

Programme notes – Pitcairn – October 18th 2.30 p.m.

Audio describer – Pam Fewings

Acts 1 and 2

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this performance of Pitcairn. My name is Pam and I will be audio describing the first half of the play to you.

Pitcairn was written by Richard Bean and is directed by Max Stafford Clark.

This half has a Prologue then two acts involving several changes of scene which all take place as the action continues.

This is the story of Christian Fletcher and some of the mutineers who overthrew Captain Bligh of the ship The Bounty while it was in Tahiti. When Fletcher

Christian dropped anchor with eight of the mutineers and 18 Tahitian women on the Island of Pitcairn in the Pacific in 1790 he planned to establish a society of equals with his fellow sailors and their Tahitian followers. However, the settlers were loath to relinquish their privileges and vices and the Tahitians dreamt of going home.

The setting is behind the place where the ship docked. High chalky white cliffs fill the back of the stage. Patches of greenery grow through cracks in the rock. Front centre against the cliff are a series of flat white rocks which are used for sitting or lying on. Cut into the cliff behind these rocks is a large rectangle about a metre wide and reaching to the top. In this space various scenes are shown. At times the cliffs separate in the centre and move to the sides to give a wider view.

To the left of the rocks is a tall metal tripod from the centre of which is hung a brass bell on a chain.

To the right of the rocks on the floor is a net bag filled with large round green breadfruit.

For several minutes before the play starts a film of rough seas dashing against the cliffs and over the rocks is shown. It is in black and white and quite noisy. It makes a dramatic start to this play.

The cast.

In the Prologue set in 1814 Captain Pipon, Captain Staines and three marines, Calvert, Magee and Platt appear briefly. The captains wear the naval uniform of the day. White shirt, waistcoat, knee length breeches and stockings. Over this they wear a long tailed short fronted open naval jacket decorated with many gold buttons and gold epaulettes. On their feet they wear black shoes with silver buckles and on their heads tricorne hats. The marines wear tight navy trousers with navy boots, white shirts and bright red closed jackets. They wear navy peaked caps and they carry muskets.

Once there they meet with John Adams as he is 24 years after the mutineers landed on Pitcairn.

At the time of the landing - the mutineers.

John Adams played by Adam Newington is a cockney able seaman who is married to Fasto, one of the Tahitian women brought with them when they fled from Tahiti. He is a rough man who wears belted fawn trousers, is bare chested and has tattoos on his arms however, 24 years later in the prologue and epilogue John is soberly dressed in a long pale brown dress, straw hat, socks and flat brown shoes.

Except for Christian Fletcher and Ned Young all the mutineers are unshaven and have a lot of facial hair. They wear a variety of natural coloured trousers and shirts or tunics.

Christian Fletcher is played by Tom Morley. He and Ned Young both wear naval uniform similar to that worn by the officers in the Prologue.

Christian's wife is Mi Mitti, she is beautiful and arrogant. She considers herself queen because of being married to Christian.

Ned young is a black man and his wife is Mata who is also good looking and a very energetic young lady.

In the prologue the Tahitian women are all soberly dressed in long full pale brown dresses and they all wear wooden crosses round their necks. When they landed on Pitcairn they were wearing natural coloured sarong-type skirts and dresses of varying lengths. The skirts were decorated with patterns in black. Some of the skirts are very short and worn with bra type tops. All the Tahitian women have luxuriant black wavy hair and bare feet.

Mi Mitti is played by Siubhan Harrison, Christian's wife wears a full length creamy brown sarong and wears red decorations in her hair.

Waluha is played by Anna Leong Brophy and is married to Matthew Quirral an able seaman from the West Country, she is kind and motherly.

Te'o is played by Saffron Hocking and is married to William Morley a Scottish blacksmith. Te'o already has a baby girl.

Te Luca played by Lois Chimimba is married to William Brown the gardener. He is the only one who wears a waistcoat, a small hat and an apron as he is in charge of the farming. Te Luca is a dancer. Her dances are very energetic and incorporate a lot of sexual behaviour.

Fasto played by Vanessa Emme is married to John Adams. Before she was brought to Pitcairn she was married to Oha one of the Polynesian men.

The Polynesian men.

Oha is played by David Rubin. When he was on Tahiti he was royalty which meant he was not allowed to work or marry anyone beneath his status. Oha wears a floor length skirt but is bare chested. Around his neck he wears a wide green gold embroidered collar to show his status. His black curly hair is tied up in a knot on top of his head. He is an angry man.

Naveed Khan plays Manalee a farmer. He has formed a bond with Ned Young which is called a taio. He wears a simple dress in fawn with similar decorations to those on the girl's dresses.

Both Oha and Manalee have a great deal of head and facial hair.

Hiti is a thin young cleanshaven lad of 15 with short curly black hair. He wears only a short tie-around sarong. He is very lively and is longing to have sex with one of the girls.

All the Polynesian men also leave their feet bare.