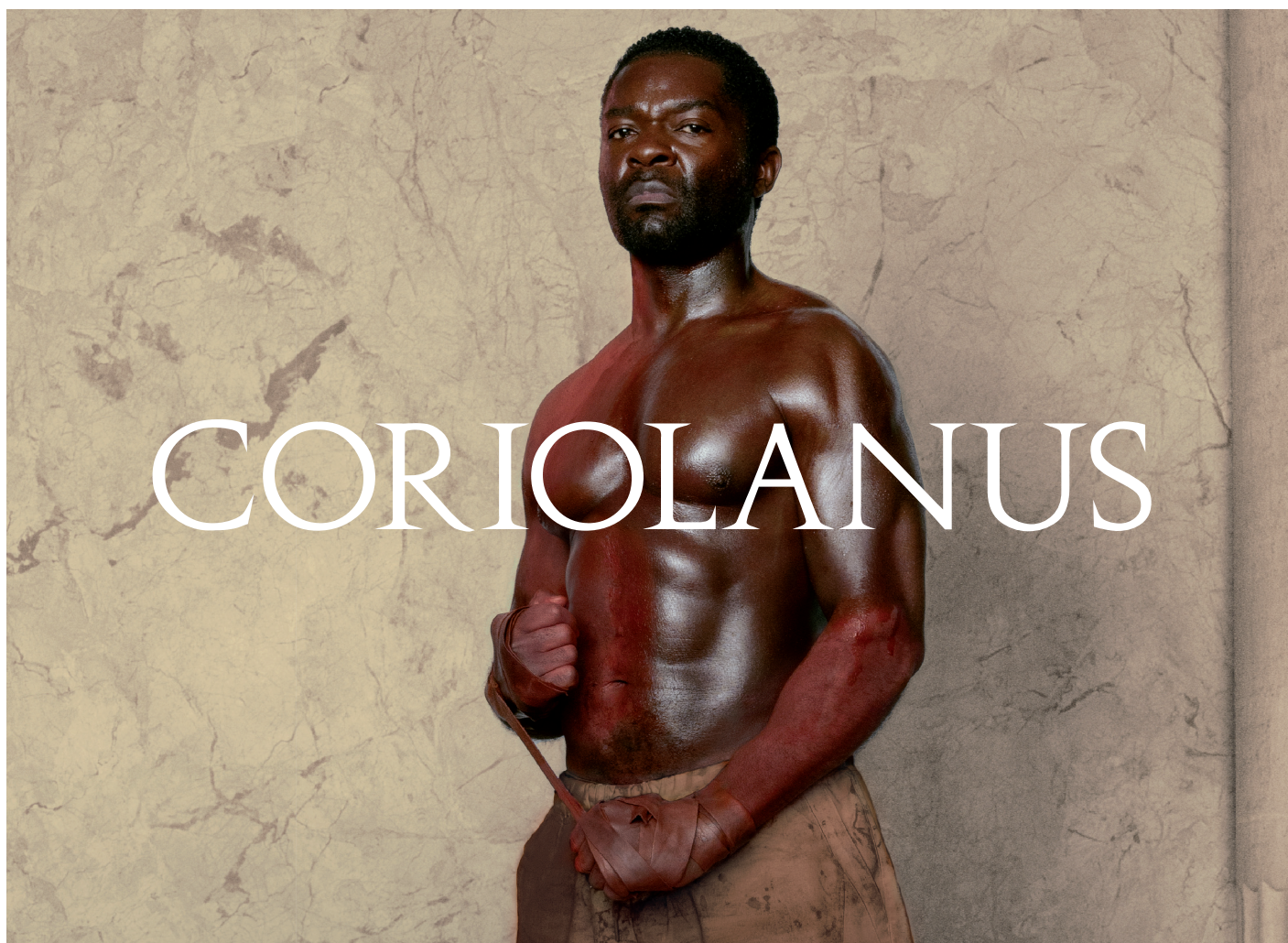


National Theatre

Visual Story



by William Shakespeare
Olivier Theatre



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

This production is supported by the Huo Family Foundation.
Production photography by Misan Harriman

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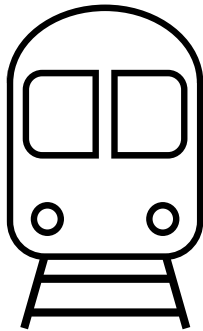
About the National Theatre

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 **main entrance** to the National Theatre looks like this.



