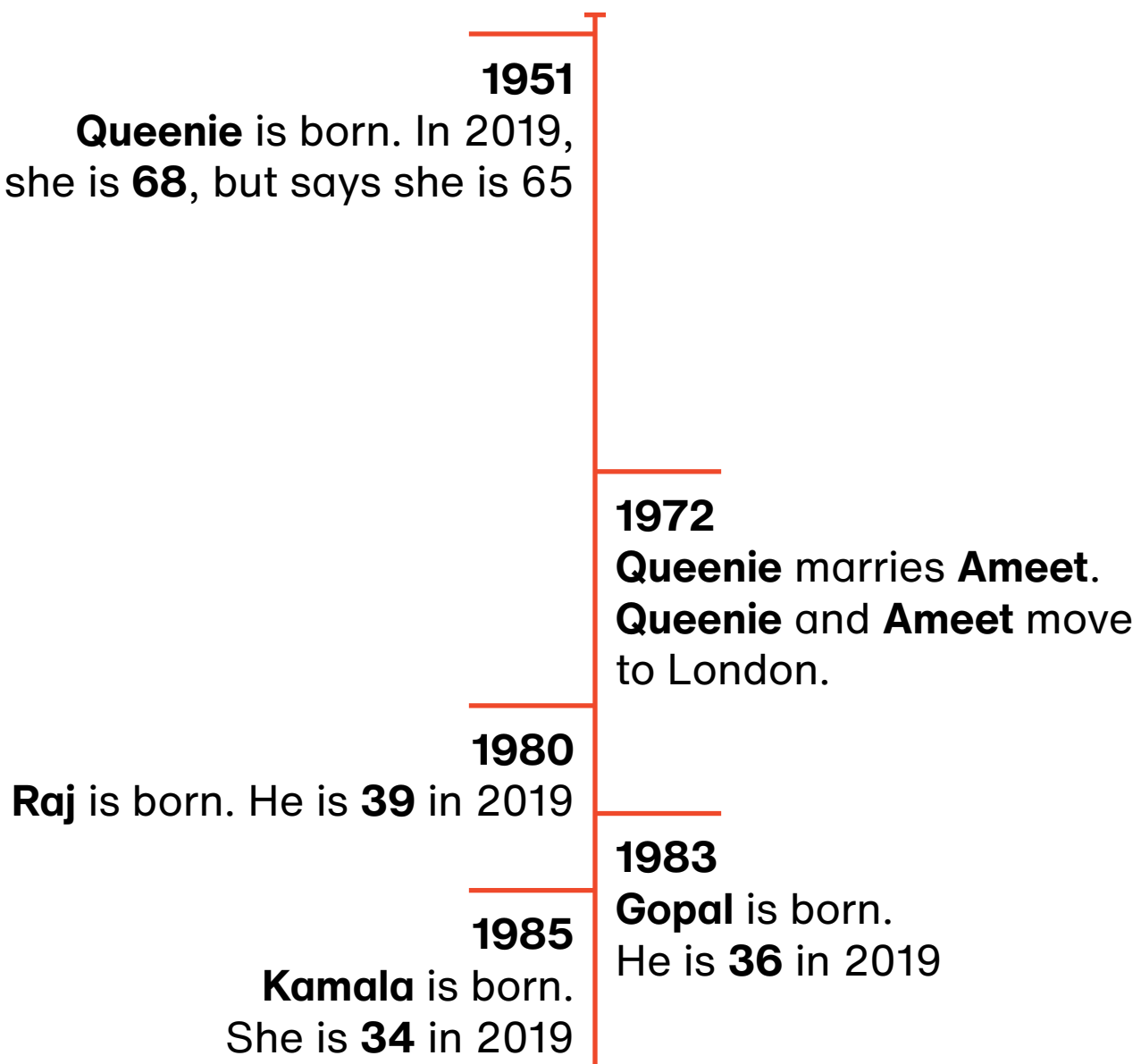
What Happens in the Play?

The characters

Two actors in *A Tupperware of Ashes* play multiple roles, including staff in Queenie's restaurant, a lawyer, healthcare professionals, and a cousin in India.

The play is set between **2019** and **2022**.

Queenie's family timeline:



What Happens in the Play?

Synopsis

Prologue

Queenie hears her husband, Ameet, calling her to come and swim in the water. She protests getting in.

Act 1

When Queenie goes into the sea, she starts drowning. Her oldest son, Raj, catches her and pulls her out of the water. She is reminded that this is the North Sea, not the water in Kolkata which she had been imagining.



Queenie's children – Raj, Gopal and Kamala – play games while Queenie prepares a new recipe for them to try. The smoke alarm in the kitchen goes off, as Queenie has left food overcooking in the oven.

