

Large Print Accompaniment to *The Greatest Play in The History of the World* showing in Trafalgar studio 2 until January 4th 2020.



creating inclusivity and equality in disability

Welcome to the large print accompaniment of *The Greatest Play in The History of the World* by Ian Kershaw which is on at Trafalgar studio 2 until Saturday January the 4th 2020. With evening performances Monday to Friday at 7:45pm Saturday evenings 7pm and matinees on Thursday and Saturday at 3pm.

The running time is approx. 1 hour and 10 minutes without an interval.

This performance does involve audience interaction.

Studio 2 is an intimate performance space situated downstairs close to a bar and toilets, with lift access and has just around 100 seats. The box office is situated directly ahead as you enter the foyer and there are plenty of customer service staff on hand to assist in any way they can.

Touch tours are available on request subject to availability for further information regarding access

email access@trafalgarentertainment.com or enquire at the box office.

Or for further access details visit the access page for all the up to date information.

<https://trafalgarentertainment.com/your-visit/access/>

To book tickets you can call the Access line on 0800 912 6971.

Trafalgar Studios are situated in Whitehall, near Charing Cross Train Station, Post code SW1A 2DY, as you enter the venue the box office is directly in front of you.

To get to Studio 2 you can go down a set of stairs or use the lift which is adjacent to a bar area and toilets.

As you enter Studio 2 there are 3 rows of just under a 100 seats on three sides that are red in colour, there are a few steps down to stage level which is right in front of row A as studio 2 is a very intimate performance space.

This accompaniment gives you an overview of the synopsis, cast, and stage design, Props, costumes,

visual ambience, an extract from the programme, production credits and theatre Information. It has been written, performed and edited by Tim Calvert of Calvert Creative Concepts.

The promotional material for *The Greatest Play in The History of the World* states:

Written by Ian Kershaw

Directed by Raz Shaw

And Starring Julie Hesmondalgh.

A man wakes in the middle of the night to discover that the world has stopped.

Through the crack in his bedroom curtains he can see no signs of life at all...other than a light in the house opposite where a woman in an over-sized Bowie T-shirt stands, looking back at him.

Starring 2018 BAFTA nominee **Julie Hesmondalgh** (*Coronation Street, Broadchurch*), ***The Greatest Play in The History of the World...*** is squashed full of exquisite observation and heart-breaking beauty.

Following a sell-out run at Traverse Theatre at the Edinburgh Fringe 2018, where Hesmondalgh was the winner of The Stage Edinburgh Award, ***The Greatest Play in The History of the World ...*** transfers to

Trafalgar Studios for six weeks only until January 4th 2020.

The production was originally produced in association with the Royal Exchange, Manchester.

The Greatest Play in The History of the World... is an intimate one woman play told in the form of a narrator taking the audience on a journey not only to the stars but through the lives of an array of interesting characters.

It's about love, loss and everything that matters, and is a perfect antidote to this crazy world.

As you enter the auditorium the stage is open to you. The whole of the performance area is layered with a sparkly blue thick carpet that covers underneath the seats, the stage surface and the back wall.

The set is very simplistic and is spacious and consists of just two tall metal shelving units on either side in front of the back wall, these consist of 9 mesh metal shelves that contains dozens of identical plain white shoe boxes with mostly 3 on one shelf.

Julie Hesmondalgh is present on stage when you take your seats, breaking the fourth wall and casually chatting to the audience with a cup of tea in hand moving around the auditorium. She continues to do

this until the play begins and the lights dim and she moves back centre stage.

She is dressed in a thick old fashioned mustard cardigan with pleats on and dowdy grey t shirt and dark jeans and black socks, she is white and slim in her 50's with a full mop of blond hair.

Music is playing from NASA's Golden record that is sent into space.

The space goes pitch black at the start and when you hear a pre-recorded voice over this happens intermittently throughout the performance.

The narrative of the recordings is different from the narrative of the play.

Julie uses the full use of the stage often standing pacing around, crouching and sitting; she sometimes stands on the steps amongst the audience.

As the play begins the narrator walks us down Preston road where the action takes place. She introduces us to an array of characters that are represented on stage by a pair of footwear that she takes down from the metal shelves out of a box and places on the floor.

The main character featured is 31 yr. old Tom and he is represented by a pair of brown patterned tatty carpet slippers.

The second character mentioned is Sarah who is 26 she is represented by a pair of white fluffy slippers; these are placed on stage next to Toms.

Followed by 2 other pairs who represent the unruly kids from no 58 that are red and blue trainers.

