

MAGGIE & ME VISUAL GUIDE



MAGGIE & ME - VISUAL SYNOPSIS

Maggie & Me is the world premier of the stage adaptation of the modern Scottish classic Maggie & Me (Sunday Times Memoir of the Year) by Damian Barr, adapted for the stage by Damian Barr and James Ley, directed by Suba Das.

It starts in Brighton in 2008 when Damian gets a book deal to write a memoir about his chaotic childhood in 1980's Lanarkshire. But as soon as he starts thinking about his troubled past, he starts to vividly remember all the relevant people and the stories – good and bad. He meets his younger self and Maggie Thatcher - the woman and politician who forever changed his family, community and country.

Damian soon starts reliving his past with both the fears and the joy of his childhood. It shows his traumas as well as his triumphs alongside his coming of age and coming out as gay. This story allows Damian to find his voice and finally tell his story.

The story is told on a stage which starts off in Damian's writing shed in Brighton. We then move back to Lanarkshire, where the stage is made up of levels and stairs creating a beautiful wreckage - a bombsite of glittering black slag alive with shocking pink spires of rosebay willowherb, books, and all the items you might find in a 1980s/1990s Lanarkshire council house: black ash furniture, Kay's Catalogues, a Girl's World.

There are old televisions which show news footage, images of the past, text on screen and some live camera footage.

CAST

Maggie & Me has a cast of 7 actors. They are:



Wee DB is played by Sam Angell - We see him at 8, 12 & 16. We see him grow up. We meet him at 8 in Superman pyjamas. He's then 12 in school uniform with a scruffy side-parting. Finally, he's 16 with specs and curtains in the early 1990s.



DB is played by Gary Lamont - 32yo writer living in Brighton and married to Mike. We meet him trying to write his memoir...he ran away from his past but must now relive it in order to write Maggie & Me. He must face his worst fears.



DB's Mum is played by Nicola Jo Cully - She loves her 'three gifts' – her kids. After divorce, she nearly dies of a brain haemorrhage but fights her way back then leaves violent Logan only to meet the alcoholic Dodger. She is always trying to do her best.



Margaret Thatcher is played by Beth Marshall - we follow her from the Brighton bombing to her departure from No 10. She appears in different outfits and her iconic hair. She is certain about everything until Wee DB shows her the real impact of her policies.



Mark is played by Grant McIntyre – He is Damian's match at a school and a seemingly self-assured, funny and sporty super twink.



DB's Dad is played by Douglas Rankine - A steel worker who loses his family, then his job and finally his identity. He hardly ever speaks but we feel his love. He is felt most often as a strong loving absence.



Heather is played by Joanne Thomson – she is DB's smart, strong-willed, best friend in both the past and present. She doesn't care what anybody thinks or says about her. Heather is a good person and good for DB.

Some of the actors play more than one character. In addition to the characters above:

Nicola Jo Cully plays one of DB's Posh Friends, the Newarthill Librarian, a Bully, a Backing Singer, Elaine (the Majorette's teacher), Miss Campbell (one of Wee DB's schoolteachers), and a Floor Manager. She also provides the voice of Diane Athill, a famous memoirist and editor.

Grant McIntyre plays Danny who is Wee DB's rough and tumble first pal and first crush; leader of a gang that bullies him. Kind to his pet canaries. Soft heart in a tough shell. He also plays a TV Reporter, a Backing Singer, a Camera Operator, a Majorette, a Floor Manager and a Party Guest.

Beth Marshall plays DB's therapist.

Douglas Rankine plays Mike, DB's husband in Brighton (AKA Mr Hart), Logan, who is not seen on stage but we hear his voice and witness his violence. Logan is the man that DB's mum leaves his Dad for. He is the father of DB's half-brother - the Wee Man. He terrorises and abuses Wee DB. Douglas also plays Johnny, who introduces Wee DB and Mark to "the scene" in Glasgow, Dodger, the feckless, but not evil, alcoholic boyfriend who replaces Logan, a Majorette, a Camera Operator, Wee DB's Sex Ed and PE teacher, and a Floor Manager.

