Audio Introduction to All is but Fantasy at TOP February 2026

Welcome to this introduction to All Is but Fantasy – two, high-energy performances, full of live music and song, which revisit the stories of four of Shakespeare's most famous characters - **Lady Macbeth and Emilia** in one performance and **Juliet and Richard III** in the other.

The plays were written, composed and directed by Whitney White, with Set & Costume Design by Soutra Gilmour, Lighting by Ryan Day, Sound by Tony Gayle, Choreography by Sarita Piotrowski, Music Supervision by Simona Budd and Musical Direction by Tom Knowles.

Each performance lasts a little under two and half hours, including an interval of twenty minutes.

The audio describers for this production are Gethyn Edwards and Carolyn Smith.

The stage has seating to both sides as well as to the front and both plays share a baseline set that evokes a converted New York warehouse rehearsal space. It has pale wooden floorboards and 20ft-tall sash windows at the back, dividing the rear wall into thirds. Slender columns, painted in the same slightly grimy cream as the wall and window frames, rise either side of the central window. The room looks directly out onto a black metal fire escape and the featureless, bare brick of the building just opposite. There's a tall wooden door in the right hand third of the rear wall, with the space above it filled with a smaller window. All the windows have long, partially closed, translucent fabric blinds.

A drumkit is set up on a low platform at the centre rear and an upright piano stands to the left of it, with chairs, stools, microphones and instrument stands for the bassist and guitarist along the platform's front. Four additional microphone stands are dotted around the space and moved about as needed.

Characters come and go through the door, in and out over the sills of the windows, and along the walkways that lead diagonally off the front two

corners of the stage. Characters and band members can sometimes be seen sitting on the steps of the fire escape, chatting and smoking.

This basic set is adjusted and added to in various ways by the four stories in the production.

Lady Macbeth is sparse and open, using only the baseline set and a couple of low wooden stools with round orange seats. Once the Macbeths become king and queen, a length of red carpet is rolled out diagonally across the centre stage and a crystal chandelier lowers from above.

Emilia introduces Desdemona's simple, divan double bed into the centre of the stage. It's made up with plain white linen and two pillows. This part of the play also features two smallish, round-topped, pedestal bar tables; a 70s-style drinks trolley; a sturdy, throne-like upright wooden chair; and a metal bucket stencilled with the word 'ash'. In this section of the play the characters also do a fair bit of smoking and drinking.

In **Juliet** and **Richard III***,* a central portion of the stage now has uneven lines of short, scrubby grass forcing its way out between the joints of some of the floorboards.

Juliet adds a compact, roughly six feet high, multi-levelled, red-steel climbing frame at centre stage. It has short walkways, handrails and flight of steps with a moveable, curved bench section that slots in underneath the main structure. Although it evokes the feeling of an aging, children's play area, it stands in just as well for Juliet's balcony and the Capulet family tomb.

In **Richard III** three of the lighting gantries hanging above the stage are lowered at their outer ends, creating both a sense of slanting church ceiling beams and the suggestion of impending collapse. The centre of the stage is occupied by a substantial, wheeled, black coffin, flanked left and right by a formal row of three orange plastic chairs on each side.

The four plays are performed by the same cast of six, with costume changes that reflect the setting of each play. The six cast members are:

Woman The central character each play, the Woman is an actor taking on Lady Macbeth, Emilia, and Juliet. She is a black American woman in her 30s, of medium height, with long, straight black hair parted in the middle. We first meet her dressed in black: a leather biker jacket over a crystal-embellished, scoop-necked Lycra bodysuit and chunky leather ankle boots.

Similarly, the **Man** is an actor who plays Macbeth, Iago, Romeo, Lady Anne and Queen Elizabeth. He is a white British man of Jewish heritage, in his 30s, tall, with collar length, black curly hair and stubble. He too wears a biker jacket – his is accented with bright red patterns on the shoulders and a curved border of the same colour dipping over the back of his black leather trousers, which are tucked into short biker boots of the same colour and material. Under his jacket is a white singlet and he wears a wide black leather belt. He often wears black, noise-cancelling headphones on his head or around his neck. He sometimes plays the guitar and arrives carrying it in its case.

The **Three Witches** all sing and act, providing a chorus and backing vocals for Woman and Desdemona. At times they line up at microphones like traditional backing singers but they often enter the space, moving, dancing, sitting in judgement or support of the other characters. All three are black British women in their thirties, of medium height. They are all dressed in black.

