

THE MARKET THEATRE PRESENTS

MANTSOPA

A WOMAN WITH POWER BEYOND HERSELF

Programme 2025



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SYNOPSIS

Following a highly successful staged reading performed at The Market Theatre on 5 October 2024, "Mantsopa", a play with music written and directed by veteran actor and theatre-maker, Dr. Jerry Mofokeng wa Makhetha, makes a return as a fully developed production, running for 10 performances from 30 April – 11 May.

Mantsopa, whose grave lies at Modderpoort in the eastern Free State, was born in 1793 and died in 1908. A survivor of famine and subsequent cannibalism, she grew to become a trusted advisor to King Moshoeshoe I, correctly predicting victorious battle outcomes for Basotho against colonial settlers and speaking truth to power with unshaking honesty. Mantsopa's tale is interwoven with the very existence of Basotho, highlighting the immense contributions of women in shaping history. Gifted with sharp foresight and divine wisdom, she stands as a symbol of resilient femininity and a source of hope to many women battling structural limitations.

In this brand new work, the story of diviner, seer and rainmaker, Mantsopa, is shared through the journey of her fictitious great-granddaughter, Tholoana, who has inherited the gift of song. Tholoana's blossoming music career coincides with echoes from the spirit world to take her great-grandmother's gift. As she struggles to reconcile the gift and the calling, Mantsopa's towering greatness compassionately guides her through the internal conflict. Tholoana's journey of refusing to be reduced to the entrapments of fame delivers a powerful message for women to claim their power.

Writer and director, Mofokeng wa Makhetha, calls the play with music both a contemporary interpretation of Mantsopa's legacy using modern musical instruments that will appeal to a broad audience, and a celebration of the Basotho people more than 200 years since King Moshoeshoe I formed the nation.

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"This production is a cultural journey into the heart of the Basotho people through one of our most extraordinary icons, Mantsopa, revered by all who witnessed the accuracy of her war-time prophecies and felt the first raindrops as she summoned the flood-gates of heaven for rain. It is theatrically realised through a blend of dramatic action and musical storytelling, tapping into the traditions of Basotho as people of narrative, song and dance. The delivery appeals to the current times, allowing audiences to view Mantsopa from a modern perspective," states Mofokeng wa Makhetha.

Award-winning multilingual actress, Florence Masebe, takes on the role of "Mma-Tholoana", while one of Lesotho's finest musical exports, Leomile, prepares to stir our heartstrings with soulful notes as "Tholoana". Additionally, renowned actor Tseko Monaheng's powerful voice adds depth to the story, with the little dynamite – Itumeleng Mofokeng – challenging him. Lebohang Banyane returns to the play, after being part of the staged reading during its development phase last year. Accompanying and flavouring the story with music are Mawande Stuurman (on keyboards and musical direction) and the legendary Godfrey Mgcina (on percussion).

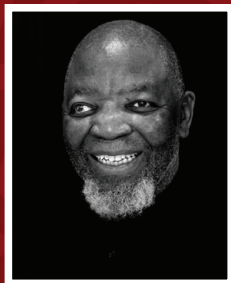




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DIRECTOR
DR JERRY MOFOKENG-MAKHETHA

Respected as an 'actors' director', Dr Jerry Mofokeng-Makhetha is known for his unique ability to get the best performance out of the actors in his productions. Practising as both a director and actor, Mofokeng-Makhetha also brings an attentive mind to his roles, triggering excellence from his co-actors.

A proud African and Mosotho, his relationship with the culture and history of Lesotho has seen him create critically acclaimed works such as the adaptation of the novel 'Motsuane', originally written by L.L Mokoena; 'Mpolelle', a presentation of Basotho folktales alongside musical icon, Tshupo Tshola, 'My Father's Daughter' which was created for the Vrystaat Kunstefees (Vryfees), and now 'Mantsopa', a dynamic play with music rooted in Basotho's enchanting traditions of song and dance.

