

**STACY MAKISHI**  
VESPER TIME



PHOTO CREDIT: OLIVER RUPPIN

Written and performed by Stacy Makishi  
Produced by Artsadmin

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**ARTS  
ADMIN.**

## VESPER TIME

A one-hour piece for stage, **Vesper Time** has been presented at IBT 17 Bristol International Festival, Soho Theatre London and across the UK.

**Vesper Time** offers an 'evening prayer', a high-spirited and playful reflection on ageing and on acting before it is too late; on male role models and the need for father figures - real or imaginary. Stacy draws on her former training as a missionary and her roots in stand-up comedy and writing, excerpts from Hollywood blockbusters and the existential undercurrents of Moby Dick.

The work is a vehicle for Stacy's infectious energy, strong writing, clever dramaturgy and self-deprecating humour – but she's also on a mission. As she takes us through a story about forgiving her estranged father, she swerves into a subversive sermon about playing it small, doing ourselves down, not living life to the full. She's here because she wants us all – together – to go big.

**Vesper Time** is a Chelsea Theatre and Colchester Arts Centre co-production supported by the National Theatre Studio. The making of Vesper Time was supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England and produced by Artsadmin.

### QUOTES

*"The show moved me to tears, laughter and some serious reflection."*  
- Dean Atta

*"Genuinely moving."*  
- A Younger Theatre

*"Intricately woven, precise sermon/storytelling from Stacy Makishi [#Vespertime](#) [@sohotheatre](#) uplifting, funny & touching"*  
- andrew ellerby @instamatik Oct 9

*"Very meaningful as well as absurd, incredibly clever and witty."*  
- Claire MacDonald (audience)

*"I admire Stacy's raw and loving energy. It was refreshing to experience something so humorously absurd containing such powerful substance. Stacy Makishi managed to open my heart with complex laughter."*  
- Emma, Moeller, Total Theatre

*"An hour-long voyage back and forth in time, across the world into space, up through heaven and via a million and one cultural references. I had a blast no matter where Stacy led us and I could never, ever have predicted where we would end up. Every aspect was moving and amusing in almost equal measure."*  
- Grace Murray

## FULL DESCRIPTION (DOROTHY MAX PRIOR, TOTAL THEATRE)

Stacy is greeting us as we come into the Marlborough Theatre's cosy, pink, womb-like theatre space. She's wearing a radio mic, but there's also (80s pop) music playing, so her words are only just audible, which is rather nice – a kind of murmuring undercurrent. Everyone gets a hug or a smile or a wave or a few words. She's like an excited puppy greeting her family's homecoming.

So now we're all seated and she prevaricates before getting up onto the stage, musing on the separation of performer and audience intrinsic to theatre and performance – no matter how interactive or intimate a piece is, she (the performer) is in one role and we (the audience) is in a different role. This is something important to acknowledge, and I like her for it. It's hard to get up there, to cross the divide.

Cut! The music stops and she introduces herself and the theme for the night. She's here because she wants us all – together – to learn that we don't need to play it small. We can be bigger, better, louder, prouder. She tells us that her estranged father mistakenly called her 'Tracy' – and then gets us singing along to Tracy Chapman's Fast Car. I'm possibly the only person in the audience who doesn't know the words, but as we get to sing it five or six times throughout the evening, and as she has a karaoke version on video for us, I get to learn it. We do all learn, together, not to play it small, to give it all you've got – and by the time we're on our last take, the audience is standing and leaping and singing at the top of their voices.

Vesper Time is an odd and interesting mix. Her 'evening prayer' is a reflection on ageing, and specifically on doing it and saying it before it's too late; on male role models and the need for father figures (real or imaginary – gods, heroes, or mere mortals); and on the perils of obsessing on revenge and regret.

She manages, skilfully, with a firm grasp on the dramaturgy, to weave together reflections on Moby Dick, the ultimate exploration of masculinity, peppered with homoerotic desire; stories from her own childhood, marked by the departure of her father and the arrival of her 'uncle' Leo; and some deliciously blasphemous fantasies about God the Father. Holding it all together are the constantly recurring threads of the Tracy Chapman sing-a-long, and a stated desire to change her little red slippers into a pair of multi-coloured glittery platforms under her chair. Again and again she tries and stops herself, defeated...

We don't just get to sing – we also get to greet the person next to us (like you do in church these days) with a great big 'Aloha – Ai Yai', and to write down the thing we really need to say to someone before it's too late – a declaration of love, an apology – these all fed into an American-style mailbox on the side of the stage (Stacy was born in Hawaii but lived her early adulthood in mainland America).

