



Punch

Self-Care Guide & Pre-Show Information

NOTTINGHAM
PLAYHOUSE

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Introduction

This document contains detailed information about the show in order to describe what you should expect when attending and support audiences experiencing the show.

This includes information about the content warnings, plot, the space, lighting and sound, audience participation, and further access information.

We have also collated information and resources in this document to help those who might find themselves affected by the contents or have concerns about their visit.

All of the information in this document was correct at the time of publishing. More information will be available closer to the time of performance.

Please note that by discussing the content of the show, the below information will contain key plot points and descriptions of what happens in the performance.

If you would like to receive elements of this information but avoid these spoilers, please do not read the section at the end of this document entitled 'Show Synopsis'.

(LtoR) Tony Hirst, David Shields, Julie Hesmondhalgh, and Alec Boaden.



Show Information

Running Time:

approx. 2 hours 25 minutes including interval

Content warnings:

- Strong language
- References to violence, death, bereavement, alcohol and substance misuse, and mental health
- Knives on stage
- Based on real life people and events

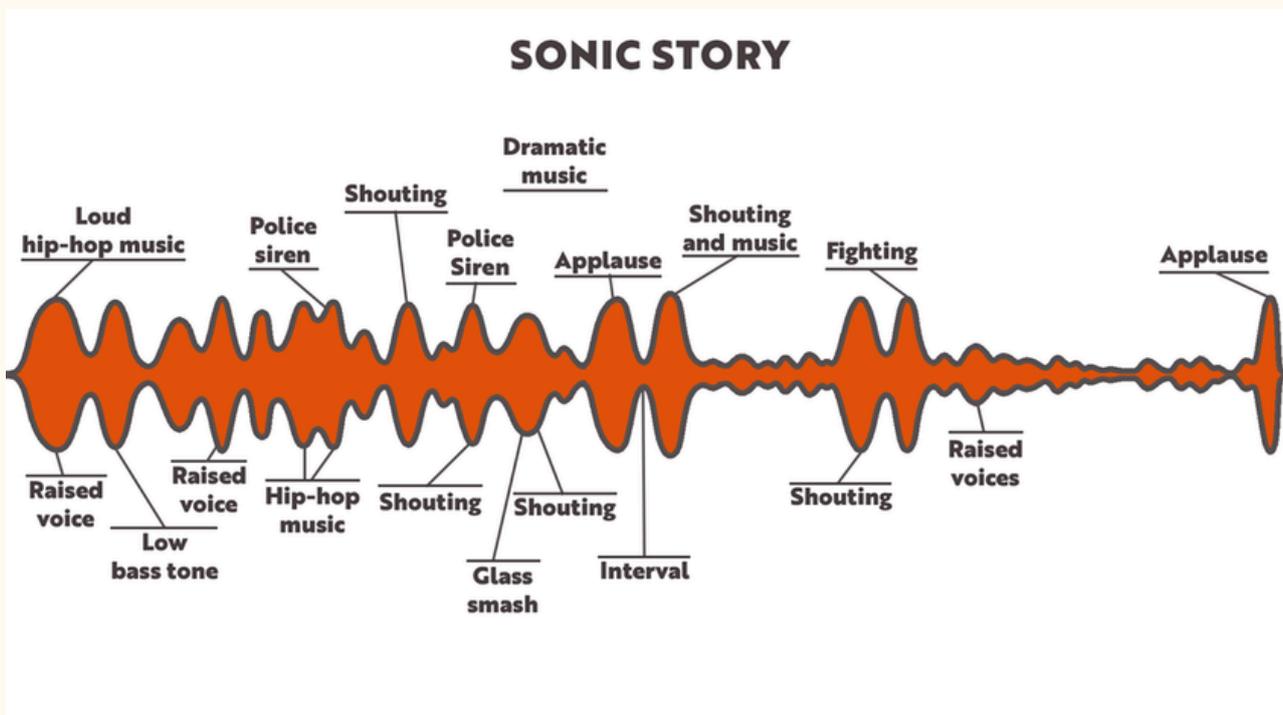
Production warnings:

- Loud music throughout
- Flashing lights throughout
- Strobe lighting
- Sudden noises
- Theatrical smoke and fire/flame effects

The auditorium will remain open for a short time after the show. Feel free to stay seated to reflect on the performance or chat with other audience members. Our ushers will let you know when the space needs to close.

Age Recommendation: 12 yrs+

Sonic Story



Show Synopsis

We meet Jacob, an eighteen-year-old young man from the Meadows in Nottingham. He is talking to the audience about the day he killed a man called James. He is talking from the future about the past.

Jacob and his friend Raf are drunk and walking from the Meadows to town on a hot July day. They bump into people who are leaving a cricket match at Trent Bridge, and pick fights with them.

Jacob and his friends drink in lots of pubs in town, before becoming separated. Jacob meets a woman called Clare, who he flirts with, before Raf rings him to tell him to join in with their fight at Market Square.