Mofokeng-Makhetha's professional journey as a director started when he was in his third year of his studies at Wits Drama School. His debut director's credit was on 'The Blood Knot',

followed by Amiri Baraka's 'Dutchman'. Upon completion of his studies at Wits, Mofokeng-Makhetha went to Columbia University in New York on a Fulbright Scholarship to study for his MFA in Theatre Directing. In the U.S, he directed Workshop'71's 'Survival'. He then returned to his alma mater, directing works such as Zakes Mda's 'The Hill', Lorraine Hansberry's 'A Raisin In The Sun' and Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night'. He simultaneously directed 'Boeman' and 'Lena' as Resident Director at The Market Theatre. In 1994, he was awarded the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Theatre, and directed 'Nongogo'.

Mofokeng-Makhetha has been at the forefront of theatre productions, occupying senior management roles such as being the Resident Director at The Market Theatre, Associate Artistic Director at The Civic Theatre in Johannesburg, and Artistic Director at The State Theatre and the Performing Arts Centre of the Free State (PACOFs) respectively.

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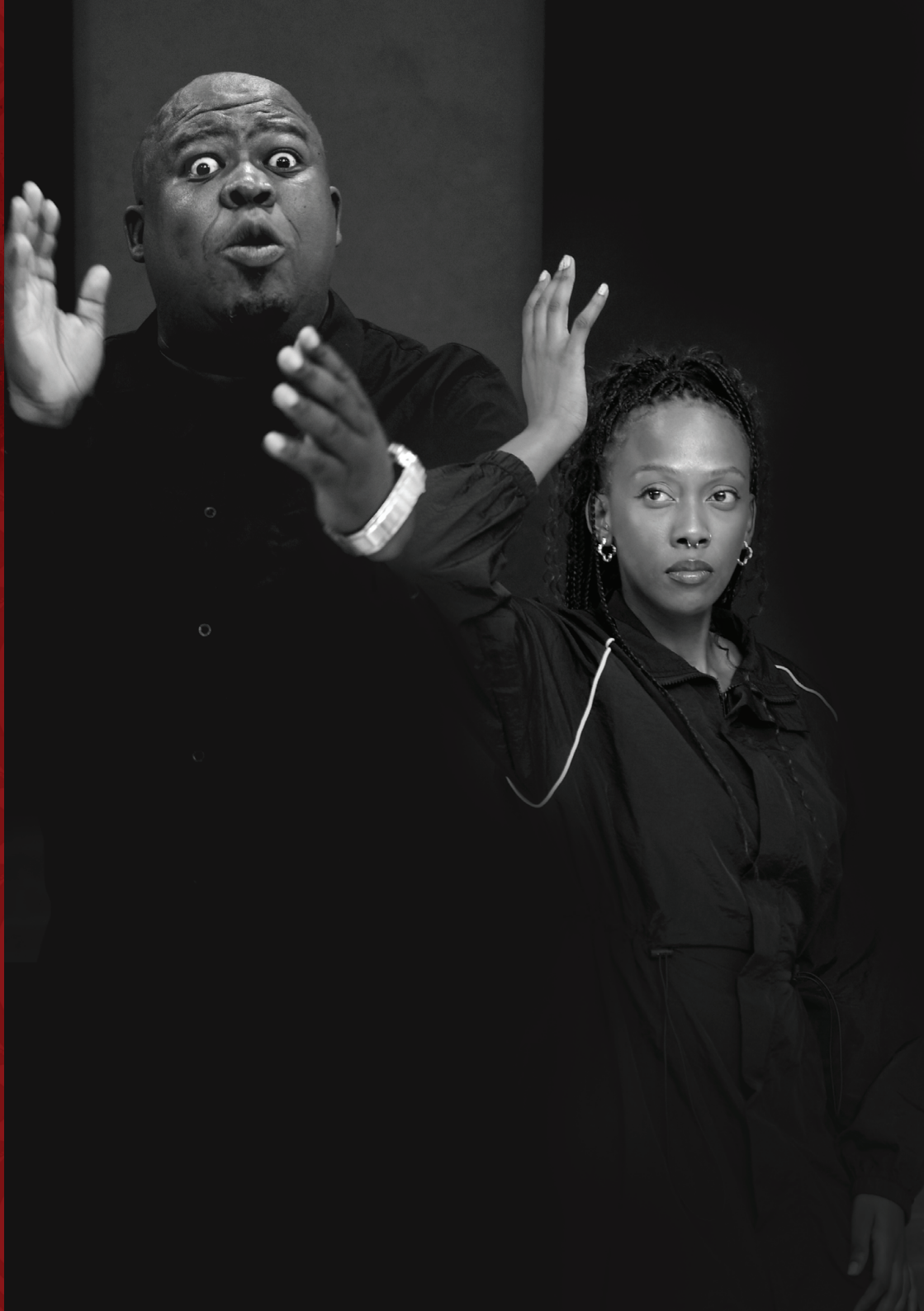
ACTOR
FLORENCE MASEBE

