

PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE

AUDIO DESCRIPTION NOTES

BULL DURHAM

These description notes were prepared by Jenny Paldino and Kaitlin Stilwell and will be shared in advance of scheduled audio-described performances. This production features an AudioBill, a human-narrated alternative to printed programs and can be accessed on our official website, PaperMill.org.

Bull Durham features a book by Ron Shelton, with music and lyrics by Susan Werner. It is directed by Marc Bruni, with original choreography by Joshua Bergasse, music supervision and additional arrangements by Vadim Feichtner, scenic design by Derek McLane; costume design by Alejo Vietti; lighting design by Cory Pattack; sound design by Haley Parcher; hair, wig & makeup design by Liz Printz. *Bull Durham* is stage managed by Matthew Lacey.

Based on the 1988 MGM film written and directed by Ron Shelton, *Bull Durham* follows Veteran catcher “Crash” Davis as he is tasked with mentoring hotshot rookie pitcher “Nuke” LaLoosh, while baseball muse Annie Savoy must choose her seasonal protege.

This production is recommended for ages 13+. Theatrical haze, flashing lights, strobe effects, and loud sounds are featured throughout the performance. The first act will run approximately one hour and two minutes, followed by a fifteen-minute intermission. The second act runs approximately 50 minutes.

SCENERY AND CHARACTERS

There is no show curtain. The stage is dimly lit. Looming high above the center of the stage in bright light is a giant Durham Bulls logo attached to a white wooden frame: a depiction of a black Bull blowing orange steam out its nose, crashing through a blue capital letter “D”.

The stage is framed by three sets of industrial steel arches that span the entire stage and end in columns at its edges, making three sets of wings or entrances on either side of the stage from the back of the stage to the front. On these pillars hang lights casting warm, diffused amber pools of light on the floor. Through theatrical haze, a long dark green, paneled wall is visible that extends the length of the back of the stage. The wall is lined with dim box lights, casting a similar warm, diffused glow. Black netting stretches from the top of the wall and rises beyond the metal archway and out of sight. In the middle of

the stage and closer to us is a similarly green-paneled wall with a doorway just left of center. A spotlight shines from the top left corner of the stage, cutting through the haze and casting light through this open doorway, leaving a slanted, rectangular pool of light in front of it on the dark wooden floor — a space waiting to be filled. Above the doorway hangs an arched, hand-painted sign in white cursive lettering with orange trim and a blue background which reads, “The Greatest Show on Dirt!” Another sign on the right side of the panel in the same faded paint reads “BALL GAME TODAY in printed capital letters.

Many different interior and exterior spaces of the ballpark will be represented by the re-arrangement of these layers of paneling, sliding on and off-stage in different configurations to make a locker room, the coaches’ office, and even the outside of the stadium. Currently, we are in a slightly abstract version of this, in a configuration we never return to — not quite in any of these recognizable spaces, but clearly within the visual world of the ballpark.

To the far left and the very front of the stage, beyond the columns, is baseball announcer Uncle Roy’s broadcasting office, containing a wooden desk and wheeled wooden office chair. On the desk rests a vintage radio microphone; a thin green desk lamp; and the tools for several practical sound effects, including a roll of newspaper, a baseball glove, a slapstick, and a slide whistle. Behind the desk, the wall is almost entirely covered in Durham Bulls paraphernalia from years past, including old programs, scoresheets, and several framed autographed photos. This will remain onstage throughout the show but only lit when it is being used.

Uncle Roy Tuck is played by Nick Wyman. He is a tall, older gentleman with light sandy skin, almost always situated at this desk to the left of the main action. He wears grey pants with suspenders, a plaid short-sleeved button-down shirt, thick black glasses, and a worn tan fedora.)

At the center of the show are three characters “brought together by America’s two favorite pastimes—baseball and romance.”

Annie Savoy is played by Carmen Cusack. She is a slender woman in her mid-to-late 40’s with warm honey-beige skin, 5’6” but wears *very* high heels. She has voluminous dark red curls, and she favors figure-hugging outfits with plunging necklines, pulled in, belted waists and flowing skirts. Her clothing, often in vibrant shades of red, pink, and purple, contrasts the clothing worn by the other women in terms of its formality and sophistication. She is surefooted, grounded in her movements despite her incredibly

high heels, and moves with fluidity and perhaps a bit of swagger. She has a low-pitched, warm voice and speaks with a Southern drawl.

Ebby Calvin “Nuke” LaLoosh, the Bulls’ pitcher, is played by Will Savarese. He is a man in his early twenties with light olive skin. He is 6’3,” athletic build, with messy dark brown hair. When out of uniform he wears brightly-patterned button-down shirts and a gold chain. Crash often refers to him as “Meat.”

