

I'M WITH HER

BY VICTORIA MIDWINTER PITT



A GUIDE FOR PRESENTERS



I DIDN'T FEEL HEATED OR ANGRY. I FELT POWERFUL!
WOMAN 5, JULIA GILLARD

I'M WITH HER

**A THRILLING REAL-LIFE DEMONSTRATION OF THE
POWER OF WOMEN TO OUTLAST, OUTWIT AND
OUT-MUSCLE THE GREAT UGLY BEAST OF SEXISM**

Since #MeToo erupted, millions of women have shared their stories. But inside our stories there's a part we don't always tell —a seed of heroic resistance.

**BECAUSE NONE OF US COPS THIS STUFF WITHOUT,
IN SOME WAY, OPPOSING IT.**

**Written by Emmy nominee Victoria Midwinter Pitt from
conversations with eight very different Australian women:**

**A bartender in her 20s. A botanist in her 90s. A sex worker, a nun, a
counter-terrorism expert. An anthropologist, a world champion
surfer. And a Prime Minister.**

**Together, they light up the golden thread that runs right through the
patriarchy and may yet be its undoing: the strengths women use to
keep turning up to our own lives.**

**This play burns with the generational energy of its characters, young
and old. It reminds us – all women – of how much power we have in
being ourselves.**

THE AUSTRALIAN

**Profound. Revelatory. Victoria Midwinter Pitt's stunning script
paints life itself as a radical act of resistance.**

ARTSHUB

THE SECOND YOU CAN ACTUALLY HEAR IT FROM SO MANY OTHER WOMEN THEN IT'S A DIFFERENT PICTURE. LIKE LITTLE DOTS – THAT CONNECT TO MAKE A VERY DIFFERENT PICTURE

ANNE ALY

THE STORY OF THE PLAY

This play is a conversation. I began by just talking with women from all over Australia. Everyone had a story to tell. But very few women wanted to tell their story publicly.

The eight women who agreed to give their own story to this script, Nikki Keating, Julie Bates, Patricia Madigan, Pam Burrige, Julie Gillard, Marcia Langton, Marion Blackwell and Anne Aly are very different women. For all their difference, they are in no way intended to represent a cross section of Australian women. They represent only themselves. Their experience is unique. And at the same time there are things about the story each of them tells that so many women and girls will relate to.

Across about five months I spoke with each of them in a series of long, free-flowing, intimate conversations. Sometimes when I heard echoes in the predicaments they described, I'd share pieces of their stories across the group, and carry back fascinating responses.

The act of listening took on a particular force in this process. What I was hearing, in a way I had not heard it before, was my own story. I found myself joining in, taking risks, pushing boundaries. And being pushed. My contributors and I stretched each other with the questions we knew to ask each other. We surprised, sometimes shocked, ourselves with our answers.

Julia Gillard's monologue involved a different process from the rest, but one still rooted in conversation. My starting

point was something she'd said to me a few years before: that the one thing everyone wanted her to speak about was her famous misogyny speech - perhaps Australian women were missing a larger point she'd been trying to make about her Prime Ministership. Instead of another interview we agreed I would work with the words she'd already put on the public record to create a monologue that threw down the challenge of a re-focus.

Over the months, organically, eight conversations grew into one conversation across the group. That dynamic is the spiritual foundation of the show.

Then, by a long, winding process that was part epic spread-sheet and part deep instinct, I began to build a play from the raw mountain of words they'd given me. I wanted to distill into two hours a direct experience for the audience of what we had experienced in our conversations, individual, and collective.

Each woman worked closely with me in refining and approving the final text of their monologues. Julia Gillard gave her consent to the use of her words, but offered no comment nor asked for any revisions. Each woman as you hear her in this play, is represented exactly as she wished to be.

But the conversation is not finished. We're just getting started.