Florence Masebe is an award-winning South African film and television personality with an industry experience of more than three decades. She has worked on multiple projects on camera and behind the scenes. Her most recent television appearance is on the groundbreaking television drama, 'The Republic', playing the role of President Lufuno Mulaudzi. This role fetched a SAFTA best actress award in 2020. She also played lead roles in 'Generations', 'Soul City', 'Muvhango', 'Scandal', 'Ikani', 'Task Force', 'Ring Of Lies' and others. Her portrayal of the title role in the Tshivenda film, 'Elelwani', earned her an Africa Movie Academy Award for Best Actress in a Lead Role.

Florence Masebe is a polyglot who prides herself in her ability to speak, read and write all South African official languages, a skill she brings into her performance work as an actor. She is the founder of the Nyamuthenga Heritage Foundation, an organisation that focuses on the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the Vhavenḁa people. The foundation's work is dedicated to matriarchs that influenced Masebe's art, her grandmothers VhoMususumeli Masebe and Vho-Muḁheiwana Mashau.

A wealth of experience in the broadcast and entertainment space covering front, behind the camera and on the microphone for more than 30 years. A prolific writer and content producer. Government advisor and policy strategist with more than a decade experience in the state. She served as Creative Industries Special Advisor in the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa. She is the author of 'The Heart Knows', a poetic diary on mourning and loss.

Ndi Khadzi ya ha Makovhagaḁa! Nyamuthenga wa Tshililo wa Vhafamaḁi!



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ACTOR
LEOMILE MOTSETSELA

'Mantsopa' marks Leomile's historic theatre debut, underscoring her creative versatility and explorative boldness.

A radiant nova from the mountain kingdom of Lesotho, Leomile is a soulful singer-songwriter and composer whose music, woven in Sesotho and English, explores the depths of identity, love, and belonging. Her name, bestowed upon rainmakers, means: "One who brings restoration." True to its meaning, she channels this calling through her art—using music as a form of orature that rekindles memory, reconnecting us to who we have been and who we have the power to become.

Leomile seamlessly blends traditional African folk with neo-soul, jazz, and

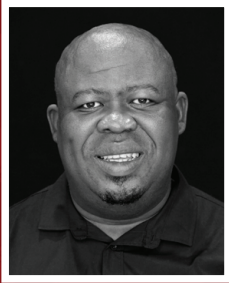
alternative electronic textures, crafting a sound that is both timeless and contemporary. Her debut album, 'Pula-Molomo' (2016), marked the beginning of a remarkable journey, leading her to stages at prestigious festivals such as the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz, MTN Bushfire Festival in Swaziland, and Sauti Za Busara in Tanzania. She has also toured alongside the legendary Village Pope, Tshepo Tshola.

Beyond her rich catalogue, Leomile's artistry extends into children's music, while her bold and unconventional latest project, 'Nevermind.', stands as an ode to rebirth and self-renewal. Leomile invites us to live boldly, root ourselves in belonging, chase freedom with an open heart, honour our inner child, and embrace love as a lifelong journey.

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ACTOR
TSEKO MONAHENG

Tseko Monaheng possesses the same depth in her acting as he does in his captivating voice. A son of the Mountain Kingdom (Lesotho), Monaheng has crafted an inspirational career across radio, stage, film and television productions.

In 2017, Monaheng acted in the South African film, 'Five Fingers for Marseilles', a neo-Western thriller that won 2 out of 7 SAFTA nominations, and was nominated for the Cleveland International Film Festival and World Cinema Amsterdam. The film was also selected for screening at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) from 7 to 17 September 2017.

In 2018, he made his debut in South African television with etv's soap opera, 'Rhythm City', and also appeared in 1Magic's 'Lingashoni'. In addition to being a regular voice on Lesedi FM's radio plays,

he has also acted in several Basotho films, including playing lead in Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese's critically acclaimed short film 'Behemoth: Or the Game of God' and 'This Is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection' by the same creator, 'Kau La Poho' as well as 'Lilaphalapha'.

