



mac birmingham press release :: 13 January



Nick Makoha, in association with mac birmingham and Pippa Frith present

## My Father and Other Superheroes Wed 1 – Sat 4 Feb

Poet and writer Nick Makoha gives a deeply personal and moving account of how pop culture raised him in place of his father, in his debut theatre show *My Father and Other Superheroes* which will be shown for the first time at **mac birmingham**.

The day Nick Makoha realised he was going to become a father, he also realised he had no idea how to be one...

For most of his life, Nick Makoha has been without a father figure. When faced with the prospect of becoming one himself, he realised that it was *Superman*, *Star Wars* and *Mohammad Ali* (among others) which had filled that role as he grew up and provided the formative blueprints of how to be a good father. With such impossible shoes to fill, and a distinct lack of special powers, *My Father and Other Superheroes* follows Nick's journey to discover what it takes for a man to become a hero, and ultimately the conclusion that a hero can be just a man.

Nick Makoha has previously toured with his poetry as part of spoken word events, but *My Father and Other Superheroes* is his first ever stage production. The show was developed as a result of his passion for the subject of fatherhood, which is fuelled by his own experiences both as a father and a son.

Working with highly acclaimed hip hop director Benji Reid and producer Pippa Frith to realise his ideas, Nick has created a one man show which fuses traditional theatre with contemporary spoken word and physical elements to take the audience on a journey across decades and continents – from being smuggled out of his home country of Uganda at a young age, to the UK, Saudi Arabia and Kenya.

Along the way he examines his relationship with his father, but in doing so Nick also explores the impact which pop culture had on him as he was growing up – with references to the influential words and actions of such varied inspiration as Bill Cosby and the Jedi of *Star Wars* adding light relief to Nick's honest and emotional story.

*My Father and Other Superheroes* tackles the universal subjects of fatherhood, loss, heroes and hope using Nick's talent of producing creative and evocative language, which has deeply touched audiences.



"After leaving the theatre my first reaction was to phone my dad to see how he was, I have a good relationship with my father but I hadn't spoken to him for a while. I always talk to my mum. The show provoked me to seek out my father for advice. As soon as I got out of the theatre, before I got on the tube I called my Dad, my Mum answered, I said hey Mum can I speak to Dad" *Justyna Kwasniewski, British Council.*

*My Father and Other Superheroes* was first developed at Spokelab, Theatre Royal Stratford East and is supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, **mac birmingham** and Contact, Manchester.

The show will go on to tour at The Albany, London; ARC, Stockton and Contact, Manchester.

Tickets can be purchased in advance from [www.macarts.co.uk](http://www.macarts.co.uk), over the phone on 0121 446 3232 or in person from **mac birmingham's** Sales & Information.

-Ends-

#### Notes to editor

For more information, further images or to arrange an interview or review please contact:

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#### Admission Details and Times

Wed 1 – Sat 4 February

Tickets £10 (£7)

Theatre

Date	Time
Wed 1 Feb	8pm
Thu 2 Feb	2pm
Thu 2 Feb	8pm (with post-show discussion)
Fri 3 Feb	8pm
Sat 4 Feb	8pm

**mac birmingham**, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, B12 9QH

[www.macarts.co.uk](http://www.macarts.co.uk) | 0121 446 3232

#### Tour Details

**The Albany, London**

Thu 23 Feb, 7.30pm

Tickets £8 (£6)

[www.thealbany.org.uk](http://www.thealbany.org.uk) | 020 8692 4446



**ARC, Stockton** (as part of a double bill)

Wed 29 Feb, 7.30pm

Tickets £10 (£8), Schools/Colleges £5

[www.arconline.co.uk](http://www.arconline.co.uk) | 01642 525199

**Contact, Manchester** (part of Flying Solo Festival 2012)

Tue 6 & Wed 7 Mar, 7.30pm

Tickets £8 (£5)

[www.contactmcr.com/nickmakoha](http://www.contactmcr.com/nickmakoha) | 0161 274 0600

### About Nick Makoha

Nick is the director of the Youth Poetry Network through which he provides a charismatic and responsive approach to workshop facilitation in Business and schools. Clients include the London-Chicago Teenage Poetry Slam, the National Endowment for Science, Stephen Lawrence Centre, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) and Creative Partnerships. As a former NESTA mentor he is an ongoing advocate of young people wishing to work in the Arts and Media.

Born in Uganda, Nick Makoha fled the country with his mother, as a result of the political overtones that arose from the civil war during the Idi Amin dictatorship. He has lived in Kenya, Saudi Arabia and currently resides in London. He has presented his work at many international events and toured for the British Council in Finland, Czech Republic, the US and the Netherlands. His pamphlet, *The Lost Collection of an Invisible Man*, was published by Flipped Eye in 2005 and he has been widely published in journals and anthologies. He has recently completed a project with the Tate Modern.

He is one of ten writers on a programme called *The Complete Works: A national two year development programme for ten advanced Black and Asian poets*. It supports writers to produce a full-length collection by providing Individual poet-mentors who will offer intensive critical feedback, tailored support and career development. His Mentor is T. S. Eliot Prize award winning poet George Szirtes. He has been paired with him as they are both writers in exile.

His exodus from Uganda makes him a product of inter-culturalism. He uses poetry as a Rosetta stone and is keen to investigate the relationships between sounds and the meanings they convey through language. Moving through many tongues he has acquired a special sensitivity to this relationship. The loss of his mother tongue is what separates him from his heritage. This theme of loss is expressed in his new collection.

### About mac birmingham

Opened in 1962, **mac birmingham** is a hub of creativity and learning in the Midlands. With four performance auditoria, rehearsal and media studios, a cinema, and a visual art gallery, **mac birmingham** presents a broad range of contemporary work from both emerging and established artists across genres. **mac birmingham** is the most visited arts centre in the



Midlands and is renowned for its family friendly and inclusive approach. Originally intended for children, the centre now caters for audiences young and old, from the local community and beyond.

Re-opened in May 2010 after extensive refurbishment, the arts centre boasts stunning architecture and a high level of accessibility. Set in the magnificent surroundings of Cannon Hill Park and home to the Bridges Bar Café for meals and snacks, and the stylish Arena Bar for evening drinks, the centre is well worth a visit. Over 850,000 visits were made to the arts centre in its first year of reopening.