

Introductory Notes – Kimberly Akimbo

1. Introductory information

Welcome to this Audio Introduction for the Adelaide season of **Kimberly Akimbo**, the musical that took Broadway by storm. The Book and Lyrics are by David Lindsay-Abaire and the music by Jeanine Tesori.

This is the Australian premiere of the musical and is directed by four-time Helpmann Award-winner Mitchell Butel and stars Marina Prior, Casey Donovan, Nathan O’Keefe and Christie Whelan Browne.

The performance lasts for approximately **2 hours and 30 minutes**, including a 20-minute interval.

The following introduction will take about 16 minutes to listen to and features information about **Kimberly Akimbo**, including descriptions of the set, characters and costumes.

The live audio description will be given for Access2Arts by **Jules Fielke** and **Kay Jamieson**.

Please be aware that this performance contains strong language, adult themes and theatrical haze.

Kimberly Akimbo tells the story of Kimberly Levaco, a 16-year-old grappling with a rare genetic condition that causes her to age approximately four to five times faster than is typical. Progeria is characterized by the accelerated appearance of ageing, beginning in childhood, and stunted growth. Most individuals do not survive past their mid-teens.

Set in suburban New Jersey around the turn of the millennium, the musical follows Kimberly as she navigates the challenges of her disease with adolescent life and a turbulent home life. Despite having the mind of a teenager,

the accelerated aging forces her to confront mortality in a uniquely premature way.

At the heart of the story is Kimberly's struggle to carve out a meaningful existence amid family chaos. Her father, Buddy, is a habitual drinker, her pregnant mother, Pattie, is fraught with her own health anxieties and insecurities, and her Aunt Debra, a con artist with dubious schemes, keeps them all on their toes.

When Aunt Debra drags Kimberly and her quirky group of friends into a questionable 'get rich quick' scam, it sparks a journey of rebellion, self-discovery, and bittersweet acceptance. The plot weaves together humour, dark comedic twists, and tender moments to highlight the urgency of seizing life, even when time seems to be conspiring against you.

The musical is as much a celebration of youthful defiance as a poignant exploration of the fleeting nature of time, blending elements of teen comedy, heist capers, and heartfelt drama into a narrative that challenges both its characters and the audience to rethink what it means to truly live while every moment counts.

2. Set description

When the audience enters the red velvet house curtain is down, with 1999 projected onto it.

The curtain rises to reveal an open stage, enclosed on three sides with floor to ceiling muted grey panels. At the back, a series of large cut-out shapes – semi circles and triangles of

different heights and widths – sit in the middle of large curved and jagged shapes. Under different lighting and in different scenes, these myriad shapes become sloping hills, treed landscapes or city skylines. High on the backdrop, a one metre diameter circle changes colour in different scenes, reflecting moods of what's happening on stage as well as interiors, exteriors and, in a night-time scene, a blue moon.

We discover the semi-circle and triangular shapes slide off to either side when transitioning to the ice rink scenes, revealing a double sliding door at the back, the entrance to the rink.

On either side of the stage, on three metre high, arch-shaped panels, a circular motif overlaid with a chrome bar, signifies we're in the ice skating rink: a reception desk on the left and cloakroom window on the right.

We discover later the two arch-shaped panels are set on mobile risers. When rolled onstage and swivelled, the reverse sides reveal Kimberly's purple bedroom on the left and the family living room on the right. The cloakroom window in the ice rink now a window behind the couch in the Levaco living room.

This mobile swivel device is also used for the school scene transitions, when two rectangular banks of student lockers in

the school hallway are swivelled to evoke the library, revealing two large bookcases on the other side.

Another mobile set piece depicts the Levaco family car. Painted a pale blue it has a front bench seat facing us, just wide enough for three people to squeeze in side by side, with a left hand drive steering wheel. It is rolled on to centre, facing us, with the green landscaped background behind, as though being driven along the road.

Using this double-sided swivelling set we magically transition from one scene into the next.

The different scene locations include inside and outside the ice rink, the Levaco's cluttered living room, their kitchen, basement and Kim's bedroom, lockers in the school hall, the school library and the Levaco family car. The overall colour palette leans toward muted, pastel-toned hues punctuated with unexpected flashes of bold colour. Eclectic props (including a swear jar) and homely furnishings evoke an ordinary suburban life with carefully chosen details that hint at underlying tensions and hidden family secrets.

