

**PIPELINE**  
**RELAXED PERFORMANCE FACT SHEET**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 24 @ 1:30PM**

The performance is approximately 1 hours and 30 minutes, no [intermission](#).

To help plan and anticipate your visit to the Young Centre for the Performing Arts, you may wish to also review the [Visual Guide](#).

At this time, all audiences are being asked to present full proof of vaccination against COVID-19 (at least 2 doses plus 14 days) at the door before entering the building. As well, audiences are required to wear a facemask to protect themselves and others from the spread of COVID-19.

**BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE:**

- In the Atrium, a bell will go off to indicate *Pipeline* audiences can be seated, and the lights will go up and down.
- The doors to the Baillie Theatre will open approximately 20 minutes before the show starts for you to enter and find your seat.
- The quiet space in the **CABARET** is available to you 1 hour before the performance begins and throughout the performance.
- You may also find the seats by the fireplace by the front doors a comfortable place to sit as they are tucked away from some of the open movement in the Atrium.

**ENTERING THE THEATRE:**

- You may have to line up to walk into the theatre.
- Walking into the theatre you will walk through a dark doorway and will be directed to your seats by an usher. Your seats may be up or down some stairs.
- You are welcome to get up and leave the theatre if you need to. There will be a quiet space in the **CABARET**.
- The seats on either end of the row are bolted down however you may feel slight shifting in the seats towards the middle of the row.
- The seats are quite close so you may accidentally be touching the person next to you.
- There is some soft air movement in the theatre so you may want to bring a scarf or sweater with you.
- The house lights in the theatre will be left on at 30% for the duration of the performance. The sound will be capped at 90db.
- The show may start a few minutes after 2:00PM because they might hold for any late audience members to arrive. The wait will not be too long.
- Someone will give an introduction and explanation about the relaxed performance before the show.
- There is music playing in the theatre before the show.

**DURING THE PERFORMANCE:**

- There will be ushers to help you find your seats before, and during if you are returning to your seats during the show.

- The quiet space in the **CABARET** is available to you during the performance. There will be a live feed of the show on a TV there so you can continue to watch the show if you would like.
- Please do not go on stage during the show as you or the actors could get hurt.
  - o Later in the show, one of the actors move slowly down the left aisle towards the stage, and will walk up a few stairs to get onto the stage. If you are exiting the theatre during the performance please be careful of the possible actor movement in the exit aisle.
- The lights will go down at the start of the show, when they come on fully at the end of the show it indicates it is time to leave.

### CHARACTER GUIDE:



Akosua Amo-Adem  
is Nya

Tony Ofori  
is Omari

Chelsea Russell  
is Jasmine

Kevin Hanchard  
is Xavier

Mazin Elsadig  
is Dun

Kristen Thomson  
is Laurie

**Akosua Amo-Adem** plays **Nya**. She is a public high school teacher and a single mother raising her teenage son Omari on her own. She is a struggling but doing her best for her son and her students. Her son faces an incident at his private school and she is deeply worried about him and his well-being and this incident is greatly affecting her life. She is holding it together by a thread.

**Tony Ofori** plays **Omari**. He is smart and astute. He is sensitive, tender, and honest despite feeling angry and unable to release his rage. An incident happened between him and a teacher at his private school and he is trying to navigate what might happen to him, while believing he is doing what is best for his mother.

**Chelsea Russell** plays **Jasmine**. She is sensitive and tough. She is Omari's girlfriend and cares deeply about him, even when she puts on a brave face to appear like she doesn't.

**Kevin Hanchard** plays **Xavier**. He is Omari's father and Nya's ex-husband. He lives in a different city and is emotionally disconnected from his family.

**Mazin Elsadig** plays **Dun**. He is a charismatic, genuine, and thoughtful security guard at the public high school Nya teaches at. He tries to be a gentleman no matter how stressful the environment.

**Kristen Thomson** plays **Laurie**. She is another teacher at the public school Nya teaches at. She doesn't hold back, doesn't mince her words, and has a don't mess with me attitude.

### ABOUT PIPELINE:

- There is no specification as to what city this story takes place – it could be a large American city, or a large Canadian city. It is intended to be in a big city with differences in neighborhoods and income levels.

- The show begins with a voice over the speaker; this voice is of the school principal. You never see this character.
  - o There are a few other moments when the character is implied but is not present:
    - When Nya is presenting the poem *We Real Cool* to her class, she addresses and engages the audience as if they are the students.
    - When Jasmine is talking into her headphones she is talking to a friend or leaving a voicemail, but you only ever hear her side of the conversation.
    - When a student is presenting the poem *We Real Cool*.
    - When Nya is addressing the School Board about Omari's case.
- The set is quite empty and is without walls. The furniture indicates what location they are in. As the set rotates bringing forward different set pieces, this signifies a change in location.
- The play follows a consistent timeline from start to finish but the sequences of events are not exactly one after the other. The play jumps around through each character's experiences.
- There is strong language and racial slurs in the show: fuck, fucking motherfucker, n-word, bitches. These are not words to use when speaking with others.
- Throughout the show, there are a few graphic descriptions and depictions of violent acts (pushing a teacher, a fight between students including banging someone's head against the ground, father grabbing and choking their son), gangs (Crips & Bloods), dying, covert racism, and threatening and antagonizing authority figures.
  - o If you have had negative experiences with teachers or institutions, you may find moments in the show triggering. If the descriptions or the experiences are too intense you have the option to leave the theatre and return later, or cover your ears to not hear the dialogue.
  - o Although violence is discussed and presented in the show, it is a serious subject not to be taken lightly, and it is not appropriate to harm or threaten people for any reason.
- The poem "We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks is a real poem.
  - o When the poem is spoken aloud by Omari there is a mic by his ear that is used to distort and echo his voice. This happens a few times during the show. The distortion is intentional and will occur, but has been lessened for the relaxed performance. You will still notice a difference.
- The play considers what and who is right or wrong, however it does not conclude with clear answers.
  - o All the characters have faults and strengths and it is up to the audience to empathize with and/or understand each of the characters.
- Even though some of the themes of the play are heavy, there is also great humour. It is okay to laugh if you think something is funny.

### **PLAY INFO & OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:**

- Omari is being questioned by his teacher about 'Bigger Thomas'. Bigger Thomas is the main character in the novel *Native Son* (1940). He is a 20-year-old Black man living in a Chicago slum who accidentally kills his white employer's daughter and then kills his girlfriend to prevent her from telling the police.
- The title of the play refers directly to the 'school-to-prison pipeline', where underprivileged and disadvantaged students are funneled out of public education and into juvenile and criminal justice systems.
- Omari writes a list of ways his mother can support him. He includes the following:



One: Hear me out.

Two: Let me chill sometimes.

Three: Know when to back off.

Four: Know when to keep pushing.

Five: Let me have some space.

Six: Don't assume me for the worst.

Seven: Show up. In person.

Eight: Be fair.

Nine: Forgive that I'm not perfect.

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