Welcome this introduction to the audio described performance of *Who Killed My Father*, adapted and directed by the award-winning **Ivo van Hove** from the internationally acclaimed book by **Édouard Louis, and designed by Jan Versweyveld.**

Returning home to the small, conservative town in the north of France where he grew up as a gay teenager, a son finds his dying father virtually unrecognisable from years of alcoholism, social deprivation and gruelling manual labour. He starts to wonder: who’s responsible?

Who Killed My Father is a furious indictment of the political elite, and a son’s declaration of love. This is a rare opportunity to see **Hans Kesting** perform the production in English.

The audio described performance is on Wednesday 14 September and Thursday 15 September at 7.30pm. There will be free touch tours before each described show at 6pm. The description will be given by Eleanor Margolies and Miranda Yates. The performance lasts for 1 hour and 30 minutes with no interval. This introduction will last about 6 7 8 9 minutes

The Young Vic warns that this show contains strong language and homophobic language, themes of alcoholism and domestic violence, depictions of physical illness/injury, and discussions of identity in the context of class, social inequity and privilege. The show also contains scenes of actors smoking, haze, smells of oil and BBQ, strobe lighting, and loud music.

Director Rebecca Frecknall writes in the programme about Ivo van Hove’s work, which is sometimes described as 'sparse' and 'stripped-back'. She says that leaving a performance of his production of *A View From The Bridge* at the Young Vic, she tried to articulate what it was the director had done that seemed so radical. She says it was …

*as though he had taken the play and wrung it out like a wet towel, leaving its essence on the bare stage. Van Hove's work was the first I'd seen, outside of the dance world, where I felt every element had truly earned its place on stage. Nothing was for decoration; all choices were anchored to what he felt was the central 'idea' of the play. This was a revelation to me, demanding a new level of rigour in my own work. What do we as directors take as law when reading a script? The stage directions? The setting? Who speaks the text? Who enters the space and when do they exit? The literal nature of that space?*

These elements of the play, she continues, are simply vessels to deliver the artist's central idea, to deliver it to an audience in the most vital and visceral way. Anything that does not aid this communication is not necessary.

The stage is open to us as we come in – a wide ‘letterbox’ shaped space facing rows of bench seating. The rows rise upwards from the stage on stalls level and wrap around the auditorium on the balcony levels. The opening is about ten metres wide and four metres high, extending backwards about three metres. The space feels partly like a room in a modern house that has been taken apart, perhaps for demolition, but also evokes derelict industrial spaces.

At first, the room appears to have black walls and carpet, but depending on the lighting, they can appear as grey. There are two window openings in the left-hand side wall, with no glazing but screened with gauze, so that light can be diffused through them. Shutters can descend over the openings, and they are deep-set, with a sill at hip height. In the back wall, just to the left of centre, there is a plain, modern door that opens outwards. When it opens, dazzling white daylight pours through the doorway onto the floor. Just to the right of the door, a TV stands on the floor. It’s an old model, not a flat screen, and the standby light is glowing. The TV is usually just a glowing screen, representing the role it plays in remembered family life but at points it shows something that is discussed at that moment, playing silently. The back wall appears to be made of rough, undecorated panels of plasterboard – and there is a series of holes at shoulder-height, as if made by someone punching the wall. Against the right-hand wall, there is a single bed made by piling up three mismatched mattresses on a grey base. A rumpled white sheet and pillow lie on top. Attached to the wall by the bed is a tall white oxygen cylinder with a tangle of medical tubing on top.

The ceiling of the room is supported by zigzagging metal trusses, giving it the feel of an industrial space, or that the false ceiling has been removed from a modern house. There are four rectangular floodlights pointing down into the room, a fluorescent tube hanging above the bed, and three round openings in the walls under the roof, for ventilators.

Just in front of the room, there is a narrow strip of forestage about half a metre wide. When the narrator steps onto this, lights brighten to include the audience in the performance space.

This bare space is brought to life in poetic, non-naturalistic ways using lighting and other effects during the piece. For example, the atmosphere of a home in which all the adults chain-smoke is suggested by wisps of smoke that rise through the carpet; the smoke also blows in from the open front door, evoking a misty landscape in northern France.

There is one performer, the Dutch actor Hans Kesting. He’s in his early sixties, tall with a muscular build and a shaved head. He wears a saggy jumper with a round neck: it’s bright blue acrylic, with knitted pattern of cables running down it. With this he wears dark blue jeans and navy trainers.

When he plays the father, he bundles his fists under the sweater to create a heavy belly. He moves painfully, with extreme stiffness, barely lifting his feet off the ground. When he plays the mother, he often puts his hands on his hips, standing upright and tense. As the narrator, he sometimes clasps his hands in an awkward gesture, his arms crossed in front of him, shoulders hunched.

***Please note that due to the nature of the production description throughout is minimal.***

**Cast and creative team**

Director, Adaptor & Translator **Ivo van Hove**
From the book by **Édouard Louis**
Set and Lighting Designer **Jan Versweyveld**
Costume Designer **An D’Huys**
Composer **George Dhauw**

That’s the end of this audio introduction to ***Who Killed My Father***. If you have further questions or would like to book for the touch tour, please contact the Young Vic box office on 020 7922 2922.