

Welcome to this introduction to **Archduke**, written by Rajiv Joseph. It has been directed by Lyndsey Turner.

The audio described performance at the Royal Court Theatre is on Saturday 25th July at 1.30pm with a touch tour at 12pm. The production lasts for approximately 2 hours, including a 15-minute interval. The audio describers are Jenny Stewart Cosgrove and Miranda Yates.

Belgrade, 1914. Three hungry young men are offered something to eat (and the chance to change the course of history). Their mission: kill Archduke Franz Ferdinand and set the century alight.

There is a cast of five. Four men and one woman. They are described in order of appearance.

Gavrilo is a small, skinny, 19-year-old white man. His boyish face is clean-shaven apart from a carefully trimmed moustache. His complexion is sallow skinned with large brown eyes, the left of which has a purple bruise blossoming on the skin around it. He has short dark hair which hasn't seen a comb in while and is sometimes hidden beneath a grey flat cap. He regards others with fierce determination, eyes wide lips clamped firmly together or puzzles the world around him with a furrowed brow, eyes rolling upwards as though searching for the answer in the space above his head. Gavrilo is dressed in clothes that appear scrounged from wherever he could manage as nothing fits him and nothing matches. A pair of raggedy black trousers are held around his waist with a thin rope and have sheen of wear on the knees and seat. They are worn with an oversized grubby white shirt, open at the neck and with the sleeves rolled loosely to his elbows. Over this a tatty, dark blue waistcoat fraying at the seams, and a black suit jacket with dark shadows where the pockets should be. His black boots are almost grey with scuffing. Gavrilo speaks with a slight cockney accent.

Nedeljko is also 19 years old, also white and also attired in raggedy clothes that give him an equally threadbare and uncared-for look. His brown tweed trousers and waistcoat match, the woven detail of the fabric ghost-like beneath the layers of grubbiness that have built up. Both the trousers and waistcoat are too small for him, the trousers finishing a good few inches above his ankles and the waistcoat sitting a few inches above the top of his trousers. His black boots are caked in smears of

road dust, and his faintly striped, white shirt is creased and grubby at the collar and cuffs. Nedeljko is tall and slim with a mop of copper curls framing a pale face, his light blue eyes regard others with an almost vacant ease, his lips parted in a small “o” as he processes things. At times he springs to life all limbs as he gesticulates or rails against some misunderstood slight against him. He has dirty hands and a visibly dirty face. He speaks with a southern Irish accent.

Trifko is a tall, broad-shouldered black man of 20. His black hair is cut short and neat, and he has a small moustache above his scowling lips. His brown eyes are restless, searching the faces of others and the space around him warily. Trifko’s clothes are in better condition, and his black boots are clean and un-scuffed. His black trousers are worn with a pale shirt under a cloud grey wool waistcoat and a dark grey wool jacket. He arrives wearing a grey flat cap and carrying a large red-leather suitcase which he cradles in his arms. He speaks with a soft London accent.

Sladjana is an older white woman of 60 with smooth, weathered skin on her soft featured face. She has sharp blue eyes and thick white hair worn in a heavy centre parting and falling in a single long plait down her back. She is short with a roundness to her figure and a slow pace and energy to her movements. She excels as a cook and is dressed comfortably to carry out her duties. Her cotton skirt is floor length and denim blue, falling in loose pleats of fabric that only just allow her black ankle boots to be seen. Over this she wears a white pinny tied at her waist and almost as long as the skirt. Her cotton blouse is faded pink with billow sleeves and a button down front; the outer edge of each sleeve and the front are adorned with lace appliqué. She completes her outfit with a cherry red scarf that covers the top of her head and is wound around her neck. She speaks with a Northern accent.