They are also placed in the centre on the carpet.

Two further boxes are taken down and opened with slippers taken out and these represent an elderly couple at no 30 Mr and Mrs Forshaw.

The narrator holds these in her hands at one point when she is discussing the couple.

The last sets of shoes featured are from unexpected audience members. For characters Sarah and Marcus.

Towards the end of the play a white shoe box is placed in the centre and is opened it is shimmering gold inside like the gold record sent to space.

The lighting modulates from moderate to very bright to dim this is mostly bright white lights and warm yellows, and goes to black out during the pre-recorded sequences that also contain music.

Extracts from the programme, with producer, actor, director and Writer.

PROGRAMME INTRO NOTES!

Welcome to *The Greatest Play in the History of the World....*

We know, we know... there's a joke about the title in the play.

I started to write a programme note, trying to summarize what an incredible joy & a privilege it has been to captain this little spaceship and work on this production, but what makes it so very extra special, is the gorgeous story behind how it came to life and the people involved. I think it's better you hear it in their own words...

Merry Christmas!

Tara

Tara Finney, *Producer*

Julie -

I had a notion, a romantic notion that my husband, the writer Ian, should write a one woman show for me and we could tour it together into our dotage, like travelling troubadours (or something). A couple of Christmases ago he kept disappearing to the cellar for an hour at a time, wrapping presents maybe, I thought. And then he presented me with this lovely thing. A beautiful play, a love story, but a universal one (literally!) about learning in time what matters in the end, about leaving a mark on the world (and maybe beyond) that shows us, the human race, in all its glorious messiness, confusion and joy. It was the best present I ever got. In these dark and confusing times, it offers a bit of love and hope. We hope it feels like a present from us to the audiences who come and see it at Trafalgar Studios.

Raz -

Julie and I met doing a play together called WIT by Margaret Edson. It was a play that had meant a lot to me for years and came to mean a lot to Julie. Along the way we discovered a way of working together that was

always honest - sometimes brutally so - stuffed full of sarcasm, on both sides, and ever thrilling and enlightening. We had long looked for another project of similar depth to collaborate on. When Julie sent me a one woman play written for her by Ian, who just happens to be her husband, I didn't know what to expect. What I got was the most rewarding piece of writing I have read since I first clapped my eyes on WIT some 20 years ago. Its brilliance is in its indefinability. Part love story, part parable, part spiritual offering, part ted talk. It revels in its celebration of the power of humanity and reminds us that yesterday and tomorrow don't count if we forget to make the most of this moment today. This now. It feels like the perfect antidote to the mad world we live in today as well as the perfect piece with which to continue my collaboration with Julie.

Ian -

Julie Hesmondhalgh is my favourite actor in the world. She also happens to be my wife. She asked me to write her a play. I did. This is it.

It's about love.

Raz Shaw is my favourite director in the world. He is not my wife. He tells my wife where she should stand and sometimes, like in our marriage, she agrees with him.

Together, the three of us have tried to work out what the play is, what it's about and what we'd like an audience to take with them after journeying with us.

The play is about life and living and what happens when we've gone.

It's also about other things too -

I once saw an elderly man looking at a swing-bin in a hardware shop once, it looked like he'd never bought a swing-bin in his life, someone else had always bought the swing-bin but that someone else wasn't here anymore. He had to buy the swing-bin. The play is kind of about that.

And shoes.

It's also about shoes.

When I was a teenager my friend took his own life and I saw his shoes in the place where he'd kicked them off for the last time. I paired them up and placed them near to a wall. I thought I was tidying things up. This I now feel was a gross invasion of privacy. I should have left that for his mum to do. They were her son's shoes.

It's also about space and the stuff that's up there. The International Space Station is the size of a football pitch, weighs 450 tons and flies over our heads fifteen times a day; it never fails to amaze me. There is no mention of that in the play.

The Golden Record is even more amazing. Copies are attached to Voyager 1 & 2 they are records made out of gold (obvs). Voyager was launched in 1977 and will continue through space long after we've gone. There is definitely mention of that in the play.

In short - it's a play about life and love and how as mortals we learn to really live. It's about lost love and it's about found love.

It has heart, lots of heart.

And shoes.