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

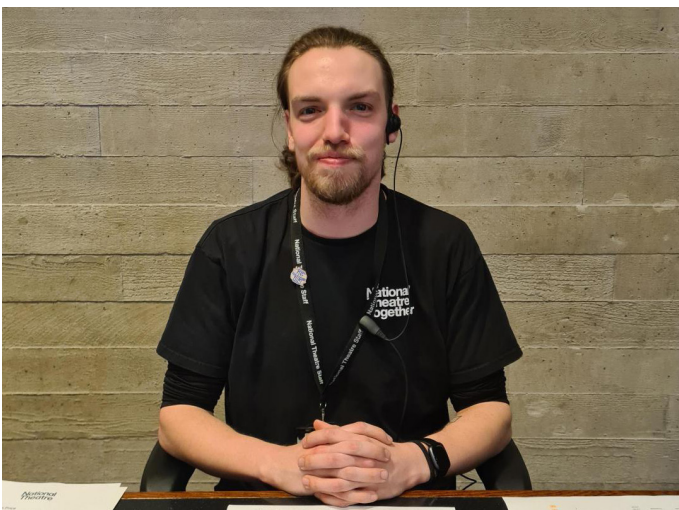
Who's who?



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 is near the entrance and looks like this.



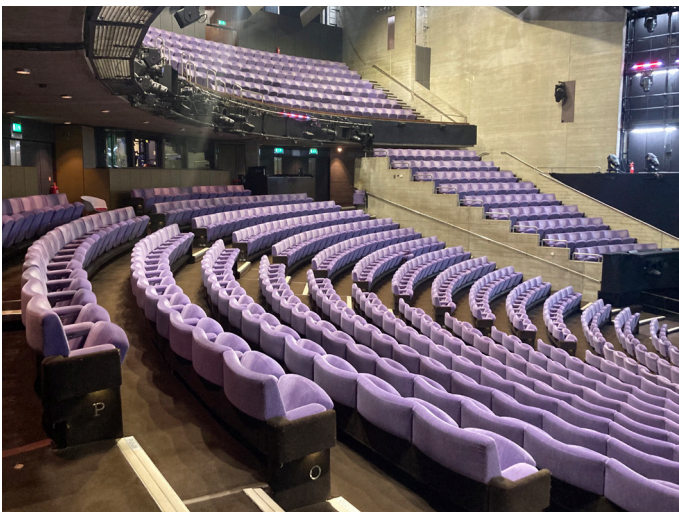
There are lots of staff available in the building if you have questions or if you would like directions to your seats. **National Theatre staff** wear **black t-shirts** with **white writing**.

About the National Theatre

Olivier Theatre



This production of *Coriolanus* will be performed in the **Olivier Theatre**. There are signs on the walls around the building to help guide you to the theatre.



The Olivier has two levels of audience seating:

- The **stalls** (lower level)
- The **circle** (upper level)



There are foyer spaces at the stalls level and circle level. These can be **busy and loud** performance.



The **access desk** is in the Olivier stalls foyer. There are hearing enhancement headsets, ear defenders, fidget items and large print cast lists available here.



There is **step-free access** around the National Theatre. There are **accessible toilets** on every level.



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

The Production

Coriolanus

Coriolanus is a **play** written by **William Shakespeare**.

Dates

Coriolanus will be performed in the Olivier Theatre until **Saturday 9 November**.

Length

Coriolanus is **2 hours and 45 minutes** long.
This includes one **20-minute** interval.

Warning!

The following pages contain spoilers.

Theatre Guidelines

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

Coriolanus contains:



**Fake blood
and injuries**



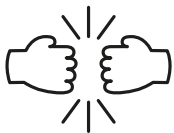
Strobe lighting



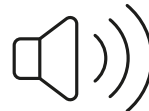
**Depictions
of death**



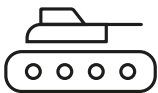
**Bright flashing
lights**



**Depictions
of violence**



**Loud sound
effects**



**Depictions
of war**

What happens in the play?

The set



Coriolanus is set across multiple locations in the cities of Rome, Antium and Corioli.

Multiple large grey columns are raised and lowered to create different spaces in the cities.

When the columns are all lowered, images are projected onto them. Some cameras are used to capture close-up images of the actors, which are projected live onto the columns.



When all the columns are raised, the stage is full of plinths, platforms and furniture, often holding weapons, vases and other objects that could be found in a museum. In battle scenes, there are live fires around the edge of the stage.

Some columns are lowered while others are raised to create different rooms, including Coriolanus' home, Aufidius' dining room and the Roman senate.