Lighting

The lighting is pivotal. In the scenes set within the Levaco's home, warm soft washes evoke an intimate and lived-in domesticity. In the school scenes the white brightness evokes corridors and rooms lit by fluorescent tubes. Red lighting in the basement scene evokes an environment like a photographic dark room and acts of artifice or tricks. The

deep blue lighting depicts night scenes as well as coldness and the ice. Green effects on the cutouts at the back suggest a landscape of rolling hills and jagged peaks, with a blue sky above.

Spotlights are used to accentuate the surreal quality of more intense scenes and colour transitions mark key moments. During the rink scenes a low thin layer of theatrical haze is used to indicate the ice.

The lighting heightens the story's emotional arc and highlights the unstoppable march of time that is central to Kimberly's journey.

3. Characters and Costumes

Set in 1999, a time before most kids had mobile phones (with a capacity to flag their relationship status, likes and dislikes), individual personalities were displayed most prominently through their fashion choices. Here the mixed heritage cast of nine actors showcases a broad range of fashions from the era of the late 1990's.

At the heart of this musical is **Kimberly Levaco**, a 16-year-old grappling with a condition that forces her to age rapidly. Despite the challenges she faces, Kimberly is portrayed with a unique blend of vulnerability and defiant youth.

Her look is a layered combination of striped sweater under a denim tunic or smock with appliqued flowers at the pockets, over a pair of green flares. Her backpack is also denim with appliqued flower motifs. Sometimes she wears a plain white

tee with a logo on the front, jeans and a purple parka with a fur-lined hood, or a pink and red plaid bomber jacket.

Her long dark brown hair has the beginning hints of a grey streak and is drawn back in sections with small bright clips placed in a row like a head band. A candy necklace often hangs around her neck. These pieces underscore her struggle to remain connected to a youthful spirit while being burdened by an adult appearance. She is played by an actress in her sixties.

Later when Kimberly appears dressed as a Nana, she wears a short grey wig, silver clip-on earrings, a dark green cardigan over a white high-necked shirt and a green patterned longer skirt. Her matching navy handbag is teamed with navy shoes that have little 'old lady' heels.

Supporting Kimberly is a vivid ensemble of characters:

- **Buddy** in his thirties is Kimberly's dad and he drinks too much. He is tall and thin and has light brown receding hair and a scrappy beard. He is often in an open shirt, sometimes worn with a t-shirt, jeans and a navy and teal coloured parka. He also wears a grey tracksuit and runners.
- **Pattie** also in her thirties, is Kimberly's mum. She is also tall and very, very pregnant. Her blonde hair is drawn up in a loose ponytail. She likes to wear a pink velour "Juicy" Couture tracksuit, with its distinctive glittery sparkles branding "Juicy" across her butt. Her arms are encased in white splints from elbow to palms, due to carpal tunnel operations on both wrists. Unable to use her hands, she is very awkward.

Mostly in the home, her manner reflects the strains of their domestic life and her own personal shortcomings. Later, she wears denim dungarees over a white sleeved shirt. She also wears a brightly patterned waterproof jacket. In the finale she wears a cute above-the-knee dress.

- **Debra** is in in her late thirties, and stands out with her bold, offbeat style. She's Kimberly's aunt. Her costume is an eclectic mix that hints at her unconventional, scheming nature. She wears a striped poncho and tatty grey jeans. She carries all her worldly goods in a large drawstring garbage bag. She has dark, curly hair, a round face with bright eyes, and a full figure. She's loud and bossy, prone to schemes and crimes.
- **Seth** is a high school student, a bit of a dork, a brainiac who loves anagrams, and "not the most popular kid in school". He works at the rink and plays the Tuba. With dark hair and a bright smile his gangly limbs and teenage foibles swing between quirky eccentricities, a growing confidence and teenage embarrassment. He wears t-shirts and black jeans, with an open overshirt. At work he wears a blue shirt with a logo and a peaked cap. He adds a blue parka with white collar and brightly coloured inserts under the arms and across the chest.