First Witch has light brown, tight ringlets in a collar-length, asymmetric style - plaited into corn rows on the left side of her head and left loose across her crown and on the other side. She wears a satin vest top and cropped cargo pants with leather ankle boots.

Second Witch has her natural long, curly black hair pulled back from her face into a bun on top of her head, the rest falling below her shoulders. She wears a low-cut corset top with a cropped, quilted satin bomber jacket over pleated, calf-length culottes and square-toed ankle boots.

Third Witch has black, blonde-highlighted braids that reach her hips, swirling as she moves. She wears long, wide trousers gathered at the ankles, with a hip-length, lurex waistcoat with spaghetti straps and buttons down the front. Her ankle boots have pointed toes and high block heels.

Desdemona appears in the second play about Emilia. As well as playing Desdemona, she also steps in as Juliet and other female parts and plays acoustic guitar in the band during Richard III. She is a white Irish woman in her late twenties (for Desdemona) and early teens (Juliet), of average height. She has waist-length, slightly curly blonde or light brown hair and pale skin.

Each section of both plays has its own style.

The characters in Emilia are dressed in ’70s chic; Woman wears denim jeans, a white vest and ankle-length suede waistcoat. First Witch wears baggy blue harem trousers with a dark red satin cropped jacket. Second Witch wears jeans with a denim waistcoat. Third Witch also wears a denim waistcoat; hers is strapless and reaches her hips. Under this is a tiered, ruffled black chiffon skirt, ankle-length at the back but rising to above her knees at the front. Desdemona wears jeans and a white cheesecloth smock under a tan suede Afghan coat with shearling lining, collar and trim at the wrists and around the hem. When she first appears, she is wearing sunglasses. Man wears an army green shirt open over his black vest and black jeans.

In Juliet, introduced with Noughties Grunge music, the cast wears mainly Adidas leisurewear – except for Desdemona, who plays Juliet as a young ingenue, wearing a full-skirted, sleeveless long white dress with a close-fitting bodice and plunging neckline. Man, playing Romeo, wears a white T shirt, blue jeans, black Converse baseball boots and a brown plaid shirt worn loose over his T shirt. He has headphones around his neck. Later, he puts on a pale brown zip-up hoodie over his shirt. Woman, who also plays Juliet, but as a streetwise young woman, wears a black tracksuit top and short skirt with shorts beneath, with white trainers and socks, her long hair curly, with a bun on top of her head. She has a black backpack, with

diamante chains hanging down from the straps on either side. Later she wears a calf-length, full-skirted ADIDAS dress with elbow-length sleeves and a deep 'v' neck. First Witch wears very long, baggy shorts and a loose T shirt, white trainers and socks, a black shiny scarf covering her hair. Second Witch has a pink tracksuit and black trainers, while Third Witch wears navy wide-leg tracksuit trousers, a multicoloured, horizonal-striped vest top and a navy shrug.

In the final play, Richard III, the Witches are smartly dressed in black: First Witch in a knee-length skirt and vest top, with a cropped jacket. Her hair is severely braided into corn rows. Second Witch wears a tiered chiffon skirt and blouse, beads decorating the bun on top of her head. Her hair is in a thick plait down her back. Third Witch has a short skirt and tightly fitting jacket with a low neck, her hair long and loose. All three have their waists cinched with wide leather belts that lace up the back, as well as having silver clasps at the front.

Woman also wears black and has a similar, wide leather belt. She wears long, baggy trousers and a sleeveless top, her hair straight, shiny and loose. Man wears black vest and trousers, with the red and black motorcycle jacket from Macbeth.

When Woman becomes Richard III, she puts on Man's leather jacket. He transforms into Lady Anne by donning an ankle-length, black wraparound skirt over his trousers and borrowing a 'corset' - style belt from one of the Witches.

The black-clad **Band**, described in the play's notes as 'a collection of geniuses, misfits, and lovers of theatre', consists of the Musical Director and keyboard player; a bass player; a guitarist and a drummer.

Cast
Woman – Whitney White
Man – Daniel Krikler
Desdemona / Shadow Juliet – Juliette Crosbie
First Witch – Renée Lamb
Second Witch – Georgina Onuorah

Third Witch - Timmika Ramsay

Band

MD & Piano/Keyboard	Tom Knowles
Guitar	Nick Lee
Bass	Chevelle Frazer-Rose
Drums	Féz Oguns

All is But Fantasy contains scenes of an adult nature including racial language, depictions of suicide and violence towards women. It also contains loud music;
flashing lights, including strobe; haze; some strong language; gun shots; stage blood; and the use of herbal cigarettes and burning sage.