Inevitably, we learn of instances in Stacy's life when she's left it too late – sometimes just by a whisker, learning of a death just days before of the person she needs to tell 'I love you, you were there for me'.

Vesper Time, like previous work by Stacy Makishi, weaves together engaging and warm verbal storytelling informed by her experience in stand-up comedy (with a bit of street preacher thrown in); video clips from TV and movies (Demi Moore! Moby Dick!); and a simple but effective scenography, the white dress complemented by white sheets hung from hooks that reference the sails of a ship. These 'sails' are the screen for her film clips. There are choreographic sections that give us sculptural images of birth and death, the hanging cloths becoming a bundled baby, then a shroud, then – as she dons her black-framed glasses over the shroud – an evocation of *The Invisible Man* (to my eyes anyway – aware that this is a reference that might mean very little to anyone under 40).

She ends – of course! – by donning the platform shoes and revelling in her decision not to play it small – to go for big, tall, brave, wild. The packed house includes a lot of teenage and young adult students, who are all on their feet cheering and whooping. 'That's the best thing I've seen – ever' I hear as they exit, smiling and excited.

Vesper Time describes itself as a 'secular prayer' and it does feel like a quasi-religious communion has taken place. You leave feeling that you've been nurtured and nourished – that you haven't just witnessed someone else's story of the fight for liberation and self-expression, but have been made complicit in the united desire for a better world in which we can all grow to our full potential – no rivalry, no competition, just everyone doing their best and being their best version of themselves. Wow! What more is there?

### **Dorothy Max Prior, Total Theatre (October 2015)**



PHOTO CREDIT: OLIVER RUDKIN

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### DOCUMENTATION

[Trailer interview with Stacy Makishi \(3min\)](#)

[Click to watch \*Vesper Time\* in full \(Password : makishi\)](#)

### WORKSHOPS

Stacy is a renowned workshop leader and mentor, in demand internationally for her unique approach to leading sessions with both artists and people who are new to art. In recent years she has been invited to teach at Harvard, MIT, UC Berkeley, Wellesley College, BRUT Vienna, Thessaloniki Biennale, Queen Mary University of London and University of Chichester among others.

*“Stacy Makishi fed our souls with love and compassion and she squeezed art out of us. It was the deepest and most heartfelt workshop I’ve ever attended.”* – Workshop participant

### PREVIOUS TOUR DATES

8-10 October 2015	Soho Theatre, London
21 & 22 October 2015	The Marlborough, Brighton
28 October 2015	Colchester Arts Centre
30 October 2015	Norwich Arts Centre
17 & 18 November 2016	Contact, Manchester
28 & 29 November 2016	Chelsea Theatre, London
9 February 2017	In Between Time, Bristol
27 May 2017	Folkestone Quarterhouse

### STACY MAKISHI

Stacy Makishi is a transplant from Hawaii who found paradise in East London in 1994. After graduating from the University of Hawaii she worked as a stand-up comic at the Comedy Store but when her punchlines punched back, Stacy found herself happiest when making what New Yorkers called ‘Performance’. Her present body of work is interdisciplinary in scope and includes live art, film, installation and visual art. The work is as complex as it is accessible; humorous as it is challenging; visual as it is literate.

Over 25 years of making work, Stacy has received an ICA Attached Artist Award, a Millennium Fellowship Award, a Live Art Development Agency Bursary and the Franklin Furnace Award. Her performing and participatory work is in demand in the UK and internationally and is produced by Artsadmin. Stacy is infectious; her directing and mentoring work with young people is increasingly renowned and her energy for facilitating others’ creativity produces memorable workshops for all ages. Last year she directed *Under the Covers*, commissioned by Contact and the Wellcome Foundation and devised with their Young Company (16 – 25year-olds). Presented at the Southbank Centre, Traverse Edinburgh and Contact Manchester, *Under the Covers* responded to the Sexology exhibition at the Wellcome and was about young people’s attitudes towards sex and sexuality.

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Get-in requirement	1 day (8hrs), with pre-rig 2 hours
Get-out	60 minutes
Running Time	60 minutes
Travelling Company	2 on the road (1 performer, 1 technician)
Venue Crew Required	2 Technical crew for get-in and get-out 1 Sound technician
Equipment Required	1 Stereo input to mixer from Mac laptop running Qlab 3 1 PA System that can accommodate the above 1 Projector with VGA line run to operating position

## STAGING

The ideal playing space required is 7m deep and 8m wide. The show can be reconfigured to allow for other dimensions; the company, in consultation with the company Production Manager, should agree this in advance. The set consists of 6 hooks hung from the grid, 2 stools and 3 white cloths that hang on the hooks.



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