Joanne Thomson plays the TV Newsreader, a TV Reporter, one of DB's Posh Friends, Mary the Canary (Wee DB's Dad's new girlfriend who is an auxiliary nurse by day and aspiring country and western singer by night), Paddy (a bully), Jane (the shopkeeper in the Carfin Grotto gift shop), a Camera Operator, a Majorette and a Party Guest.

We also hear about, or meet briefly, other characters including: Teenie: Damian's valiant and beloved tomboyish wee sister. The Wee Man: DB's half-brother, Logan's only son. Like Teenie, the Wee Man is spoken about in the play but is not played by an actor. Granny Mac: DB's Mum's Mum, fiercely Catholic and full of classic Scottish sayings. Clare: DB's very posh and entirely lovely literary agent.

The show is for a recommended age of 14+.

Maggie & Me features content which some may find upsetting or challenging. Alongside the comedy moments there are other darker themes including suicide, neonatal loss, sexual exploitation, child abuse, violence, alcoholism, religious bigotry, and bullying.

During the production you will hear the occasional loud noises including a whistle and a megaphone. There will also be the use of video including a disturbing nightmare scene and flickering on the TV screens.

There will also be some extremely bright and flashing lights at moments throughout the play, and some use of smoke effects on stage.

There is strong language throughout and one of the lead characters is repeatedly subjected to homophobic slurs.

<https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/whats-on-temp/maggie-me-content-guidance>

MAGGIE & ME - SCENE BREAKDOWN



Scene 1

We have a flashback to Wee Damian (Wee DB) in his Superman pyjamas and his Mum chatting and playing in the lounge and watching TV.

Scene 2

It's now 2008 and we are in Damian's (DB's) writing shed in the garden of his home. Damian and his partner Mike celebrate him getting his memoir published.



Scene 3

DB is struggling to start writing.

Scene 4

DB and his husband Mike chat over a glass of wine in the shed as DB is still struggling to write.



Scene 5

DB starts writing about his past and how hard it was but is worried people will judge him. Mike is worried DB is spending too much time reliving the past rather than being in the present. He's missing him.

Scene 6

DB listens to Desert Island Discs and realises he has to relive his past not just remember it.



Scene 7

DB is hosting a dinner party and starts talking about his past – how he accidentally drank creosote, about his first love Danny, and how he put DB in a wardrobe and took him to the top of a hill ready to push him down.



Scene 8

DB has a nightmare about a vampire.

Scene 9

DB's agent keeps leaving him messages asking where his first draft is but he ignores her.

Scene 10

DB's friend Heather comes to visit him in the shed and brings photo albums from their childhood. Damian is worried nobody will believe his story.



Scene 11

DB is talking to a therapist who encourages him to have the conversations with people he didn't manage to have when he was young. His Mum appears and he asks her questions about when Dad and she split up and when she met his Stepdad Logan. This is when DB's safe childhood ended.



Scene 12

DB is talking to Mike about how he's struggling with the past. Mike wants him to stop writing. Time jumps back to when Damian was a boy and his Mum and Dad are arguing. They shout about his work at Ravenscraig and its possible closure, the loss of their baby, and then his Mum leaves home taking DB and his sister Teenie with her. This scene ends with a blinding light and explosion as we go back in time to Lanarkshire.

ACT TWO



Scene 1

It is the day of the Brighton bombing and the news story is being announced. DB is confused as he's going from 2008 to a bomb site with Margaret Thatcher helping him out the rubble.

Scene 2

DB and Maggie Thatcher are in Newarthill Library. DB is looking for a book but instead meets Wee DB, his younger self, for the first time. His Mum appears and starts asking them to spell words like she did when they were young.



Scene 3

DB, Wee DB and Maggie are at the Bing and are trying to catch a frog in the disgusting water. Soon Paddy and other bullies arrive and Wee DB is forced into an old wardrobe at the top of the hill. They push the wardrobe off the hill and DB watches as it falls. DB is amazed Wee DB is okay, and Maggie gives him a medal for bravery. They head home.



Scene 4

DB and Wee DB are in their house. Wee DB is looking for his Mum but we find out she's in the hospital, leaving Wee DB to live on his own with Logan. We hear distorted voices and see scary vampire images, and realise the voice is Damian's stepdad Logan. Wee DB is scared and starts to pray. Logan does not appear on stage but we see Wee DB being punched and thrown about the stage as though Logan were there. DB just wants to be back in 2008 with Mike, but he realises he needs to protect Wee DB from what is ahead, but can't.