What happens in the play?

The characters

The ensemble of actors in *Coriolanus* sometimes play **different characters**, including Roman soldiers, Volscian soldiers and crowds of Roman citizens.



Caius Marcius Coriolanus
(a Roman captain)



Tullus Aufidius
(a Volscian soldier)



Menenius
(a Roman nobleman)



Virgilia
(wife to Coriolanus)



Volumnia
(mother to Coriolanus)



Brutus
(a Roman tribune)



Sicinius
(a Roman tribune)



Titus Lartius
(a Roman officer)



Cominius
(a Roman general)

What Happens in the Play?

Synopsis

Act 1



The citizens of Rome are rioting about the price of grain. They decide that Caius Marcius, a soldier, is the chief enemy of the people because of his own pride and his contempt for them.

Menenius, a Roman patrician (a type of nobleman), interrupts the citizens and tries to calm them. Caius Marcius arrives and insults the citizens.

Marcus announces that the Volsci, Rome's enemy, have declared war. The Volscians are led by a powerful general named Tullus Aufidius.

The citizens' tribunes, Brutus and Sicinius, discuss how proud Marcus is.

In the Volscian city of Corioli, Aufidius discusses his hate for Marcus and how they plan to attack Rome with the senators.

Back in Rome, Virgilia (Marcus' wife) tells Volumnia (Marcus' mother) that she will not leave the house until Marcus returns from war. Volumnia hopes Marcus will be injured in the battle so that she can be proud.



They are visited by Valeria, a civil servant, who tells them that Marcius is leading the army with another soldier, Titus Lartius.

The Romans and Volscians fight. On the battlefield, Marcius fights Aufidius in one-on-one combat.



Cominius, the general, insists that Marcius deserves a new name for winning the city of Corioli. Marcius is named as Caius Marcius Coriolanus (meaning conqueror of Corioli).

In Rome, the tribunes Brutus and Sicinius tell Menenius that Coriolanus is an enemy of the people. Volumnia and Virgilia announce that Coriolanus will return to Rome, having won the war and been wounded.

The Roman senators make Coriolanus consul (the head of state for a year) for his heroic actions. To become consul, Coriolanus must speak to the common people and show them his wounds. He argues against doing this.



Menenius convinces Coriolanus to speak to the citizens. He speaks, but does not show them his wounds. The tribunes convince the people that this is because Coriolanus only has contempt for them, so the people decide not to vote for Coriolanus.

Titus Lartius tells Coriolanus that Aufidius has raised a new army.

The tribunes tell the senators that the people will not accept Coriolanus. Coriolanus becomes angry with the citizens, and with the noblemen for giving the people political power.

Volumnia tells him to apologise to the citizens, even if he does not mean this.

The tribunes plan to anger Coriolanus when he arrives to speak to the citizens again at a tribunal.

Menenius brings Coriolanus to reason with the citizens, but he becomes immediately angry and curses the people.

The tribunes decide that Coriolanus must be banished. He says he will happily leave, as he hates the people and wants to banish them.



Act 2

Coriolanus says goodbye to his mother, wife and son.

Volumnia finds the tribunes and tells them that they have exiled the greatest man in Rome.

Coriolanus leaves and finds Aufidius in Antium, where he offers to be Aufidius' ally against Rome. Aufidius happily accepts.

The Volscian servants spread the word that war with Rome is coming.



In Rome, Brutus and Sicinius celebrate their success in banishing Coriolanus, but a messenger tells them that Coriolanus is now planning to attack Rome with Aufidius. Menenius and Cominius blame the tribunes. The citizens are scared and regret their decision.

In Antium, Aufidius' right-hand man begins to fear that Coriolanus will take Rome for himself. Aufidius is sure that Coriolanus will create his own downfall with his pride and arrogance.



The tribunes ask Menenius to persuade Coriolanus to stand down, as Menenius knows him best. Cominius warns them all that Coriolanus cannot be convinced.

Volscian guards tell Menenius he cannot speak to Coriolanus, but Menenius tries again. When Coriolanus sees Menenius, he ignores his plea for mercy.

Virgilia, Volumnia, Valeria, Roman women and Coriolanus' son arrive to try and make peace. Volumnia kneels to Coriolanus, which wins him over.



Coriolanus apologises to Aufidius and asks what he would do in the same position.

Aufidius sees this as a way to defeat Coriolanus. He plots with his political advisors.



When Coriolanus speaks to the people of Antium, Aufidius accuses him of failing to defeat Rome. Coriolanus becomes angry. He is attacked by conspirators and a mob of people.