As Raj leaves, he announces that his partner, Krishna, is pregnant. Queenie expresses her dislike for Krishna.

Kamala takes Queenie to see a doctor about her memory. He runs many tests.



The doctor tells Queenie that her memory issues can be explained by early onset Alzheimer's disease.

Queenie and Indrani catch up in what seems to be a steam room. Queenie hears Ameet talking to her, but tries to ignore him. Indrani reminds Queenie that they need to get ready for a party, and Queenie realises where they actually are.

At Queenie's restaurant, she tells her head chef, Jamila, to prepare for a visit by the Indian High Commissioner. Jamila tells Queenie that the High Commissioner visited a month ago. Jamila has been covering for Queenie for a year, creating the menus and running the restaurant.



Raj, Gopal and Kamala discuss Queenie's diagnosis with Indrani.

Queenie gives everyone instructions for managing her restaurant and tells her children that she will move in with each of them for four months at a time until the end of her life, starting with Raj. She makes the children promise not to move her into a care home, and tells them that she wants her ashes scattered in the Ganges.

Gopal and Kamala take Queenie to a Citizens Advice to organise a 'Lasting Power of Attorney'. Queenie becomes confused between what the lawyer is saying and the stories she can hear Ameet telling her.



Indrani helps Queenie pack up the items in her home. Ameet succeeds in making Queenie see him. Queenie tells Indrani that she can see and hear Ameet talking to her.

Queenie moves in with Raj. They argue and shout at each other and Queenie insults him.

Queenie moves in with Gopal, telling him that she can't live with Raj.

While watching an old Hindi film, Queenie mistakes Gopal for a young Ameet and tries to kiss him. She doesn't believe Gopal when he tries to correct her, and she becomes panicked and runs away.



Indrani finds Queenie in the middle of a road. She tries to pull Queenie to safety, but Queenie doesn't recognise her and slaps her face.

Queenie moves in with Kamala.

Kamala must leave to go to an exam. She encourages Queenie to eat, but she refuses and throws the food on the floor.

Kamala tries to force food into Queenie's mouth. Queenie screams and pushes her away.

Raj, Gopal and Kamala argue with Indrani. The children want to move Queenie into a care home as they can't care for her anymore, but Indrani argues against it, and reminds them of the promise they made her.

When Queenie finds out, she grabs a kitchen knife and slashes the air. Paramedics arrive, sedate her, and guide Queenie away. She screams out for Raj.

Interval

Act 2

In a memory of a bedroom in Kolkata, Queenie and Ameet discuss plans for moving to England.



Pavel, a care worker, shows Queenie her room in a care home. He connects with her, discussing her favourite mango gelato.



After some time, Pavel reappears in full Covid personal protective equipment (blue overalls, a mask, gloves and goggles.) Queenie screams in fear.

Kamala, Raj, Gopal and Indrani look in on Queenie from outside a window. They thought they would be able to visit every day, but visitors aren't allowed during Covid lockdown. Queenie barely notices them.

In a memory, Queenie and Ameet sing and tell stories.

The siblings watch Queenie singing and talking, and argue with each other.



Indrani, Kamala and Gopal continue to visit Queenie as she becomes more unwell.

Raj finally visits Queenie. She tells him (in Bengali) that she wants to go home. Queenie pushes a pillow to Raj and asks him to end it for her. Raj throws the pillow to the floor.

Pavel explains to Queenie what is happening. He wishes her peace. Ameet sings to Queenie as she passes away.

Raj tries to get a visa to take Queenie's ashes to India. He becomes frustrated with the bureaucracy and is removed from the office by security.



On the banks of the Hooghly River, Sanjivini (a cousin of the family) greets Gopal, Kamala and Indrani. They are disgusted by the state of the river water.

Raj arrives late and the priest begins the ceremony.

Raj reveals that he couldn't get a visa for Queenie's ashes, and the urn was confiscated at the airport. The family are furious and want to stop the ceremony.

Raj reveals that he smuggled Queenie's ashes in a Tupperware.

Together, Raj, Gopal, Kamala and Indrani hold the Tupperware and pour Queenie's ashes into the river.



Epilogue

In the afterlife, Queenie steps onto a beach and calls out to Ameet. He invites her into the sea. She joins him. She is at peace.

What Happens in the Play?

Sonic Story

This graphic tells the sonic story of ***A Tupperware of Ashes***. It highlights any particularly loud or quiet moments, or any moments when there are sudden changes to the sound.

