**Kinky Boots (Musical) Programme Notes – Act One Audio Described performance Saturday 26th April 2025 @ 2:30 pm**

**Audio Describer – Denise Reeves**

**Good Afternoon Everyone. Welcome to the Theatre Royal Plymouth for this extremely entertaining brand new production of Kinky Boots the Musical…guaranteed to “Raise You Up” and celebrate everyone’s individuality.**

**I am Denise your audio describer for Act One which lasts for 64 minutes followed by a 20 minute interval. My colleague Gwen will then describe Act Two. Please note there is loud music, sounds of breaking glass, catcalls, whistles, a shoe alarm and flashing lights.**

**Adapted from the book by Harvey Fierstein, with music by award winning pop icon Cyndi Lauper and directed by Nikolai Foster. it is based on the Miramax Motion picture Kinky Boots written by Geoff Deane and Tim Firth. Live music of keyboards, guitars and drums is directed by Musical Director Sioned Evans.**

**The origin of the film Kinky Boots is based on the true story of Steve Pateman who was struggling to save his shoe factory, WJ Brookes in Earls Barton, Northamptonshire. The factory had been in his family for four generations but by 1993 the demand for traditional men’s brogues had declined. To save the factory from closure, he decided to produce fetish footwear for men under the brand name “Divine Footwear”.**

**The musical is primarily about two young men who come from seemingly opposite worlds, but they in fact have a lot in common, beginning with the need to stand up to their father’s.**

**Life for Charlie Price is proving very challenging after inheriting his family’s failing shoe factory. With a relationship that is on the rocks, he faces some life changing decisions. However, a chance encounter with Lola - a drag queen with sparkle and unsteady heels - could hold the answer to saving the business and create new opportunities.**

**As the audience take their seats, the grey façade of the Price & Son factory hangs in front of the stage with grey brick work top and bottom. In between are five long vertical blanked out windows, in the centre hang the words Kinky Boots in gold lights – turning to red at times.**

**The show opens as the house lights go down to the loud theme song of Price & Sons. The factory workers walk on in front of the factory singing the song, carrying rolls of shoe leather, shoe moulds, cloths and clip boards. Mr Price appears in a brown suit, shirt and tie followed by young Charlie – a quiet, reflective seven year old boy – wearing a yellow football shirt and white shorts dribbling a football. Mr Price interacts with his son and the football before handing him a shoe mould.**

**The factory façade is then lifted to reveal a typical industrial factory floor with four large upright steel girders and two crossbars forming the frame of the building. These are lit up during the show for effect within the scene. The wall on the left is divided with a long leaded window above a double door entrance and exit. Beside which is the workers’ punch card holder. A black radiator is the other side of the door. Four stairs lead up to a landing and another entrance and exit. Above this is a long leaded window and an extractor fan below. A rack of shoes stands in front of a landing which leads to the workers kitchen area – housing a sink unit and a small emersion heater on the wall. Various kitchen crockery littering the work tops. Leading off the kitchen is a door to the men’s washroom. Further along the landing, stairs lead up to Charlie’s office on the mezzanine above with a chair and office paperwork on the desk above which is a notice board and a wall phone on the left wall. Above the office is a sloping roof with Perspex panels letting in light.**

**Bare grey walls are on the far right interrupted with leaded windows on the side. A small wall light is above a couple of signs – one alerting to the electrics and another showing the factory rules. A long grey metal cupboard with a couple of boxes stands alongside. Another double door leads off to the right.**

**The workers go about their routine alongside their work benches – some with sewing machines, others with remnants of material as befits the making of the shoes. They move the benches around to reflect the scene changes. All are dressed casually as befits the time, with the men in trousers and T shirts or polo shirts and the women in short skirts and tops with opaque tights, ankle boots or shoes.**

**Young Lola appears as a 10 year old boy dressed in blue and white football gear with long white socks but wearing bright red high heels. He already knows he’s destined to wear high heels and dances with abandon. His father – Simon Senior – appears the worse for wear drinking a can of beer and hollers at his son.**

**We then meet Nicola – Charlie’s long term girlfriend and fiancée, looking at a pair of red shoes in a London shoe shop. Nicola is in her twenties, slim with long blond hair, driven and uncompromising. She shows them to Charlie with great excitement, for she is intent upon moving to London. Charlie is not so keen.**

**Back at the factory Mr Price senior and Charlie argue as to where Charlie’s future should lie.**

**However, back at their new but rather small and dreary flat in London Charlie receives a phone call which changes everything and Charlie hurries back home to find all is not as he had thought regarding the factory.**

**We move then to a London pub, with people drinking at a couple of tables. Here Charlie meets his old friend and fellow shoe salesman Harry and asks for his help.**

**Charlie’s attention is then grabbed by a situation outside of the pub where a female is being intimidated by three hooligans. It’s dark and shadowy as Charlie intervenes. Instead the female figure slips off her high heeled boot and swings it over her head, smacking Charlie with it instead knocking him unconscious.**

**The Blue Angel Club is then revealed and Lola – the female figure Charlie attempted to rescue - makes her entrance as the club’s Drag Queen. Lola/Simon is a heterosexual cross-dresser in early thirties with a prize fighter’s physique, a killer voice and winning ways. As Lola makes her way down the steps to the stage, she sheds her elaborated coat revealing a dazzling short bright red sequined ensemble and a short curly red wig - and introduces herself to the audience. Joined by the Angels - six drag performers also wearing various outlandish red outfits – Charlie is introduced to the “Land Of Lola” as Lola and the Angels perform through song and dance. More extravagant but dazzling costumes are worn throughout.**