Coriolanus is stabbed and killed. Aufidius and the mob carry Coriolanus' body away.

Aufidius hopes that Coriolanus will be remembered well.

Epilogue

The play ends with a child visiting a museum, looking at an image of Coriolanus holding a shield.

What Happens in the Play?

Sonic Story

These graphics tell the sonic story of ***Coriolanus***. They highlight any particularly loud or quiet moments, or any moments when there are sudden changes to the sound.

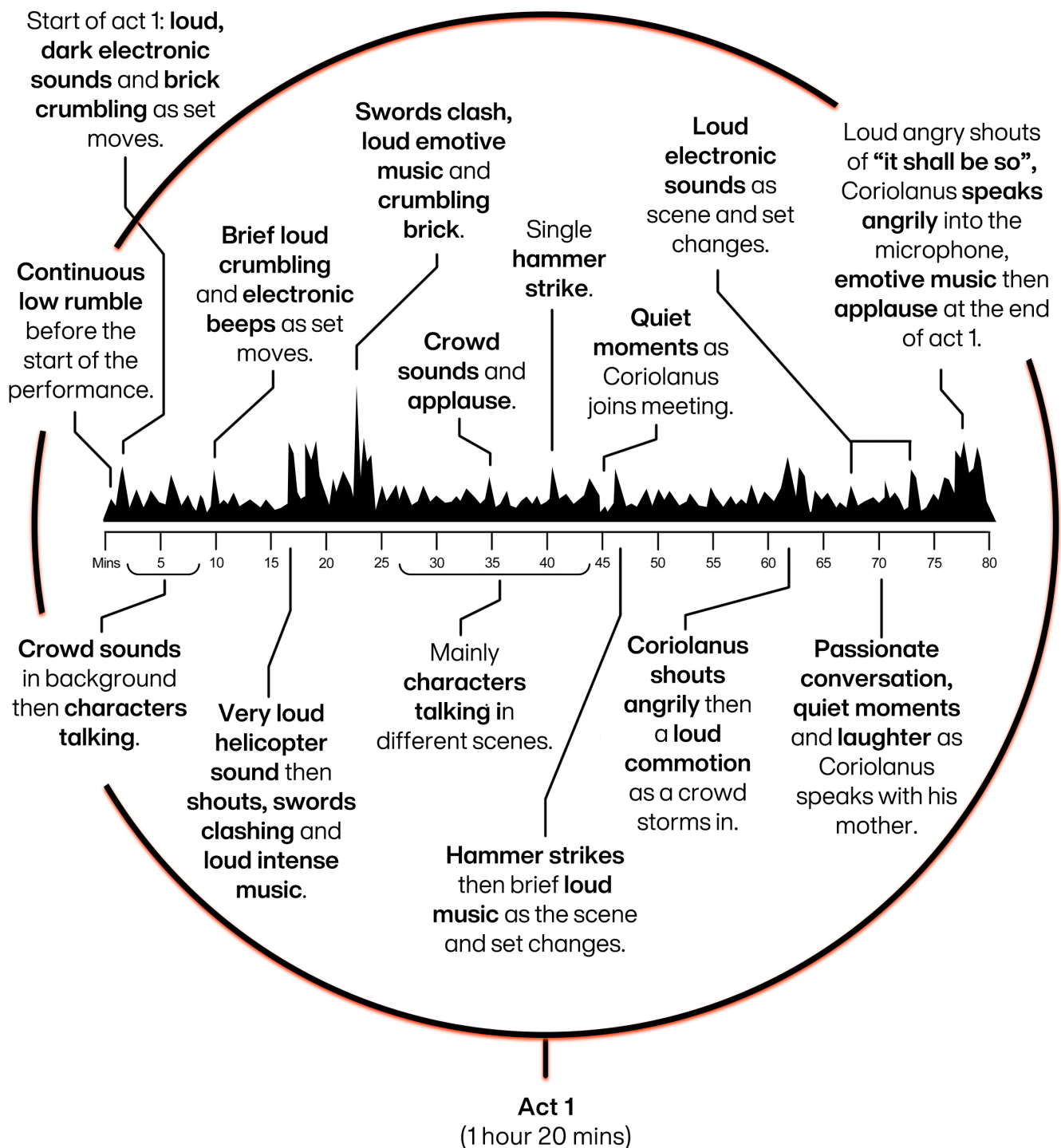
Sound summary

- *Coriolanus* is a play
- Most scenes are underscored by music
- There are loud battle scenes and the sounds of weapons
- Characters often shout or talk all at once



