Welcome to this introduction to A Knock on the Roof written and performed by Khawla Ibraheem, directed and developed by Oliver Butler.

These introductory notes are designed to support audiences with sight loss, providing information on relevant visual elements of the performance including details on the performer, style of the performance, and the set and costume design. The performance runs for approximately 80 minutes without interval.

Information on the Royal Court’s website tells us… ***‘The readier you are, the better chance of survival you have’ - Pack Bag. Set timer. Run. Repeat. Mariam knows the army often drops small warning bombs – a knock on the roof – giving tenants in Gaza 5-15 minutes to evacuate before their home is destroyed. With dry wit and determination, Mariam meticulously rehearses for the run of her life, deliberating what – and who- she can take with her.’***

**Please note** - this production contains suggestions of violence and war.

A Knock on the Roof follows the story of Mariam a young mother who lives under Israeli occupation. Mariam is in her early thirties with light olive skin, large dark eyes with strong brows and full lips. Her shoulder length brown hair is pulled back into a relaxed ponytail. She dresses simply in a pair of comfortable high-waisted jeans with plain white trainers and a pale green long-sleeved top. Other characters in the story are indicated by a change in her voice and energy, e.g. when she speaks as her husband Omar, she adopts a relaxed physicality, with head leaning to one side as she speaks in a deeper voice. Occasionally as Mariam she addresses us in the audience directly with a question or comment including us in the unfolding story.

As we take our seats in the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, Khawla is already in the space on a large almost bare stage about 9 metres wide and 6 metres deep. The space is surrounded by solid looking brick walls that rise about 12 metres in height and are painted a dark grey, and the broad stage floor is pale and scuffed. The space has the feel of the ‘shell’ of a building like a building project that’s been abandoned before completion or a windowless bunker. At either end of the back wall is a door sized gap with a green emergency exit sign at the top. The only item in the space is a single plain chair with a pale blue upholstered seat.

Lighting helps to create different locations and moods, sometimes to dramatic effect, e.g. as Miriam runs on the spot, her shadow looms large behind her, between a shifting corridor of tall shadows and columns of light, creating the sense of her running along a road flanked by high rise buildings. Later abstract grey patterns fill the top half of the back wall creating a neighbouring landscape of battle-scarred apartment blocks. At another time monochromatic patterns on the back wall spill over onto the walls at the sides – representing a ruined building with distorted shapes like bent girders and metal poking through concrete and fractured beams of opaque daylight peeking through the cracks and holes in the newly blasted sandy brick walls. In another moment blue tones fill the space and watery light floods the floor. Occasionally when the space is shrouded in dim light moving silhouettes of others, like ghosts of memory appear at the back.

**Cast and Production Credits**

The Writer and Performer is **Khawla Ibraheem**

Set Design is by **Frank J Oliva**

Costume Design is by **Jeffrey Wallach**

Lighting Design is by **Oona Curley**

Music and Sound Design is by **Remi Nakhleh**

Projection Design is **Hana S Kim**

The Dramaturg is **Aneesha Srinivasan**

A Knock on the Roof is developed and directed by **Oliver Butler**

This is the end of the introduction to ***A Knock at the Roof*** at the Royal Court Theatre. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact the box office on 020 7565 5000.