“Crash” Davis is played by Nik Walker. He is a man of about 6’2” in his late thirties with golden chestnut skin. Crash has a confident stride and a cocky, knowing smile. He has a round face, shaved head, and muscular arms. When in position as catcher, he wears a “Durham blue” chest protector and black kneepads with shin guards over his uniform. He wears his navy-blue baseball helmet backwards.

We begin **outside the stadium** at the ticket booth, as ballpark attendees collect tickets and enter the stadium for Opening Day. **The ticket booth** is a semicircular brick structure with two rectangular windows where stadium workers sell tickets. When not in use, the windows are covered by shades that read “Durham Bulls.” Next to each window is a sign listing the price of admission. Each window has a single light overhead and is shaded by an awning of orange and purple vertical-striped fabric that is scalloped at the edge. A large rectangular sign with a blue frame reads “TICKETS” in blue and orange lettering on a faded yellow background.

The Bulls locker room is paneled with the same faded green wood as outside the ballpark, and the sky and stadium lights can be seen behind tall black netting. On the left, there is a large block of six wooden cubbies, in which the players’ possessions are stored. This unit is taller than the players; players exit behind it to access other unseen spaces, including the showers. Each cubby has three compartments: a small compartment near the floor for their shoes, a large main compartment with a coat hook for clothing, and a small top compartment for various personal items. The cubby on the far right is visually different, distinguished by a wooden cross and a framed picture of Jesus in the upper compartment. This is **Jimmy’s** cubby.

A shiny black corded payphone hangs on the right side of the cubbies. In front of the cubbies is a long wooden bench on which players sit and stand while changing into and out of their uniforms. On the right side of the stage is the same, green-paneled wall from our opening moment, with the doorway to the left side and the sign “The Greatest Show on Dirt” above it. This space is first functions as an extension of the locker room

and has a long wooden bench in front of it, identical to the one on stage left. This same space on the right will function as the coaches' office every other time the locker room is onstage.

The Durham Bulls baseball team are a diverse group of men in their 20s and 30s, each of athletic build and of varying heights. They wear their baseball uniforms for most of the show: cobalt blue baseball caps emblazoned with the team logo and white and blue uniforms with orange accents. Under their white, short-sleeved jerseys, each emblazoned with their number on the back, they wear long, royal blue sleeved shirts, giving their uniforms a significant blue accent. Both shirts are tucked into their tight white uniform pants. The pants also have horizontal stripes along the waistband, and vertical stripes on the outside of each leg: one orange stripe, one white stripe, and one blue stripe. The men wear bright cobalt blue stockings over their pants. Each player wears a pair of black athletic shoes with three diagonal white stripes on the outer sides. These are made to resemble cleats but have flat bottoms for dancing. When not in their uniforms, they are dressed casually.

There are several Bulls team members we get to know:

Jimmy, whose locker contains the wooden cross and picture of Jesus, is played by Andrew Poston. He is a man in his twenties, 5'10", with light beige skin. He has neat, short brown hair and a young, innocent face. He dresses conservatively when out of uniform.

Jose, a ball player from Havana, is played by Daniel DiPinto. He is 5'10½" and has warm olive skin and dark brown hair. He has a handlebar mustache and speaks in a Cuban accent.

The Bulls are managed by a two-man Coaching team:

Skip is played by James Moye. He is a middle-aged man, 6'2", with pale, ruddy skin and graying hair usually covered by a Durham Bulls ballcap. He wears the same baseball uniform as the rest of the team, usually with his team jacket. The team jackets are made of shiny, cobalt blue fabric, with white and blue stripes at the collar and sleeve cuffs. The jackets are emblazoned with the Bulls logo on the left chest panel.

Larry is played by Joel Ashur. He is a 6'2" middle-aged man with rich walnut skin. He has very short black hair and a thin moustache. He shares the office with Skip and wears the same baseball uniform/team jacket combo. Larry has a deep, resonant voice.

The coach's office occupies the right side of the stage when the locker room is in position on the left side. The office contains Skip's desk, an old metal contraption with a peeling Bulls logo on the front facing the stage. On the desk is a stack of papers, a desk lamp, and a coffee mug full of pens. A metal office chair and a freestanding chair are behind the desk. The wall behind the desk is covered in notes and paperwork.

Hanging around the players in the locker room is 19-yr old **Millie**, played by Ashlynn Maddox. She is a 5'2" woman with alabaster skin and a petite build and dresses in short denim shorts with small, ruffled crop tops or short dresses with white bobby socks and lavender Keds sneakers. Her tousled blonde hair falls just above her shoulders. She speaks with a thick Southern accent.