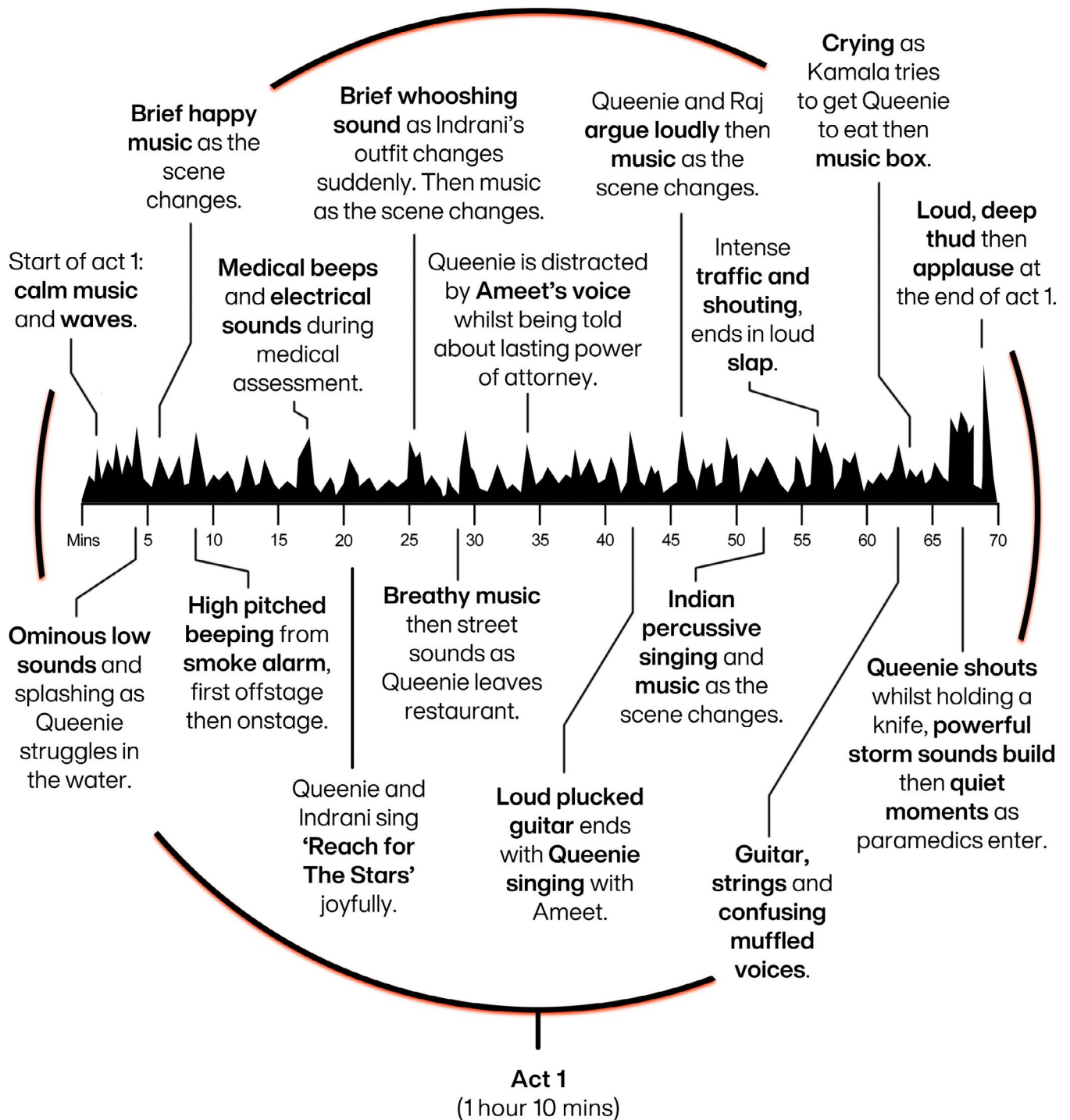
Sound summary

- *A Tupperware of Ashes* is a play
- Music is sometimes played as part of a scene, or in scene changes
- Characters shout and scream
- A smoke alarm beeps loudly early in the play
- There are sound effects of hospitals, busy roads, and the sea