In 2005, Monaheng was discovered by veteran actor and producer, Silas Monyatsi, during the auditions for the anti-AIDS drama, 'Ke Khetho Eaka'. Later in the same year, he acted in the short film, 'Untitled Stories' directed by Kaizer Matsumunyane, and also featured on several radio scripts raising awareness about HIV/AIDS.





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ACTOR
ITUMELENG MOFOKENG

Back with a dynamic bang from the staged reading of 'Mantsopa', Itumeleng Mofokeng brings an energetic flair and vibrant approach to this new play. Born in the east of Johannesburg in 1995, Mofokeng studied drama and film at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), completed in 2017. In her second year of studies, she played the lead role in 'Hunch', a short film by Sidwell Zwane. For this role, she won Best Actress on Screenplay'. In 2017, Mofokeng once again played lead in a short film titled 'To lke', which was directed by Vuyani Bila (Artsake Productions) and was flighted at the Jozi Film Festival.

Again, she portrayed the character of 'Ntswaki' in the hit South African feature film, 'Matwetwe', directed by Kagiso Lediga. A stage enthusiast, Mofokeng has played multiple roles in theatre shows, including Karina Lemmer's 'Code'

at Aardklop in Potchefstroom, 'The Lion King-Kgosi Tau' adapted by Galeboe Moabi, for which she received the 'Best Actress in a Lecturer's Production' award at the 2017 Glass Crown Awards 2017. Her other theatre performances include Millicent Tintswalo's 'She Cold' (2016), 'Day of Absence' (performed at The South African State Theatre and Maitisong Arts Festival in Botswana and directed by Diamond Mokoape) and Kgaogelo Tshabalala's 'Almost' (2018) where she powerfully played two challenging roles of Vanessa and Kgothatso.

Mofokeng is also an Industrial Theatre Actor and has performed multiple shows with the Edutainment Company, StageFright, as well as setwork around South Africa with Ezamazwe Productions between 2018 – 2021. She still tours with Purple Apple Productions, doing setwork in townships and rural areas in the country.

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ACTOR
LEBOHANG BANYANE

Lebohlang Banyane is one of Free State's finest artistic exports to the South African film, theatre and television landscape. A recognisable face and unmissable talent to local audiences, he has dedicated his young life to storytelling as an actor, presenter and speaker.

Banyane developed a passion for performance very early in his life, owing to his vibrant upbringing in a culturally rich environment. This foundation triggered his interest in the arts, and the encouragement by his family and community propelled him to pursue his destiny.

Since then, Banyane pursued various artistic endeavours, exploring his potential to the fullest. As a presenter, he worked for Motheo FM, a community radio station in central South Africa. Recently, he featured in the setwork of 'My Children,

My Africa' at PACOFS, which coincided with the passing of its author, legendary theatre-maker Athol Fugard. His other theatre appearances include the critically acclaimed 'Paleho', 'The Plot' and 'Grandma's Song', among others.

On TV, he portrayed the character of 'Tumahole' on SABC 2's 'Muvhango'. Banyane is making a return to the full production, after being a part of the staged reading in 2024.

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MUSIC DIRECTOR AND KEYBOARDIST MAWANDE STUURMAN

Mawande Stuurman is a pianist, composer, producer and music director who has travelled the world working with the best of the best in the music industry. He has worked with Ringo Madlingozi, Simphiwe Dana, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, The Temptations (U.S), Patty Auston (U.S), Brenda Fassie, Tshepo Tshola, Kurt Daren, Zama Jobe and many others. He has also composed music for the likes of Mbuso Khoza, Siphokazi, Dumza Maswana and more. For this work, he was nominated for the Backing Vocalists and Session Musicians Awards (BVSM), created by Princess of Africa Foundation.

Mawande also musically directed a number of theatre shows, including Tribute to Brenda Fassie, 'Grand Ma's Song' and 'Mpolelle' (PACOFs) as well as 'Mantsopa' at The Market Theatre.

