



## Audio Description Pre-Show Notes: Henry 5

### The Venue

The Playhouse is one of the smaller theatres within the Sydney Opera House, and is located inside the building's Western Foyer. It has 400 seats arranged in 17 long rows that slope down toward the stage. The seats are made of a light wood and have dark blue fabric cushions. The black walls of the theatre are covered with panels of the same light wood as the seats. The stage is quite small, and the front of the stage has three edges so that it juts out slightly towards the audience. The front row of seating is approximately a metre from the stage.

### The Set

The stage is open and exposed, projecting out towards the audience. There are no curtains.

The back and side walls surrounding the stage are black, as is the ceiling above. There are two doorways leading backstage, one at the lefthand side of the back wall and another towards the back of the right wall.

An off-white lino floor covers most of the stage, bordered by a box-like ridge, about 20cm high, around the back and sides of the set. A 10cm lip along the front three edges of the stage conceals fluorescent lighting tubes that shine out onto the set.

The set is stark and industrial. It could represent a disused munitions factory or an abandoned gym.

Stretching across two-thirds of the stage's width in the centre is a modular aluminium-framed structure like an open industrial kitchen bench. It is about a metre high, with aluminium legs and a wooden top painted mint green. This bench top is split into two parts, linked by a hinged gate in the aluminium frame.

Sitting close to the floor and forming the base of the bench modules is a lower shelf, painted the same mint green as the top. The overall effect of the structure is very clinical.

The bench is on wheels and can be moved about to different positions. It can also be separated into its different parts to form different shapes. Throughout the play, this modular bench structure will become castle battlements and tunnels.

At the back right hand of the stage hangs a long cylindrical brown leather punching bag. It is suspended by four small chains which are then linked to the ceiling by one much longer chain.

An aluminium chair sits at the front of the stage in the middle. Its back is rectangular but with curved corners, and four struts stretching from the top down to the seat.

At the front left of the stage is a small knee desk with a brown wooden top. Front legs and base form a right angle - otherwise the frame is completely open. Another aluminium chair sits under it.

There are two microphones to the left of this table. They are on tall aluminium stands with circular metal bases. One is straight, the other has movable angular parts. There is another tall microphone stand on the right-hand side of the stage.

Hanging from the ceiling above the stage are two open bench structures, similar to the aluminium frame of the bench below, with their legs projecting down toward the stage. The back-most bench frame has a long rectangular black screen, a surtitle board, attached to its front in the centre. This is where the titles and translations of the French dialogue are projected throughout the play.

## The Cast and Characters

For this play, an ensemble cast of just ten actors are tasked with populating a vast and epic war between two rival factions, England and France. These actors represent diverse backgrounds and ethnicities. Aside from a few notable exceptions, the group largely presents as a young and masculine entity.

To become more numerous than they really are, most of the cast will assume multiple roles in the unfolding drama, including both named and unnamed members of the French and English courts and armies.

The soldiers of both factions each wear their own practical combat clothing: a mixture of cargo pants, jackets, and vests, activewear shirts, lightweight boxing boots and sneakers, combat boots, and fingerless biker gloves. They seem to resemble a couple of ragtag militia

groups rather than the uniformed officers of two national armies. The loyalties of the soldiers can generally be identified by the colour scheme of their outfits: blue, grey, and black for the English troops; green, red, and brown for the French.

#### JK Kazzi (he/him): King Henry

At the heart of the play's conflict is England's young and charismatic King, Henry, played by JK Kazzi. He is in his mid-to-late 20s, with an average height and lean, athletic build. He has tan skin, a chiselled jawline, and deep brown eyes that often appear full of thought. His dark brown hair is slightly tousled.

Henry wears a black denim cargo jacket over a white t-shirt, with dark navy-blue cargo pants and black hi-top sneakers. Both of his hands are adorned with a number of large silver rings.

King Henry is magnetic leader, commanding attention and loyalty. He is dignified, but down-to-earth, a cheeky smile often breaking through as a hint of his wayward younger self.

#### Alex Kirwan (he/him): Westmoreland

In King Henry's inner circle is close friend and cousin the Earl of Westmoreland, played by Alex Kirwan. He is in his early 20s and is tall and lean with pale, freckled skin. His short brown hair is worn in a tidy military style. His youthful face betrays his inexperience.

Westmoreland wears slim grey cargo pants tucked into grey lace-up boxing boots with bright orange tips, a blue camo-patterned shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbow, and a black tactical vest.

#### Ella Prince (they/them): Exeter

The Duke of Exeter is another relative and close confidante of King Henry and is played by Ella Prince. (Whilst the actor is non-binary and uses 'they/them' pronouns, the character of Exeter is a man and will be referred to using 'he/him' pronouns.)

Exeter is in his 30s, with a slight, athletic build, fair skin, and very short, platinum blonde hair. He wears slim navy-blue work pants tucked into black lace-up boxing boots with rounded orange rubber heels, and a dark blue t-shirt. He has a black sports watch on his left wrist.