VICTORIA MIDWINTER PITT
Playwright

TIMELINE

2019

- Premiere of a first draft
Eternity Playhouse Sydney
Darlinghurst Theatre
Company

2022

- Script published by
Currency Press
- Margaret River Readers
& Writers Festival,
Opening Night Event
- Half the Sky Production
Subiaco Arts Centre

2023

- Ten Days on the Island Festival,
Tasmania, Burnie Town Hall
- Darwin Festival
Darwin Entertainment Centre

2024

- Perth Festival
The Octagon Theatre
- International Society
for the Performing Arts
World Congress
State Theatre Centre,
Perth

REVIEWS AND FEATURE MEDIA



AT THIS MOMENT, I TAKE PRIORITY. AND I AM TELLING YOU HOW IT'S GOING TO GO
JULIE BATES

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

VICTORIA MIDWINTER PITT is an award-winning documentary film-maker, playwright and theatre director.

Victoria trained in directing at London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Her first play *All the Things I would NEVER Tell You in 8 Songs & 12 Pictures*, based on her own accidentally hilarious coming out story, opened Spain's Alternativa Festival at the Sala Triangulo and toured Australia.

Victoria's documentary film practice has been in complex historical moments told directly, and only, by the people who have actually lived through them. Her films have won Australia's major documentary awards, been nominated for UN Media Peace Prizes and two Emmy Awards, and screened at the UN and across the world's major film festivals and broadcasters.

All her work rests on the power and revelation of first-hand story-telling, and a battle-tested, diamond-hard belief in the intelligence of her audience.



Photographer Marnie Richardson



**WATCH
THE
TRAILER:**



ANYONE CAN PERFORM THIS PLAY

I'M WITH HER WORKS IN A RANGE OF PERFORMANCE MODELS

MAINSTAGE PRODUCTIONS

I'M WITH HER can be performed on the mainstage as a rehearsed play, with full production. Some of Australia's leading actors performed the play.

COMMUNITY LEADERS PERFORMANCE

The play has been performed on mainstages as a rehearsed, moved reading by women who are leaders in the community.

SMALL GROUP READINGS

The play can be picked up by groups of all genders, ages and cultures and read for an audience

IN THE CLASSROOM

I'M WITH HER has a big impact in schools and universities. Leading Australian teacher, VANA WATKINS, has created bespoke Teaching Notes to support teachers and students to study and use the play.

Get the
**HOST YOUR
OWN READING
KIT** at



Download the free
**TEACHING
NOTES** at:





I'M NOT A GREAT WOMAN FOR GIVING PEOPLE ADVICE, BUT IF
THE FRONT DOOR WON'T OPEN, GO ROUND THE SIDE
MARION BLACKWELL

COMMUNITY LEADERS PERFORMANCES

A SIGNATURE MODEL OF PERFORMANCE HAS DEVELOPED AROUND THE PLAY. IT'S PERFORMED BY WOMEN WHO ARE MOSTLY NOT PROFESSIONAL ACTORS.

THEY'RE LEADERS IN THEIR COMMUNITY Judges, teachers, scientists, priests, government ministers, professional athletes, and women who head up women's organisations have performed I'M WITH HER.

CLEVER CASTING IS THE KEY It challenges the women who take part. And often, it changes them. And – crucially – it's a lot of fun.

THE ENTIRE REHEARSAL PROCESS TAKES LESS THAN A WEEK They stand before the audience clearly as themselves, as they read the story of another woman's life.

THESE WOMEN PERFORM WITH SCRIPT IN HAND. THERE'S NO ACTING
They stand before the audience clearly as themselves, as they read the story of another woman's life.

THE PLAY HAS BEEN PERFORMED USING THIS MODEL IN MAJOR VENUES TO SOLD-OUT AUDIENCES AT THE MARGARET RIVER READERS & WRITERS FESTIVAL, TEN DAYS ON THE ISLAND FESTIVAL TASMANIA, THE DARWIN FESTIVAL AND THE PERTH FESTIVAL.



**SEE THE
MODEL IN
ACTION:**



**WATCH HOW THE 2024 PERTH
FESTIVAL PRODUCTION CAME
TOGETHER**

HISTORY IS MADE BY THOSE WHO SHOW UP. SHOW UP.

