

Long:

Malaika Kegode is an award-winning writer, performer, creative producer and Associate Director at Theatre Royal Plymouth. She is based in Bristol and Plymouth. Her work is focused on uplifting and celebrating the overlooked and misunderstood. Beginning her arts career as a performance poet in 2014, Malaika has since developed her practice to encompass theatre, radio and film writing. She is a vocal advocate for creativity as a tool for healing and connection.

Winner of the Kevin Elyot Award (2022) and shortlisted for the Out-Spoken Poetry Award (2019), Malaika has also been included in the BME Power List, celebrating Bristol's most influential Black & minority ethnic people, and was a 2021 recipient of the Apples & Snakes Jerwood Arts Poetry in Performance Award. She has performed around the UK at a number of celebrated venues, festivals and literary events, including The 100 Club, WOMAD and Hay Festival, and has worked with a wide-range of organisations as a writer, teacher and performer.

Malaika has been performing with folk-inspired prog-rock band Jakabol since 2018. Together they have performed at music and theatre venues alike - bringing a unique, exciting blend of poetry and music to diverse audiences. In 2021, Malaika and Jakabol collaborated on *Outlier*, which became the first piece of new writing produced for Bristol Old Vic's main stage in 2021. Directed by Jenny Davies, *Outlier* fuses spoken word, original music and digital projection by Christopher Harrison to tell Malaika's autobiographical coming-of-age story of friendship, isolation and addiction in rural Devon. The show received critical success and fantastic audience reaction, and returned for a second run at Bristol Old Vic in 2022. The playtext for *Outlier* is published by Salamander Street.

Tackling themes as wide ranging as incel culture and identity in the internet age to millennial queerness and dinosaurs, Malaika's writing has been performed around the country, including at Lyric Hammersmith, Watford Pumphouse, and Barbican Theatre Plymouth. She is an associate artist for Bristol Old Vic, part of the 2023 *English Touring Theatre* Nationwide Voices cohort and the current writer-in-residence at University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

As a workshop leader and mentor, Malaika has worked with organisations such as *Arvon*, *Synergy Theatre Company* and *Narcotics Anonymous*. As a trauma informed facilitator, she has specialised in running workshops with young and/or vulnerable people to help them realise the value of their stories. Many of the individuals Malaika has mentored have gone on to forge exciting and fulfilling careers in the arts.

Malaika has also worked film, and was the 2021 recipient of the the Eslpeth Kydd Memorial Prize for her screenwriting portfolio. She has been a curational associate for Watershed, a

resident artist for Encounters Film Festival, and programme selector for a number of film festivals including Queer Vision and Tallinn Black Nights.

In 2015, Malaika founded, and continues to be artistic director and host of, *Milk Poetry*, an organisation that produces innovative spoken word gigs and workshops in a supportive environment across the South West, with monthly events at The Wardrobe Theatre in Bristol.

Other projects as writer and/or producer include:

Rot. (tiata fahodzi); *Field Notes* (BBC Radio 4); *Hear Her Voice* (Neoteric Dance Company); *Own Skin* (Random Acts); *The Best Ones* (Inn Crowd); *SheSpoke* (Strike a Light); *Level Up* (Blahblahblah); *Gloucester Slam Heats* (Roundhouse); *Finding Queerness in Kenya* (Modern Queers); *We are Not All Each Other* (Black Ballad); *Return to Form* (Loud Poets); and her poetry collections *Requite*, *Thalassic* and *Body Buffet*.

Current projects include: *The Colour of Dinosaurs* (OTIC, Bristol Old Vic & Polka Theatre); *The Combe* (English Touring Theatre); *Ruby, Baby* (with thanks to the Kevin Elyot archive at University of Bristol Theatre Collection).

Short:

Malaika Kegode is an award-winning writer, performer, and creative producer. Her work is focused on uplifting and celebrating the overlooked and misunderstood. Beginning her arts career as a performance poet in 2014, Malaika has since developed her practice to encompass theatre, radio and film writing.

Her gig-theatre show *Outlier*, an autobiographical piece about addiction and isolation in rural England performed with prog-rock band Jakabol was the first piece of new writing to appear on Bristol Old Vic's main stage in 2021. Malaika's work has been featured on a wide variety of stages and platforms, including Lyric Hammersmith, BBC Radio 4 and Random Acts.

She is a vocal advocate for creativity as a tool for healing and connection, and has dedicated much of her career to supporting the creativity and development of underrepresented voices through teaching workshops, mentoring individuals and producing accessible events.

Malaika is an associate artist for Bristol Old Vic, part of the 2023 *English Touring Theatre* Nationwide Voices cohort and the current writer-in-residence at University of Bristol Theatre Collection.