Finally, **the ballpark** itself is an open baseball field with two sets of bleachers: wooden, two-level platforms, one on the left and one on the right side of the stage. On the top level, the "stands" are wooden chairs upon which baseball fans (the women of Durham) are seated. These ladies are a diverse group of female baseball fans in their 20s and 30s. They wear colorful late-80s attire suited for summer. They have big hair and bigger personalities. One woman juggles a bundled baby in her arms. The bottom level serves as the dugout, with a wooden backed bench for the ball players to sit on. These fixtures are moveable and will be pushed into various configurations by the actors during the performance.

Towards the back of the stage is the wooden wall that acts as the perimeter of the ball field; it's created in forced perspective so that it appears far away (but actually comes up to the players' waists). The ballpark's perimeter is lined with faded advertisements from team sponsors. The skyline over the fence includes the silhouettes of local brick buildings, lit from the inside. In the distance we also see a water tower and the tall chimney of a factory building. At the edge of the field is a large painted plywood bull with red eyes standing on a patch of painted green grass. A hand-painted sign beneath it reads "HIT BULL WIN STEAK; HIT GRASS WIN SALAD."

There are three orientations of the baseball diamond that we will alternate between: pitcher at the front of the stage with the batter at the back of the stage; pitcher on the left, batter on the right; and pitcher at the back, batter at the front. The stands are adjusted accordingly into each position.

Two tall structures of stadium flood lights tower over the ballpark to the left and right. Each fixture contains 16 circular lights in four rows of four. A large sky backdrop covers the entire back wall, textured with wispy

clouds. During day games, the stadium lights are off and the sky is shades of light blue. During night games, the stadium lights are on and the sky is shades of dark blue, purple, and black.

Taunting the opposing team and hyping up the crowd during games is the mascot, **The Durham Bull**. He wears a furry, chestnut brown bull costume with a long, thin, brown tail with a tuft at the end that grazes the floor. His chest and upper arms are covered in darker brown fur, and there are black leathery hooves for his feet and hands. The Bull's large head is chestnut brown with a smooth, tan snout and yellow nostrils. He has downward-pointed ears on the sides of his head and two curved white horns at the top of his head.

We visit a few other locations beyond the ballpark:

Mitch's Tavern, the local hangout spot for the Bulls and baseball fans. Hanging next to the doorway is a rectangular red neon sign that reads, "Mitch's Tavern" in capitalized block letters. Under the word "Mitch's" are three five-pointed-stars, the biggest in the center. In the top right corner of the sign is a circle containing the outline of a bull's head. Mitch's is a dive bar dimly lit with horizontal "Durham blue" lights, creating long strips across the stage: one about a foot off the floor, and one near the tavern's "ceiling." A strip of orange lights spans the back wall at waist-height. The tavern has three circular tables, one to the left, one center toward the back wall, and another to the right. There are wooden chairs at each table. Next to the doorway on the left is a black chalkboard with drink specials handwritten with white chalk. A bar is to the far right, featuring a large unit of three shelves of liquor bottles of varying sizes. The shelving is backlit with bright orange light. Three stools sit in front of the bar.

Annie's home — The house is abstract: its shape is suggested by one triangular panel as the back wall, and a decorative roof trim hanging in front of the top of the wall to suggest the full roof. Annie's wall is covered top-to-bottom in floral pink wallpaper. There is a small circular window at the top of the wall near the "roof," and a large rectangular window in the center, with open, wispy pink floor-length curtains. Against the wall to the left of the window is a large wooden bookcase that contains a record player, several vinyl records, large volumes of poetry, framed baseball cards, and an overgrown leafy green houseplant. To the right of the window fixture is what can only be described as a shrine to baseball. There are flickering candles, a row of toy bobblehead baseball figurines, a baseball jersey, Bulls pennant, bats, baseballs, and autographed photos. A vintage sofa, button-tufted and upholstered in baby pink velvet with wooden arms and legs and just big enough to seat three people snugly, is center, with two matching pink circular throw pillows on either arm. To its left is a tall floor lamp with a vintage shade and a side

table with a corded landline phone. In front of the house to the right, the front entrance is evoked by a door frame and a mauve screen door with ornate wood detailing. The doorway is lit from above by a porch light.

As the Bulls embark on their away games, **the bus** is formed with both sets of bleachers pushed against each other back-to-back, with the wooden chairs in two rows facing in the direction the bus is driving. To support the illusion, a *miniature*, remote-control bus, with lights in the windows, drives across the stage in transition.

When the team is away for their games at the end of Act I, these games are a variation of the night games, but more abstract: the stage is much darker with only the ballpark flood lights in the back, blue lights coming through the windows of the background buildings, and spotlights picking up the players as they complete stylized series of baseball movements. They alternate between being on the field and on the bus.