

Hello and welcome to this introduction to **Laika**, written and directed for the Unicorn Theatre by Bryony Hannah and Avey Leventis.

The touch tour performances are on Wednesday the 1st November at 9.30am with the performance itself at 10.30am and Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> November at 10am with the performance itself at 11am. The show lasts 50 minutes and there is no interval.

We're looking forward to meeting you at the touch tour.

In this introduction I am going to tell you about *Laika* — the characters, costumes and what the stage looks like. The story is told by a multi-ethnic cast of 3 performers, two women and one man, who play all the characters in the play. There is also a female stage manager in black clothes who is sometimes on stage.

The story is about Laika, the space dog: the first living creature to orbit earth and Sami, a boy with an astronaut mum. Sami must help his mum train for a mission that might separate them for good.

The Clore Theatre is a box studio space. The stage is floor level and has been made to look like a bedroom with a large black metal structure surrounding it. There is an upper level that can be reached from either side via ladders. The shape of the bedroom and the structure look like the bottom of a rocket. The black metal structure has shapes and holes with lights that look like portals. There are ladders and movable pieces that will form the shape of various set pieces. There will be action on all areas of the stage floor and set. The floor has been marked with a fluorescent orange grid. The ladders will be used to climb to the top of the structure multiple times.

The show begins with a very dark stage and then the full set is revealed via lighting elements again. The doors around the space are used as entrance and exit for the cast and the walls of the theatre will glow with fluorescent

symbols during dark moments. The set is designed to look like a bedroom and a space craft and it feels futuristic.

**Sami** is an athletic man; his short dark hair is cropped to make him appear young. He has olive skin and dark brown eyes. He wears a bright blue hooded jacket and jogging pants that have a space logo on the breast and orange stripes down the sides to match the set. He has grey trainers that are padded and have elements of a futuristic feel. The clothes all look soft to the touch. He wears a silver chain around his neck that has a blue marble on the end that looks a bit like planet earth. All his clothes and shoes are bright and appear youthful.

When he is playing the role of the scientist he will add a white lab coat to the costume.

When Sami introduces himself he is excited and runs around explaining his knowledge of space to the audience. There is a single bed on the stage that can be moved around on wheels. The toys and objects around the set are from Sami's bedroom. There is a robot, a space man, a radio, a tube of crisps, a lampshade, a rocket, a book about space, soft toys and other items for the cast to interact with.

**Laika** is a tall, athletic woman with short mousy hair and blue eyes. She wears a brown jumper and a brown skin tight jumpsuit with tan brown shoes. The jumper is big and baggy and is made of very soft wool. It looks like it would feel like a teddy bear. The jumper has patches to make it look like the fur is a bit dirty. She usually moves around the space with high energy and pats her hand on her side to look like a wagging tale.

**The Mum** is a tall, athletic woman with short cropped dark hair, porcelain skin and dark eyes. She wears an all in one overall suit in dark brown; this has a space programme logo. She wears sturdy but athletic brown boots. She later wears a bright blue skin tight jumpsuit with white line details and space logo, this is her space mission suit. She moves around the stage a lot and climbs the structure and ladders.

This actor will also play the role of an usher who is chasing Laika the dog. When she is the usher she will wear a burgundy t-shirt with the Unicorn Theatre logo on the breast and the back, with black trousers, black framed glasses and a radio with an earpiece.

Laika and Sami become great friends and Sami will explain the story of Laika's life. The explanation will include the set pieces being moved by everyone and a small projection screen that shows symbols of Russia and maps.

The single bed has doors at the bottom that Laika will use to crawl through. The toys will be attached to metal rods around the space that make them look like they are spinning and floating.

The large pieces of the set that move have bells and lights attached that will be used by the cast to create images and music.

During the training scenes the set will move and light up to create small areas and rooms. The cast will climb, balance and be suspended from various elements to give the illusion of zero gravity and movement.

During the final scene Laika and the Mum will climb the structure and the sides will burn brightly like the engines of a rocket. Sami will remain at the front of the stage for this scene.

"A moving sci-fi adventure, inventively and beautifully told using puppetry, movement and music."

### **Cast and Production Credits**

Laika is played by Josie Dexter,  
Sami is played by Nima Taleghani  
The Mum is played by Anna Martine Freeman  
Written and Directed by Bryony Hannah and Avey Leventis  
Set and Costume Design by Verity Quinn  
Lighting Design by Marty Langthorne  
Sound Design by Alma Kelliher  
Voiceover by Michael Grady-Hall  
Composer Adam Pleeth  
Deputy Stage Manager Emma Ryan

Assistant Stage Manager Susan Burns  
Wardrobe Supervisor Cristiano Casimiro  
Props Assistant Alexandra Kettel