There is a **teen quartet** of high school students who act in part as a quasi-Greek chorus. Their outfits are playful with baggy silhouettes, fluoro accents, and vibrant details that highlight the idiosyncrasies of youth. The four are an interesting group with confusing relationships as:

AARON, has a crush on Delia
DELIA, has a crush on Teresa
TERESA, has a crush on Martin
MARTIN, has a crush on Aaron.

Despite being unaware of their unrequited crushes, they hang around as a group, and together they form a show choir. Their glamorous costumes make a sparkling addition to the finale. The boys in blue sequined bowties and jackets over white shirts, with black pants. The girls with large bouffant hairstyles in long fitted sheaths of silver sequins with thin blue shoulder straps and shaped bands at the bustline and around the deep mermaid frill at their ankles.

Accessory pieces reflect the earnest, sometimes clumsy, search for identity, which is taken through to the interiors of their school lockers and their individual choice of backpacks.

Some of the scenes occur at the rink and at times all the cast are on skates. The boots are white with pale-blue detailing and pink or blue blades.

4. Creatives, Cast & Band

Author and Playwright: David Lindsay-Abaire

Music: Jeanine Tesori

Director: Mitchell Butel

Choreographer: Amy Campbell

Set Designer: Jonathon Oxlade

Costume Designer: Ailsa Paterson



Lighting Designer: Matt Scott

Sound Designer: Andrew Poppleton

Accent Coach: Jennifer Innes

Intimacy Coordinator: Annabel Matheson

Video Content Creator: Matt Byrne

Production Manager: Gavin Norris

Stage Manager: Bridget Samuel

CAST:

Seth	Darcy Wain
Teresa	Alana Iannace
Aunt Debra	Casey Donovan
Delia	Allycia Angeles
Buddy (Kimberly's Dad)	Nathan O'Keefe
Kimberly	Marina Prior
Martin	Marty Alix
Aaron	Jacob Rozario
Pattie (Kimberly's Mum)	Christie Whelan Browne
Cover (Understudy)	Millicent Sarre

BAND:

Kym Purling conducts the live seven-piece band and plays keyboard. The band is hidden from the audience view but the actor singers can see Kym conducting on screens hung on the front of the dress circle that face the stage.



Keyboard 2:	Josh Van Konkelenberg
Reed 1:	Damien Hurn
Reed 2:	Mitch Berick
Drums:	Tom Doublier
Cello:	Jacqui Finlay
Bass:	Declan Horan
Guitar:	Tyler Venter

5. Event details

Event location: [Her Majesty's Theatre, 58 Grote St, Adelaide SA 5000](#).

Event date and time: The Audio Described performances are on:

- **Monday 14th July 2025 at 6.30pm**, with a touch tour commencing at 5.30pm and a post-show Q & A.
- **Saturday 19th July 2025 at 2pm**, with a touch tour commencing at 1pm.

6. Access information

Ticket information: Tickets through Ticketek

Headsets will be provided immediately following the touch tour. Those not attending the touch tour can collect headsets in the foyer near the box office from one hour prior to Showtime.

Getting to the Venue

Entry to Her Majesty's Theatre is along Grote Street. There is no drop off area adjacent Her Majesty's Theatre.



Parking: Her Majesty's Theatre does not have a car park, however there are many parking options around the Grote Street precinct, including on Pitt St, Adelaide Central Markets and Wilson Parking (on 23 Franklin St).

Public Transport: Her Majesty's Theatre is easily accessible by public transport. Including many buses along the major arterial road, Grote Street, the tram (stop at Victoria Square) and a free bus service that operates on a loop throughout the city and North Adelaide with stops on the corner of Grote Street and Victoria Square.

For more information visit adelaidemetro.com.au

For all other disability access enquiries please contact Patron Services on email ticketrequests@adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au or call 08 8216 8600.

For more information on audio described performances please contact Access2Arts using the email address audio.describer@access2arts.org.au or Voice/Text 0415 090 547. Or speak to one of the audio describers at the theatre.

This completes the audio description introductory notes for **Kimberley Akimbo** which were produced by Jules Fielke and Kay Jamieson for Access2Arts.