**Backstage in Lola’s tiny cramped dressing room, Charlie recuperates and notices that Lola’s boots are not designed to hold a man’s weight. Lola explains that footwear is an essential part of the drag act.**

**Back at the factory, Charlie is faced with difficult decisions regarding the future of the factory as he faces the workers.**

**A brief phone call with Nicola who stands in front of a shoe store in London gives Charlie an idea and a possible solution and invites Lola to visit the factory.**

**Lola’s visit to the factory is not received well by the factory workers but agrees to help Charlie with her designs for the right boots. However, Lola is immediately dissatisfied with Charlie’s first design and with the help of the Angels explains through song that “Sex is in the Heel”. George, the factory manager and the workers realize a way to make Lola’s design more practical. Eventually Lola agrees to stay and help them to go the prestigious footwear show in Milan.**

**Charlie tells the workers of his plans for Milan and thanks Lauren for giving him the initial idea, thereby offering her a promotion. In so doing, Lauren begins to fall for him.**

**The next day Lola arrives at the factory in men’s clothes. Blue jeans, a loose open neck blue check shirt and very close crop dark hair. However, Lola/Simon is mocked by Don and his friends and takes refuge in the bathroom. Charlie tries to comfort him and they share a wonderful tender moment through the song “I’m Not My Father’s Son.**

**Nicola still intent on her plans for London introduces Charlie to her boss Richard Bailey - a young handsome businessman – who presents Charlie with a plan for the future of the factory – to which Charlie refuses.**

**Soon the workers support Charlie for the future and they celebrate as they present Lola with the first pair of “Kinky Boots in Red”.**

**The Cast:**

**Lola/Simon – is played by professional dancer from Strictly Come Dancing – Johannes Radebe**

**Charlie Price – by rising star – Dan Partridge**

**Lauren – by Courtney Bowman**

**Nicola - by Kara Lily Hayworth**

**Don – by Joe Caffrey**

**Pat – by Kathryn Barnes**

**Trish – is played by Lucy Williamson**

**George – by Scott Page**

**Other parts are played by the ensemble**

**Young Charlie and Young Lola/Simon are played by 6 children in turn**

**Kinky Boots**

**Introduction to Act 2 (audio describer Gwen Furniss)**

Welcome back to Act 2 of “Kinky Boots”. At the end of Act 1, Charlie had turned down the chance to sell the factory for development into flats, and had taken the bold decision to focus on producing kinky boots for the drag queen market.

The set remains the same as before, but other sections are brought in to change the setting as needed. Costumes remain basically the same, apart from Lola, who has several changes of colourful exaggeratedly feminine clothing. Lola first appears in Act 2 in a black satin outfit with fuschia-coloured trim: a beret, black jacket with a belt, a short skirt with side slit, and calf-length stiletto-heeled boots.

During the first dance sequence performed by the cast, the factory work benches are moved aside. In this scene, Charlie is dressed in a Barbour jacket, over denim shirt and jeans.

We then move on to a boxing scene. Red ropes are used to signify a boxing ring. A referee stands in the ring, tall with long dark curly hair. The ref wears a shirt with black and white vertical stripes, a red belt, blue sequinned shorts, and black calf length boots with stiletto heels. Some of Lola’s “angels” carry out the role of assistants, dressed in red off the shoulder bra tops, short gathered blue satin skirts and stiletto boots. Lola, minus her wig, appears as her masculine alter ego, dressed in a gold sequinned coat over a red vest and shorts with white trim, and red boots with white laces. Also, gold boxing gloves! Lola’s opponent in the ring is Don. He is dressed in a white t-shirt with a picture of Sylvester Stallone as Rocky. He wears knee length black shorts, white socks and black trainers, and brown boxing gloves.

Back at the factory, Lola has changed into a short red velvet dress with fitted leopard print jacket and red stiletto shoes. She has a gold neck chain and hoop earrings, and her nails are varnished red. Nicola wears a champagne-coloured satin blouse with teal blue slim skirt. She also wears red stilettos.

With the production of boots well under way, the factory racks are lined with rolls of red leather. At the workers’ benches, part-made red boots await assembly.

During a brief scene where George and Lauren wheel out loaded sack trolleys, we see the exterior of the factory, with its tall paned windows, encrusted with the grime of decades.

Next, Lola performs at a nursing home. Standing behind a microphone on a raised stage, she wears a blond Marilyn Monroe wig, and an elegant long pale lavender gown with high neck, long sleeves and flowing cape. A nurse in a blue nurse’s dress wheels in a patient wearing a tweed cap, with a blanket over his lap. The lighting on the framework around the stage is a soft pink, and tendrils of light surround the spotlights.

The final scene takes the cast to Milan, where a modelling walkway is set up centre stage, with a row of chairs on either side for spectators. Red velvet drapes hangson either side. Charlie wears a black overcoat. An Italian stage manager, dressed in black, appears to the front of the stage. Lauren and George are the first of the factory workers to arrive. Lauren is dressed in a black sequinned minidress with black chiffon sleeves and tights. George’s appearance causes a laugh from the audience. He is dressed in black beret with sparkly black t-shirt and shorts. The other factory workers all wear sparkly black costumes. Charlie is in a black jacket with sparkly yoke and tight trousers. Lola wears a silver and black corselette with frilled black train. Her girls all wear skimpy costumes of sparkly silver and black, and of course thigh high red stiletto boots.

From time to time, there will be dry ice clouds formed on stage, and bright colourful lighting.