

Chantal Stanfield

 By [Martin Myers](#)

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Chantal Stanfield is a Cape Town-born actor, singer, dancer, voice-artist and stage and television performer. She graduated with a BA in Theatre and Performance in 2005 from the University of Cape Town. Now she stars in her one-person show, a hilarious comedy ["From Koe'siestes to Kneidlach" at the Baxter](#) from 19 December to 6 January 2018.



Following a hugely successful sold-out premiere season earlier this year in Johannesburg, the show hits Cape Town this week. This one-woman "kosher comedy", which is also penned by Stanfield, is based on real events and is directed by Fleur du Cap winner Megan Furniss. It's a sort-of boy-meets-girl love story with a twist.

The play is a heart-warming and funny story of "what happens when a girl from the Cape Flats gets involved with a Jew-ish boy from Joburg's East Rand". Stanfield tries to get to grips with a culture and heritage that is so vastly different to her own, yet sometimes surprisingly similar.

Stanfield can also be seen in the popular television series "Getroud Met Rugby", playing the role of Lindy Davids, team physiotherapist. I caught up with her when she arrived in Cape Town last week in the land of the two-minute shower.

■ ***When are you happiest?***

I'm at my happiest when I'm performing something I believe in, whether it's my work or somebody else's. The times I'm radiating the most is when I'm part of something that I know is making a positive impact.

■ ***What does music mean to you?***

Gives meaning and expression to those parts of the human experience that are universal. It touches the psyche in a way that words can't.

■ ***You act, you sing, you dance, what is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?***

Choosing between those various art forms is truly tricky - it's like trying to choose a favourite child!

■ ***This play that you are doing at the Baxter, do you sing some songs in the show?***

I only sing one or two lines from recognisable songs in the play "From Koe'siestes To Kneidlach".

■ ***Tell us about this new single that is coming out in January 2018.***

So this new single - my first – has been a looong time coming! It's called "Walk It Off" and was originally a more Motown-girl-group-inspired track before the funk took a hold of it and me. The essence of the message has stayed the same though – getting up and 'walking off' the inevitable high tackles of life, and learning about yourself in that process. It was born out of the personal and career disappointments I'd experienced and still do and how I've found my way to deal with them. I hope it will inspire others to find their truth and purpose too.

It's produced by (husband) RJ Benjamin who totally 'got' what I was trying to put out there musically!

■ ***What drives you, ego or humility?***

Right now, a bit of both. I think ego gets you in the door – you have to believe in and bank on yourself before anybody else will in the industry. But humility will keep you in the room – remembering that your path is different to somebody else's and you're on this planet to learn.

■ ***Any funny moments on stage?***

Too many to mention – from corpsing (trying not to laugh at how another actor has said something) and forgetting lyrics (have you ever made up lyrics on the spot?) to wardrobe malfunctions (walking on stage in a bra and skirt as opposed to the whole ensemble while singing Killer Queen), and injuries (tripping over an evening gown in a quick change, spraining my big toe and having my 'Whitney Houston' hobble back onstage and sit on a step for the final song).

■ ***Your heroes?***

My heroes are generally the people who are making or trying to make a positive change, however small, whether in their own lives or somebody else's. I think it takes chutzpah to stand up for what's right, those people inspire me daily.

■ ***Which living person do you admire most and why?***



Tina Turner in all her exuberance, fighting spirit and ballsy-ness.

What is your most treasured possession?

I generally don't value material possessions that much. For example, I love my wedding ring (touch wood) but I know that it's the marriage that's more important. However, I would lose my mind without my laptop, phone and/or car – tools of the trade that keep me going and working!

It's your round what are you drinking?

A mojito or margarita.

The song you wished you wrote?

Just one?! Prince's "I Would Die 4 U", Lou Rawls's "You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine" - although I think that's more to do with his voice.

🎵 *Dream gig to do?*

Singing my music in Cape Town City Hall with a full orchestra backing me.

🎵 *What makes you stand out?*

My afro! My chutzpah. My resilience.

🎵 *Nicknames?*

Chants, Chantezy, Shaniqua.

🎵 *If you were not a musician what would you do?*

I'm an animal lover so I'd probably be a vet.

🎵 *Pick five words to describe yourself.*

Tough, determined, dedicated, observant, focused.

🎵 *Five desert island discs?*

Michael Jackson's *Thriller*
Tina Turner's *Tina Live*
Bob Marley and The Wailers' *Exodus*
Daft Punk's *Random Access Memories*
Bee Gees' *Spirits Having Flown*

🎵 *Greatest movie ever made?*

The Shawshank Redemption.

🎵 *What song changed your life?*

RJ Benjamin's "Journey (The Storm)" because it ended up bringing us together in a very roundabout way since I'd first heard it/ he first released it.

■ **Who do you love?**

RJ Benjamin, obvs!



■ **What is your favourite word?**

“Yoh!”

■ **Favourite fashion garment?**

My used-to-be-gold Adidas track top. It's *only* about ten years old and been through many wash cycles around the world!

■ **Give us some real proper slang and what it means.**

Lamming – chilling. Kwaai – cool. One of my faves – karamonk – cardamom. And one I've learned in Jozi recently – gwarra! Basically means to insult somebody really badly!

■ **Top of your bucket list?**

Travelling back to Spain and then to Latvia, the place many of my husband's family are from originally.

■ **Your greatest achievement?**

Writing, producing and acting in my own play.

■ **What do you complain about most often?**

Right now, I'm complaining the most about not sleeping enough, and 4x4 drivers who drive over speedbumps in first gear...

■ **What is your fear?**

Not ticking off all my 'dream' boxes before I die.

■ ***Happiness is?***

Dance-singing to a favourite 'yardnommer' in the kitchen!

■ ***On stage I tend to?***

I tend to use my arms a lot onstage! What can I say, watching lots of Whitney and Tina has inspired my performance style!

■ ***If you are walking on stage for a keynote speech, like Barak Obama, what song would you use and why?***

John Farnham "You're The Voice". It's such a rousing, emphatic song and it encourages one to not be apathetic. It's also one heck of a song to sing live too, I've had to do it and it asks as much of you vocally as the message does.

■ ***The best life lesson you have been taught?***

It's actually something I've learned recently – the universe will meet you at the point of your sacrifice.

■ ***Where would you like to be right now?***

I'm actually pretty happy being where I am right now, in an Airbnb in a windy Cape Town ready to kick off my show at the Baxter Theatre. But I wouldn't mind being at a beach bar in Spain sipping a mojito.

■ ***Wishes and dreams for 2018?***

More firsts! Getting more of my original music out there and igniting joy through it. More new writing. More new challenging roles.

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ABOUT MARTIN MYERS

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