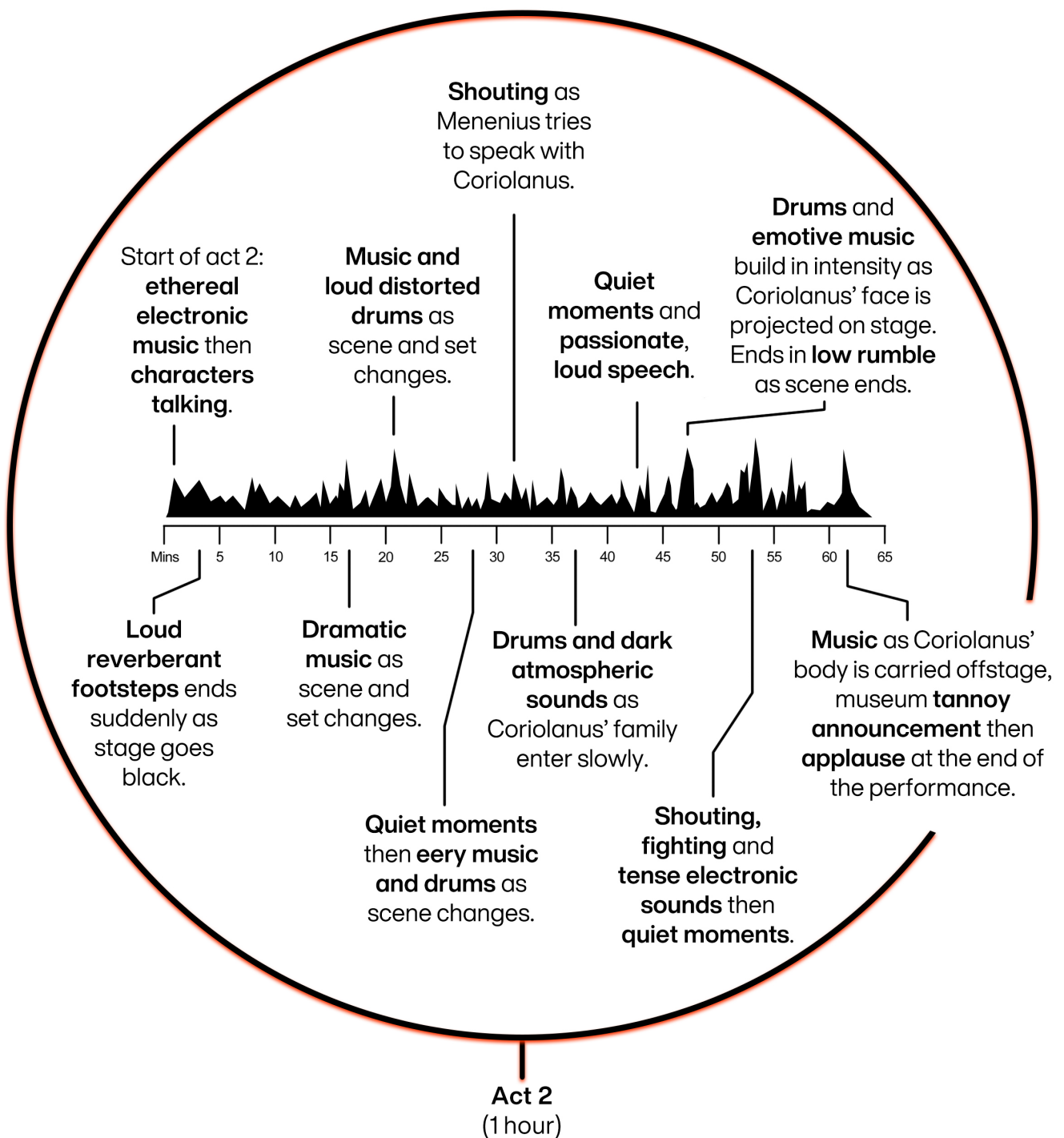
Coriolanus

Sonic Story



Coriolanus

Sonic Story



Relaxed Performance

Access information

There is a relaxed performance of *Coriolanus* on **Monday 21 October at 7pm.**

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 quiet room and chill-out space available, which staff can direct you to

Relaxed Performance

Upcoming performances

A Tupperware of Ashes

Wednesday 30 October at 7.30pm

Meera Syal is Queenie in this vivid and heartbreaking family drama about life, immigration and the Indian spiritual cycle of death and rebirth.

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.

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