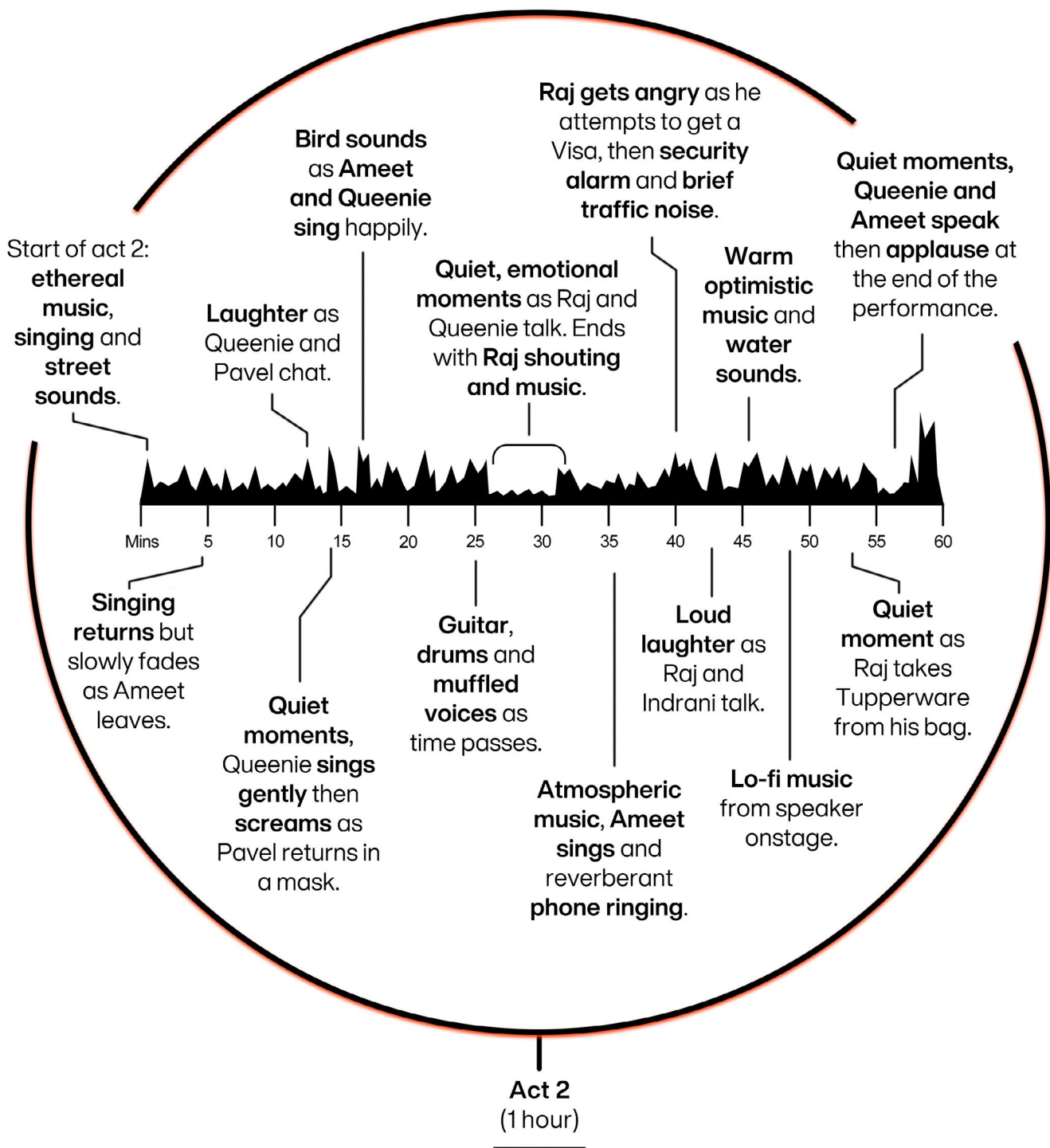
A Tupperware of Ashes

Sonic Story



A Tupperware of Ashes

Sonic Story



Relaxed Performance

Access information

There is a relaxed performance of ***A Tupperware of Ashes*** on **Wednesday 30 October at 7.30pm.**

This performance will take place in a **relaxed environment**. This means:

- Some of the lighting and **sound effects** have been adjusted to be **less sudden** or **intense**.
- The **auditorium lights** will remain on during the show at a **low level**.
- You are welcome to **leave** and **re-enter** the auditorium if you need to.
- You are welcome to **move around** or **make noise**.
- We have **ear defenders** and **fidget toys** available to use. Just ask a member of staff who will direct you to the **access desk**.

There is a dedicated quiet room available, which looks like this:



Relaxed Performance

Upcoming performances

Ballet Shoes

Wednesday 15 January at 7pm

The beloved best-selling book is spectacularly reinvented for the stage in this new adaptation by Kendall Feaver.

Alterations

Monday 24 March at 7.30pm

This seminal comedy by Michael Abbensetts, with additional material by Trish Cooke, illuminates the experience of the Windrush generation in 1970s London.

Dear England

Tuesday 15 April at 7.30pm

James Graham's Olivier-Award winning smash-hit returns to the National Theatre, directed by Rupert Goold.

All the information about our future relaxed performances, and **how to book**, can be found on our website:

nationaltheatre.org.uk/whats-on/?accessibility=relaxed-performance