MARCIA LANGTON

IMPACT

PERFORMERS

It was an intense and centring process, different to anything I've ever done... it's a beautiful opportunity to sit in and acknowledge your own power.... It also requires a level of vulnerability that is often not encouraged or celebrated, but should be.... There is no more power in the world than a collective of women who understand that they are powerful, and their stories can together create change. That all fell into place and cemented itself as we started to share the stories together.

**Lauren Moss, Northern Territory Minister for the Environment and Water
(Darwin Festival Cast 2023)**

It was a life changing experience for me. I have not been a part of a circle of women who came together so effortlessly without judgement or competition, to deliver such an incredible outcome for ourselves, the play and our community.

Amina Keygan, Demographer, (Ten Days on the Island Tasmania Cast 2023)



The model of a reading - rather than an acted performance – made the work seem incredibly accessible so that any woman anywhere might pick up the script. This model cleared the stage of acting, and set a circuit running between the real stories of the women in the script, and the intelligence and experience of everyone in the theatre. The impact was phenomenal, and the responses from the audience were visceral. The night felt electric.

Sisonke Msimang, Writer & Activist (Subiaco Arts Centre Cast 2022)

AUDIENCES

I feel so angry! But not sad-angry. I feel powerful-angry.

Audience member Subiaco Arts Centre 2022

I've bought the script for my daughter. She's only eight, but I'm going to keep it for her, for when she's older, so she can have the goosebumps I've just had.

Audience member Perth Festival 2024

A cast drawn from diverse communities, effectively brought their communities with them to the play. A new audience, many of whom would rarely attend live performance – gold for contemporary theatre. The response of this audience was overwhelming -- deeply engaged listening and a passionate standing ovation.

Sally Richardson, Festival Executive Producer,

TEN DAYS ON THE ISLAND, Tasmania 2023

To have a play like this at the centre of a festival, is powerful. It's powerful because it brings women who are known to a community, onto a stage, telling stories which are universal. And that's the recipe of what makes great festivals. The aura around that group of eight women and how that sits, the power of the dots that are joined – it's an entire festival in a single night of theatre.

Iain Grandage, Artistic Director Perth Festival 2024

COMMUNITY

The ripples of this continue: we have seen some very honest and necessary conversations amongst women and men across Burnie as a result of this play. I'm With Her and this performance model have the potential to create this kind of impact – artistically, personally and socially – for women all over the world.

Sally Richardson, Festival Executive Producer,

TEN DAYS ON THE ISLAND, Tasmania 2023

IT WAS INFURIATING! BUT IT WAS ALSO GOOD NEWS.
THERE MUST BE ANOTHER VERSION OF THIS STORY

PATRICIA MADIGAN

A SHOW THAT CAN COME OUT OF THE BOX

**NO PROPS, NO SETS, NO ELABORATE COSTUMES
ARE REQUIRED**

THE MINIMUM ELEMENTS to stage the show are:

- A cast of eight brave and interesting women
- A week's rehearsal
- A stage with eight chairs, a white backdrop and a projector

**ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS AVAILABLE TO PRESENTERS
INCLUDE:**

- The complete suite of the show's projections, (graphic design, sound design & original music) can be licenced
- A range of marketing assets is available to adapt and use
- Writer & Director Victoria Midwinter Pitt can be engaged to direct

A SHOW THAT INVITES NEW INTERPRETATIONS

- Fresh responses to the play in staging, direction and design are warmly encouraged.
- Contact us to licence the play