Scene 5

DB and Wee DB arrive at their Dad's house. Their Dad's girlfriend won't let them in as their Dad is out at work at the Ravenscraig. The scene turns into a singing competition of country and western songs, with Maggie joining in too.



Scene 6

Wee DB and DB are at Ravenscraig playing a game. Maggie appears and tells them that she wants a better future for their Dad but they don't believe her. A newsreader then announces that Ravenscraig is closing down and their Dad is out of a job. Their Dad is upset.



Scene 7

Wee DB and DB are at their Dad's house. They want to stay there but he is sending them back to their Mums, to Logan. DB wants Wee DB to tell their Dad what Logan is doing to him but he won't. Instead, Damian thinks it's all his fault because he is gay and dirty, a jessie – everything Logan says he is.

ACT THREE



DB is at Carfin Grotto where he meets Jane, who runs the gift shop. Wee DB joins DB as this is Wee DB's safe place. They say their prayers and a statue comes to life as their Mum. DB tries to convince Wee DB to tell her what Logan does to him. She makes excuses for him. We see young Mum and Dad arguing and talking about the baby they lost – DB's older sister. Mum turns back into a statue.



DB's friend Mark appears, and they start to play a game about Dynasty. Then they start to talk about the men's underwear section in the Kays catalogue. Maggie appears, and Wee DB and Mark keep playing, re-enacting dance moves and run into a cave to be alone. Mark goes away then DB and Wee DB realise it's time to go home for Sunday bath time. DB is dreading what lies ahead and keeps hearing noises of a bath filling. Maggie tries to convince him to face his past.



ACT FOUR

Wee DB and DB are performing with the majorettes then go off to start high school. Others are being horrible to Wee DB and calling him homophobic names. They get split into houses and Wee DB and Mark are separated. Mark makes new friends, but Wee DB just gets names thrown at him. In class they watch the AIDS video and there is more name calling saying Wee DB has AIDS. Afterwards Wee DB meets Heather – his soon to be new best friend. They chat in the library and he tells her everything.



Maggie returns as the librarian and starts throwing books that contravene Section 28 into a trolley. DB tries to stop her.

Maggie then turns quiz master as she hosts the Young Consumer of the Year quiz in Brighton with DB, Wee DB and Heather. Wee DB finally tells Heather he is gay. Heather then tells him why she's always been his friend. The final question is, what did Logan do to DB that night in the bathroom in the flat? DB doesn't want to go back there but realises he has to if he wants to let go of the past.

ACT FIVE

Scene 1

DB is revisiting a party at his Mums' house where they are drunk and dancing. He's annoyed as it is a school night for Wee DB and he's being neglected.



Scene 2

DB is trying to find Wee DB in his aviary but instead discovers he's been making contact with a gay man, Johnny, through classified ScotAds.



Scene 3

Wee DB and Mark are in Johnny's car. Johnny wants to take them to the gay scene and asks them to do something for him first. Wee DB leaves Mark and Johnny together.

DB and Mark chat and they say they missed each other. Mark apologises for being horrible to DB in school.



Scene 4

DB, Wee DB, Heather and Mark are in Bennetts nightclub in Glasgow dancing under colourful disco lights. Wee DB, Heather and Mark then leave, and DB remembers the moment he heard the news about Mark's death.

DB is ready to face the bath time memory and tells the story of when he was 8 years old and being violently sick in his bedroom. Logan grabs him and angrily makes him clean it up. He then plunges him into the scalding hot bath and holds him under the water. Mike, Mark and Heather help him to tell his story.

DB realises now he has relived his past and it's time to go back to 2008. His Mum comes in and tells him she loves him and he is enough. She takes Maggie away as Damian doesn't need her any more.



Scene 5

DB and Wee DB hug and then they are both in DB's writing shed in 2008. Wee DB can't believe it and spots Mike who he thinks is gorgeous. DB and Wee DB become one person and they start to write the opening pages of Maggie & Me.



THE END