Dragutin “Apis” Dimitrijevic is a tall, well-fed, barrel-chested white man in his late forties. A proud Serbian patriot he blusters and bellows often with one foot balanced on the seat of a chair his hands slicing through the air in extravagant gestures. At times he wields a long wooden stick with a brass end using it to pick out areas on a huge map as he works himself up and warms to his theme. His round face has a ruddy complexion and blue eyes that glint with menace his eyebrows raised like two question marks. He has a shock of smoke grey hair that is cut short and stands on end, and a slightly unkempt full beard flecked with grey. He is wearing the uniform of

a Serbian Officer of the period; the fabric is a little faded but fastidiously maintained. Khaki green trousers, with a thick red, vertical stripe on each outer seam are tucked into knee-high black leather, jack- boots. His jacket is midnight blue, with a Nehru collar and long sleeves. The chest of the jacket is decorated with gold brocade sewn in thin lengths that span it with horizontal stripes, each stripe is fashioned into a knot at the outer edge, where two loops of gold droop down in small rings, the jacket is done up with five toggle buttons. The other characters refer to him as “Captain” and he speaks with clipped vowels and an RP accent.

The stage is dominated by a huge, curved tunnel-like structure, made from exposed metal ribs in a dark gun-metal grey. The ribs form the frame of a giant circular tube, roughly 10 metres in diameter, and the front edge is picked out at times by a narrow strip of glowing white light. From the wide opening at the front of the stage, the tunnel curves gently round to the right as it travels towards the back, a further 10 or so metres.

The metal framework is lined by a number of small industrial lights encased in metal cages at the sides or above that emit a low amber glow. But overall the space has a dark, dank, industrial feel evocative of an enormous sewer, a hidden, subterranean world that feels part tunnel, part bunker.

The tunnel remains a feature throughout with objects and furniture added to indicate different locations. At first we’re at a meeting point in an abandoned warehouse, with a clutch of wooden crates and boxes stacked a few metres back on the left. Further forward on the right a small wooden and metal trolley hosts a couple of smaller boxes, and doubles as a handy place to sit.

Next we head to Apis’s quarters and a banquet room in Zemun, a border town across the river from Serbian Belgrade. A large table in the centre is covered by a dark grey ruched tablecloth with a red liner down the middle, the table displaying the remnants of a feast with dirty plates and empty platters. The men sit around the table in the dim light from two small candelabras. After dinner a large map of the Austro-Hungarian Empire drops in behind them to fill the back of the space. As Apis holds forth we hear the occasional thwack to it, from the wooden pointer in his hand.

Following the interval, we arrive in Apis’s chapel. Two wooden pews rest at the front of the space, facing us, with a gap between them. Behind, following the curve of the

tunnel, are three tall, ornate gold candelabras, each holding five candles, and high overhead hangs a gold-trimmed Orthodox crucifix, showing the figure of Jesus at the crucifixion.

In Apis's study a claret toned, leather button-back armchair on the left has a small round occasional table on either side, on the left the table has a small light with a red shade trimmed with gold fringing, a wooden presentation box rests on the table to the right. A little further back is an sturdy world globe, its lacquered wooden surface polished to a dark sheen. And on the right matching the armchair is a claret toned foot stool.

The final location - a sumptuous private train carriage - fills the central space. Its walnut wood interior, is trimmed with pale gold detail around the central doorway, and the carriage's windows at the back and sides. Each window including the one in the central door at the back has a soft beige curtain. The curtains on the windows are pulled back to one side with a small lamp next to each. In front on either side are L shaped seats with button backs upholstered in a duck egg blue silk.

Cast and Production Credits

Gavrilo is played by **Stanley Morgan**

Nedeljko is played by **Chris Walley**

Trifko is played by **Abraham Popoola**

Sladjana is played by **Janice Connolly**

Dragutin "Apis" Dimitrijevic is played by **Marc Wooton**

Sound Design is by **Tingying Dong**

Lighting Design is by **Neil Austin**

The **Designer** is **Es Devlin**

Archduke is written by **Rajiv Joseph** and Directed by **Lyndsey Turner**.

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