Jacob runs to join the fight, and we see him getting ready to join in.

The theatre goes black, and we meet young Jacob.

We meet Jacob's Mum and Grandma. Jacob's Mum tells Jacob he is her little angel. His Grandma tells him we all need a stake in the world to leave a mark.

As Jacob gets older, and he goes to secondary school, he befriends people in his year who encourage him to misbehave. He is diagnosed with ADHD, Dyslexia, and Autism.

Jacob begins to hang around with dangerous groups of people in the Meadows, taking drugs and getting involved in fights. He deals drugs and stops attending school as much.

Jacob talks about the different gangs in the area, and how they would get into fights. He talks about how some people would carry knives, but he didn't.

Jacob's Mum is upset with Jacob, as he keeps missing school. She tries to tell him to go back to school, but Jacob doesn't listen.

We flash forward to just after Jacob attacks James. James is in hospital with a head injury. His parents, Joan and David, are very worried about him.

Meanwhile, Jacob has fled from the scene of the incident, back to the Meadows. He hopes to avoid what has happened and is upset when Raf calls him to let him know that James is badly hurt.

Jacob gets a call from his Mum, who says that the police are at their house. Jacob panics, and denies any wrongdoing, before throwing his phone into the River Trent.

Raf has told the police that it was Jacob who hit James, and Jacob goes to court where he hears that he has been sentenced to spend time in prison for killing James.

Joan and David watch Jacob go, and are upset at his prison sentence, as they do not think it is long enough. They are angry and confused about what has happened.

Jacob is moved into prison, where he is surrounded by other young offenders. They are all angry, and talking about getting back at the people who put them in prison when they get out.

Joan and David struggle with their grief. David appeals Jacob's court sentence, wanting it to be longer. They feel like they have no support, and no answers to their questions.

In a search for answers, Joan and David meet with Restorative Justice charity, Remedi, who hope that opening a conversation with Jacob will help them come to terms with what happened to James.

Jacob's parole officer tells Jacob that Joan and David want to get in contact with him, and he is open to the idea but confused. He is struggling after leaving prison.

Jacob returns to his Mum's house after leaving prison. She has lost her license to be a childminder due to Jacob's crime, and is struggling with alcohol addiction. Jacob is upset to have negatively impacted her life.

Joan and David compose their letter to Jacob, asking him questions about why he attacked James, and if he had any martial arts training. They send Jacob the letter, and await a response.

Jacob writes back to them, and confirms that he didn't know James. They begin a dialogue, and Jacob starts to rebuild his life through work and resitting his GCSEs.

After their conversation continues, Joan and David learn more about Jacob. They learn that his Mum has died. After two years, they decide to meet up in person, the final stage of Restorative Justice.

They offer to act as a reference for Jacob as he goes to University, stating that James would always have done the good thing in life. They are acting in James' honour, and looking to make sure two lives aren't wasted.

In the present day, Joan and Jacob talk about the benefits of Restorative Justice in the news. They continue to talk and work together to prevent further deaths like that of James.

The final scene sees Jacob as a grown man with a family, and speaking about the benefits of Restorative Justice. He is campaigning to ensure that young men like him don't make the same choices he did.



Julie Hesmondhalgh and Tony Hirst on stage.

What Is Self-Care?

Self-care means noticing what we need and taking steps to look after ourselves, especially when situations are difficult. It is about making choices that support our wellbeing so we can live our lives as fully as possible.

Our modern understanding of self-care derives from the original publication "A Burst of Light" (1988) written by Audre Lorde, a Black intersectional feminist writer and activist. For her, self-care helped sustain the strength needed to continue fighting for change.

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation"
- Audre Lorde.

For this document, we have been influenced and inspired by the work of other theatres and companies, including New Diorama Theatre, Clean Break, Nouveau Riche, Sheffield Theatres, and the Bush Theatre.

Alec Boaden as Raf.



Frequently Asked Questions

Have the victims' family been involved in the creation of this play?

Nottingham Playhouse would not have commissioned this play without the prior approval of James Hodgkinson's family. We continue to respect the family's wishes at all stages of the play's production. We are committed to honour the stated wish of James' parents – Joan and David – that two lives should not be wasted as a consequence of the manslaughter of their son. We seek to support them in raising awareness about the dangers of one-punch and the benefits of Restorative Justice.

Is Nottingham Playhouse making a profit from this play?

Nottingham Playhouse is a charity and any surplus made from our activities is directed back into our charitable purposes. We create bespoke education, participation and engagement programmes for all plays that we produce, tailored to each play to reflect its subject matter and our communities.

Where can I find support if the themes of this play affected me?