Exeter is cool and collected, and more battle-hardened than his fellow soldier Westmoreland. His movements are relaxed, but nimble. He often stands with his weight on

the balls of his feet, watching closely, like a coiled spring ready to leap into action at any moment.

#### Jack Halabi (he/him): The Dauphin

King Henry's fiercest rival is the Dauphin, prince and heir of France. He is played by Swiss-born Lebanese Australian Jack Halabi. The Dauphin is in his early 20s and is a similar height to Henry, but with a stockier build. He has tan skin and icy blue eyes, and his brown hair is cropped into a buzz cut style like an American marine, with a closely shaven moustache and beard.

He wears brown camo-print cargo pants, black and silver hi-top sneakers, and a black tactical vest over a long-sleeved brown shirt.

The Dauphin is cocky, walking with a self-assured swagger. He gestures expressively when he speaks.

#### Jo Turner (he/him): The King of France

The Dauphin's father, the King of France, is played by Jo Turner. He is in his mid-50s, with an average height and build, fair skin, and short, grey-blond hair.

The King of France wears a breezy set of matching burgundy pants and top, the collar adorned with a simple multi-layered gold necklace, with a long, tailored black robe worn open over everything. A pair of stylish black leather loafers indicates that he does not intend to set foot on any muddy battlefield.

Throughout the play, Jo Turner also assumes the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury, wearing a simple ash-black suit with a white priest's dog collar, spectacles, and polished black leather shoes, as well as an unnamed French soldier wearing black cargo pants and boxing boots with a khaki green t-shirt and matching cap.

#### Mararo Wangai (he/him): Montjoy

Acting as an ambassador and intermediary for the French side is the officer Montjoy, played by Kenyan-born Mararo Wangai. He is in his 30s, with an average height and lean athletic build, and black skin. His long black dreadlocks are wrapped in a burgundy hair sleeve, and he has a slight beard and moustache.

He wears dull green cargo pants with the cuffs rolled up at the ankle, black lace-up boxing boots with light green streaks, and a khaki-brown, double-breasted canvas jacket over a burgundy t-shirt.

[Harrison Mills \(he/him\): Michael Williams](#)

Michael Williams is a young soldier in King Henry's army, played by Pacific Islander Harrison Mills. He is in his early 20s, with an average height and athletic build. He has medium brown skin and thick, curly black hair cut short in a neat military style.

Michael Williams wears black cargo pants, black hi-top sneakers, a white t-shirt with a brown harness holster over his shoulders, a backwards-facing grey cap, and a pair of black fingerless biker gloves.

During the play, Harrison Mills also assumes the role of Lord Scroop, a member of King Henry's entourage, wearing grey cargo pants, t-shirt, and jacket with black lace-up boots.

[Ziggy Resnick \(she/they\): Sir Thomas Grey](#)

Another member of Henry's entourage is Sir Thomas Grey, who will be played in this performance by Ziggy Resnick. (The character of Sir Thomas Grey will be referred to using 'he/him' pronouns). Ziggy is in their early 20s, with an average height and slim build. They have an Eastern European appearance, with light olive skin and long curly brown hair slicked back into a bun.

Sir Thomas Grey wears black cargo pants, black sneakers, a grey camo-patterned shirt and a black jacket.

Ziggy Resnick will also assume the role of an unnamed English soldier, wearing green cargo pants, a camo-patterned t-shirt, a grey beanie, and black fingerless biker gloves.

[Ava Madon \(she/her\): Katherine](#)

Waiting on the sidelines of the England-France war is French princess Katherine, daughter of the King of France and sister to the Dauphin. She is played by Ava Madon, an actress of South and West Asian heritage. Ava is in her 20s, although the princess Katherine is only about 18 or 19. She is average height with a petite build, brown skin, and long, wavy dark hair that flows down over her shoulders and back.

Katherine wears a simple and elegant floor length gown made of bright yellow fabric, with large sleeves and a long row of yellow buttons down the back. On her feet are a dainty pair of burgundy suede flats.

Odile le Clézio (she/her): Alice

Princess Katherine's loyal lady-in-waiting is French servant Alice, played by French Australian Odile le Clézio. She is in her 60s and is a similar height to Katherine, with an average build, fair skin, and wavy brown hair in a shoulder-length bob.

Alice wears a practical and chic outfit including a brown midi-length skirt with soft pleats, a crisp white blouse with mid-length sleeves, and a pair of light brown leather brogues.

The Transcribers

At the same time as Shakespeare's historical drama is playing out onstage, there will also be a handful of outside observers documenting the unfolding conflict like court transcribers. Odile le Clézio and Ava Madon lead this group of transcribers and are sometimes joined or replaced in this role by other actors who are not actively part of a scene. The transcribers are often found at the edges of a scene, wearing plain, practical clothing and typing on a laptop. Some of what they record will also appear typed across the surtitle board above the stage.