

Sting

Young Vic

Welcome to this introduction to *Sting* by Sophie Swithinbank and directed by Nancy Medina.

The performance lasts for an hour and fifty minutes and runs straight through without an interval.

The audio description has been written by Ruth James and Willie Elliott.

The theatre's website sets the scene like this;

“Ash is off the rails.

Going straight from the sparkly sweat and tequila shots of the club to her first day of a new job, her new boss Lily is unimpressed. Their assignment: to catalogue historic cases of women accused of being witches. After an incident at work, Ash's boyfriend Dom enters the scene as a knight in shining armour, even providing Ash with the best present she could hope for: a pet rabbit. But as the women delve into researching a disturbing series of murders, Lily starts to get the sense that something is wrong with Ash. Or maybe, something is wrong with Dom.

This production contains themes and scenes that some may find upsetting, including:

Domestic violence, sexual assault, a miscarriage, alcohol and drug use, strong language, physical and emotional abuse. There is also sudden loud music, thick haze and there are moments of total darkness, as well as bright flashing lights.

The play is set in a variety of locations in the present day; Night clubs, an Archive, an apartment and a police station.

The performance takes place on a wide traverse stage that runs from left to right, with raked audience seating facing each other across the space.

As you enter the auditorium there is raked seating immediately to your left. It is from here that we shall describe the setting.

It's a wide, narrow space ten metres across by four metres from front to back, with steel shelving forming walls on the opposite ends. The polished pine floor is inlaid along the centre with a honeycomb design.

At first glance the two walls appear to be a mirror image; metal shelves, six metres high by four metres across, with storage boxes set randomly. They are eight shelves high and five

shelves across. There are exits on each side of the shelves, leading off into darkness as well as a door in the centre of each wall of shelves.

On closer inspection, the walls are subtly different.

The wall on the left serves mainly as the backdrop to an Archive. In the centre is a frosted Perspex swinging door that leads out to a shower room. On either side, archive boxes on shelves are vaguely visible behind opaque panels, the same size as the door. At floor level, nearest to the audience on *this* side, eight slender map drawers are arranged vertically.

On the far side of the door, a shelf, at chest height, holds a portable transistor radio, with a long extendable antenna. Some of the open shelves are empty, while others have more archive boxes stored on them.

A leather topped office desk with drawers on one side, sits just in front of the Perspex door, with two office chairs tucked under it, each with a comfy cushion on the seat. There's one behind the desk, on castors, with a purple scarf draped over the back, and the other on the far side from us. A slim laptop computer sits on top of the desk.

On the right of the space, the wall appears to have a more domestic setting, representing an apartment. A wooden door is set in the centre. Farther away, close to the audience on the other side, a steel table on castors, with a single drawer in it, is tucked under the shelves. When wheeled in front of the door, it has the feel of a kitchen.

Close to the audience on *this* side, a wire rabbit hutch sits on a chest high shelf, with a bed of clean straw. Other shelves hold various items, some stored in cardboard boxes, as well as a blue rucksack, and a tupperware container of cereal.

There are three characters, two women and a man.

First to appear is Ash, dancing wildly in a smoke-filled Club. Ash is a woman of mixed heritage, probably in her early 30s, although she seems younger. She has light brown skin, and long, dark brown hair that tumbles in a mass of unruly curls. Her large brown eyes and expressive face reflect every passing emotion. Ash often seems unfocused, restless - buzzing swiftly from one mood or place to another.

Her Club gear is white shorts and a lacy white top, with a silver jacket tied around her neck and grey and silver trainers, with brown socks. Through the lacy top can be glimpsed a neon-

orange sports bra. Her make-up is restrained, and her jewellery confined to a slender round silver pendent, as well as several silver rings on her fingers, and a thumb ring. Her pink mobile phone hangs across her chest, on several green chains.

Later, she wears wide-legged dungarees over a cream top and white vest, still with the orange bra and matching underwear.

Lily works as the Archivist. She is a slender and graceful white woman in her early thirties with a pale, delicate-featured face and intelligent dark eyes. Lily's thick, chestnut hair is styled into a short pixie cut and she wears a long, almost mediaeval-style dress in thin cotton, of an Indian paisley pattern, in brown, red and cream, with black trim round the v-neck. Over it is a dark blue jacket, with frills at the neck. When working at the Archive, she wears hand-made embroidered slippers, with purple and pink pom-poms on the toes. Lily changes into brown trainers when she goes out. She, too, has several silver rings, including a thumb ring, and a small spiral pendant on a delicate chain.

Dom is Ash's boyfriend. He's white and in his early thirties. Dom first appears in navy jogging trousers, with a matching zip-up hoodie over a white t-shirt, with grey trainers. His dark brown hair is shaved close at the back and side, up to a fade

into slightly longer hair on top, greased into a sharp side parting, and his beard is precisely trimmed. Later, he wears olive green pyjamas and, later still, he dons suit trousers with a white shirt, a clip on black tie, and wears sturdy black Doctor Marten shoes.

The lighting is usually restrained, as suits an archive or an apartment, but at times bright lights blaze out through the shelves, piercing the space between.

Cast

Dom is played by Nick Blood

Lily by Phoebe Ladenburg

Ash by Adelle Leonce

Creatives

The Designer is Debbie Duru

Lighting Designer, Ryan Day

Composer & Sound Designer, Nicola T. Chang

Movement Director - Rachael Nanyonjo

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