We know that the subject matter of the play is challenging. To support audiences, we are providing:

- Links to online resources about the themes in the play, available on the website.
- A Show information and Self-care guide available on the website and in emails sent to bookers in advance of seeing the show.
- You can contact the following support services for free if you would like to discuss any of the topics further:

Restorative Justice:

If you'd like to find out more about the restorative justice process, you can find out more on [Remedi \(remediuk.org\)](http://remediuk.org) or [Calm Mediation](http://CalmMediation.com) websites. The following organisations might also be useful to look at:

Restorative Justice Council

The national, independent membership body for the field of restorative practice. <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/>

Victim Support

Has information on victims' rights to Restorative Justice.

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/your-rights/restorative-justice/>

Why Me?

A national charity delivering and promoting access to Restorative Justice.

<https://why-me.org/>



Shalisha James-Davis on stage.

Resource List

You might also want to look at these organisations:

The Compassionate Friends

Provides support to bereaved family parents and their families.

www.tcf.org.uk

Criminal Justice Organisations:

Appeal

A charity and law practice that fights miscarriages of justice and demands reform.

<https://appeal.org.uk/>

Catch 22

Works with young people and adults providing intervention, rehabilitation and victim services in prison and in the community.

<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/what-we-do/criminal-justice/>

Prison Advice & Care Trust (PACT)

A pioneering national charity that supports prisoners, people with convictions and their families.

<https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/>

Nottinghamshire Youth Justice

Works with children and young people aged between 10 and 18 with the aim of preventing offending and re-offending.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/youth-justice>

Prison Reform Trust

A charity working to create a just, humane and effective penal system.

<https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/>

The Criminal Justice Alliance

A network of 200+ organisational and academic members working towards a fair and effective criminal justice system.

<https://www.criminaljusticealliance.org/>

The Longford Trust

A charity that supports people with convictions to reintegrate into society.

<https://www.longfordtrust.org/about-us>

Young People Organisations:

Barnardo's

Offering support to make sure children and young people feel safer, happier, healthier and more hopeful, by running over 800 specialist services across the UK.

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/>

Base51

Offers holistic support to young people in Nottingham.

<https://www.base51.org/>

Just for Kids Law

Helps children and young people in the UK to have their legal rights and entitlements respected and promoted, and their voices heard and valued.

<https://www.justforkidslaw.org/>

PACT's Schools Toolkit

Information about supporting students affected by imprisonment.

<https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/get-help/professionals/schools/>

Positively Empowered Kids CIC

A non-profit organisation, specialising in early intervention and prevention of mental ill health in children and young people, through wellbeing events, workshops and programme such as resilience leaders & youth voice in action.

<https://positivelyempoweredkids.co.uk/>

Runaway Helpline (Gang Support)

Provides support for anyone feeling like running away or are away from home due to gang involvement.

<https://www.runawayhelpline.org.uk/advice/gangs/>

Support Through Sport

A CIC using a range of positive initiatives as diversion and intervention programmes to support young people whilst tackling negative influences such as knife crime, gang violence, youth offending and serious youth violence.

<https://supportthroughsport.co.uk/>

Switch Up

Empower young people and drive real change impacted by crime and violence across Nottinghamshire.

<https://switchupnotts.co.uk/>

The Children's Society

A national charity working to transform the hopes and happiness of young people facing abuse, exploitation and neglect.

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/>

The Mix

Offers a range of support services for under 25s.

<https://www.themix.org.uk/>

YoungMinds

A charity providing a range of support relating to young people's mental health.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

The Dangers of One-Punch:

One Punch UK is a charity raising awareness and educating people about the devastating impact one punch can have.

<https://onepunch.org.uk/>.

Additionally you might also want to look at this BBC Article containing studies of one punch deaths:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38992393>

Mental Health Support Organisations:

Samaritans provides over the phone support for those considering suicide 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Mind is a mental health charity, making sure no one has to face a mental health problem alone:

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

David Shields and Emma Pallant on stage.



Self-Care Suggestions

Before The Show

Read the Summary or Synopsis

Preparing yourself by reading the summary, synopsis, or content warnings may help you decide if you are comfortable with the content, and also help you gauge if there are any points you may not be comfortable with.

During The Show

Watch With Someone

Attending the show with someone who you trust, who knows you and your connection to the subject of the play, may help with the experience. They may be able to recognise when you need help or support and can assist you.

Step Away

It is important to know in yourself when it is time to step away, and there is nothing wrong with deciding that the show is not for you or is too much. The Front of House team are on hand if you want to leave.

After The Show

At the close of the show, the auditorium will stay open to provide a reflective space for 15 minutes. This space is for you to take time and process what was included in the show.

Talk

We will be hosting our Talking Circles in our Bar area. This is a space to discuss what you saw in the show, and decompress. Our organised talks will cover themes covered in the show.

Breathe

Breathing is a good way to help you feel calm. Try breathing in for four seconds, holding your breath for four seconds, then exhaling for four seconds. Repeat this as long as you need. This is called Box Breathing.

Ask For Help

If you found the content of Punch distressing, try talking to someone you trust or contacting one of the organisations listed above

David Shields as Jacob.

Emma Stone in rehearsal.