BILLING PAGES

**Tara Finney Productions presents
THE GREATEST PLAY IN THE HISTORY OF THE
WORLD...**

By Ian Kershaw

Cast

Actor Julie Hesmondhalgh

Creative Team

Director Raz Shaw

Designer Naomi Kuyck-Cohen

Lighting Designer Jack Knowles

Sound Designer Mark Melville

Producer Tara Finney

Production Manager Dan Gosselin

Stage Manager Philip Hussey

Associate Lighting Designer **Anthony Doran**

PR **SM Publicity**

Graphic Design **Grant Archer**

The Greatest Play in the History of the World... was first produced by Tara Finney Productions in association with Royal Exchange Theatre and received its world premiere at Royal Exchange Theatre on 9th November 2017.

Creative team

Theatre information

Access information

Trafalgar Studios are passionate about access and inclusion offering a range of services to make your visit an enjoyable one.

There is a access membership scheme in operation at the venue, by signing up to this you will be able to inform us of any specific access requirements you may have meaning we will be able to in turn provide you with a better service, that includes appropriate seating at a discounted rate. For more information or to join you can do this by visiting the box office or emailing access@traflagarentertainment.com or you can call the access line on free phone number 0800 912 6971 operated by ATG.

Touch Tours

Touch tours give patrons who are visually impaired the opportunity to visit the stage and set before a performance to touch and feel every aspect of the production including props and costumes and the opportunity to ask any questions you may have along the way. This enhances the experience of the play so as an audience member you are better able to immerse yourself in all the elements that unfold on stage.

A Touch tour can be provided on request please allow at least a weeks' notice and discuss this at the time of booking – this is subject to availability – please ask at the box office or contact by email:

access@trafalgarentertainment.com

An audio introduction to each show is available on sound cloud searching for – Trafalgar Studios, online by visiting Trafalgarentertainment.com you can also request an audio Cd using the email address above or visiting the box office. A large print version is also available.

The Trafalgar studio's is situated on 14 Whitehall, in London, postcode SW1A 2DY not far from Charing Cross train station, and Trafalgar square.

There are bag checks at the Theatre on arrival and the box office is in close proximity to the entrance.

Studio 2 is situated downstairs. If you require any assistance please ask a member of staff.

There is an accessible toilet that can be reached by using the lift.

Guide dogs are permitted in the auditorium with prior arrangement and can also be looked after in

accordance with guide dogs for the blind guidelines, Please let us know in advance that you will be bringing your guide dog when you make your booking, to ensure that seating is appropriate should you wish to take your dog with you in the auditorium.

Staff is happy to sit with guide dogs and provide them with water etc. in a suitable space during the performance whenever this is preferred.

To book tickets call the access line on 0800 912 6971

Trafalgar Studios Box Office Opening Hours are:

Mon-Sat, 10:30am to 7.45pm and 6pm when there isn't a show on.

Trafalgar Entertainment Group.

Trafalgar Studios is owned and operated by Trafalgar Entertainment Group, a live entertainment business launched in 2017 by Sir Howard Panter and Dame Rosemary Squire DBE. For more information on the company and its flagship venue Trafalgar Studios, see www.trafalgarentertainment.com or follow us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

The manager of the venue is Martin Scorer

Showing in Trafalgar Studio 1

A Taste of Honey

By **Shelagh Delaney**

Directed by **Bijan Sheibani**

Starring **Jodie Prenger & Gemma Dobson**

On until the 29th of February with Mon – Sat at 730pm
with matinees on Thurs and Sat at 2.30pm

The running time is 2 hours and 25 mins including an interval.

The audio described performance is on Saturday the 8th of February at 2:30 pm with a touch tour beforehand.

There is a captioned performance on Tue the 14th of January at 7:30pm.

For more information email
access@trafalgar.studio.com

“It’s chaotic – a bit of love, a bit of lust and there you are. We don’t ask for life, we have it thrust upon us.”

A Taste of Honey, **Shelagh Delaney’s** ground-breaking British classic returns to the West End for the first time in 60 years.

When her mother Helen runs off with a car salesman, feisty teenager Jo takes up with Jimmy, a sailor who

promises to marry her, before he heads for the seas. Art student Geoff moves in and assumes the role of surrogate parent until, misguidedly, he sends for Helen and their unconventional setup unravels.

Bijan Sheibani (*Barber Shop Chronicles*), directs **Jodie Prenger** (*Oliver!*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *Abigail's Party* UK tour) as Helen in this new production from The National Theatre, producers of *War Horse* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

Written by Shelagh Delaney when she was nineteen, ***A Taste of Honey*** is one of the great taboo-breaking plays of the 1950s, offering an explosive celebration of the vulnerabilities and strengths of the female spirit in a deprived and restless world.

To book tickets call the ATG Access line on free phone 0800 912 6971.

This reflective and moving play from The National theatre is one not to be missed.