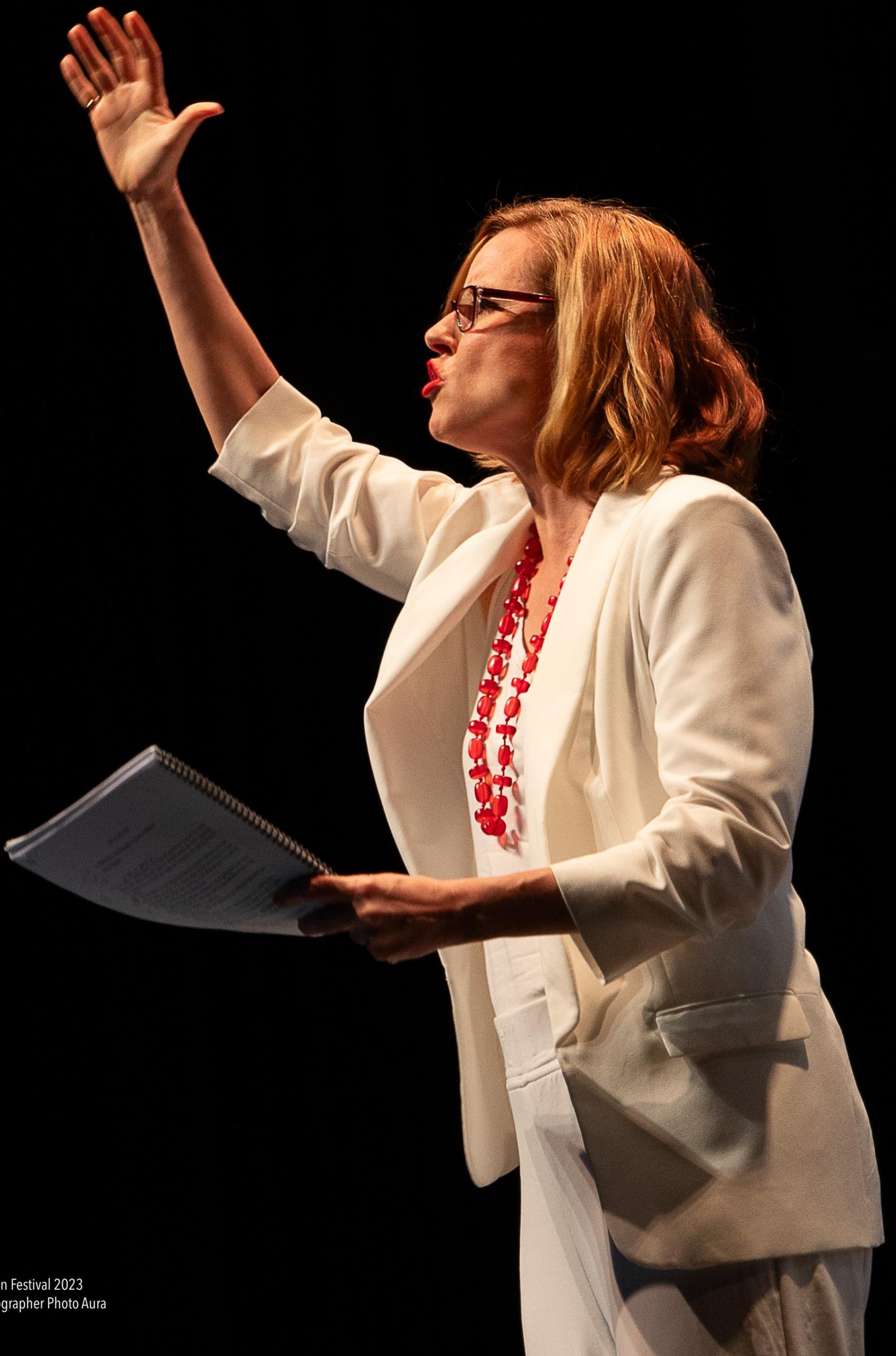
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ARTSHUB



ON THE TOWN



AUDREY JOURNAL

**A THRILLING REAL-LIFE DEMONSTRATION OF THE
POWER OF WOMEN TO OUTLAST, OUTWIT AND
OUT-MUSCLE THE GREAT UGLY BEAST OF SEXISM**

**'A brave and beautiful show. As a piece of
resistance, it's bloody brilliant'**

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

**'Profound. Revelatory. Victoria Midwinter Pitt's
stunning script paints life itself as a radical
act of resistance'**

ARTSHUB

'An incredibly powerful work'

BROADWAY WORLD

'Quite extraordinary'

CANBERRA CRITICS CIRCLE

**'This play burns with the generational energy of its
characters, young and old. It reminds us - all women - of
how much power we have in being ourselves'**

THE AUSTRALIAN

**'A firestorm. A cultural milestone for
Australian feminism. Their refusal to shut
up is a dangerous thing'**

AUDREY JOURNAL

I'M WITH HER