Mawande is the CEO of Afropig Productions, a recording label and artist management company founded in 2009. Again, he's the visionary behind Mawande Express, a genre-nonconforming concept started more than 10 years ago, blending in Salsa, Jazz, Mbaqanga, Ghoema and Soul.

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PERCUSSIONIST AND DRUMMER GODFREY MGCINA

Godfrey Mgcina is a drummer and percussionist who was born and bred in Johannesburg and currently lives in Soweto. He has worked with most of South Africa's music legends, including Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa, Letta Mbulu, Sibongile Khumalo, Gloria Bosman, Ringo Madlingozi and Caiphus Semenya.

Mgcina formed part of the 2023 Standard Bank Joy of Jazz tribute, aimed at honouring some of SA's fallen icons of jazz as a respected member of The Hugh Masekela Band. He has also been on Strictly Come Dancing S2 as part of the in-house band, alongside Keith Hutchinson, Randal Skippers, Concord Nkabinde, David Klassen, Alistair Coakley, Bez Roberts, Sydney Minisi and Adam Howard. Furthermore, he was a drummer for The Harlem High Hats Band on Mzansi Magic's 'The Road', a telenovela scripted on the

backdrop of Sophiatown.

Internationally, he has chopped and pocketed for the likes of Snoop Dogg, Toto, Shirley Brown and Erika Badu.

In musical theatre, he has performed in critically acclaimed pieces such as 'Magic @4am' by Mbongeni Ngema and 'Songs of Migration' by James Ngcobo and Hugh Masekela.



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VOCALIST
NOMHLE PEARL NONGOGO

Better known as Pearl Afrika, Nomhle Nongogo hails from the dusty streets of Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape. Born to Thobeka Nongogo and Kekeletso Parkies, she found her calling at a tender age of 10, after joining church groups around Gqeberha. In 2001, Pearl Afrika moved to Johannesburg to pursue a career in music, and in the following year she joined the gospel ensemble, Joyous Celebration. She stayed with the choir for three years.

As a young artist who wanted to establish herself in the music industry, Pearl Afrika did backing vocals for a number of great artists, such as HHP, Unathi Nkayi, Thandiswa, Luciano, Lundi Tyamara, Kholeka, 340 ml, Mzwakhe Mbuli, Sonto Mndebele, etc. Working with all these artists landed her on big stages, travelling with big bands, mostly across the continent and abroad.

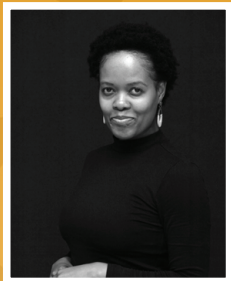
In 2012, Pearl Afrika released her first album called 'Ikhwezi', which tackled very sensitive social and political issues, such as polygamy, incest, poverty, HIV/AIDS, GBV and her love for her country. The project, which was produced by the late Sisa Sopazi, bagged two SAMA18 nominations for Best Adult Contemporary and Best Female Artist. Pearl Afrika describes her sound as Afro Traditional Funka, and is currently working on a six-track EP that blends the genres of Pop, Reggae, Afro-soul, experimenting with different producers.



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DANCER
BOITUMELO SHARON MKHONDO

Boitumelo Sharon Mkhondo is a dynamic and versatile artist whose work spans dance, acting and singing. Tumi is celebrated not only for her performance skills but also for her deep commitment to arts education and community development. A graduate of the University of the Free State with a degree in Drama and Theatre Arts, she has dedicated her career to nurturing young talent and creating opportunities for artistic expression in schools. Since 2012, she has been actively involved in coaching learners, directing school performances and hosting the Free State Schools Arts Festivals, providing a creative platform for youth to engage with the performing arts.

Her talent, drive and leadership have earned her the prestigious role of Free State Ambassador for Business and Arts South Africa (BASA)—a position that

reflects her influence and advocacy within the South African creative sector. As a performer, Tumi has participated in several notable productions that have toured both nationally and internationally, showcasing her diverse skill set and passion for storytelling through the arts.

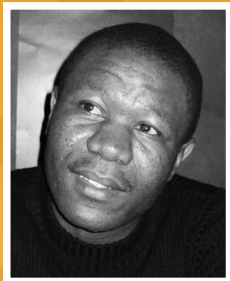
Whether on stage, in the classroom, or behind the scenes organising festivals, Tumi Sharon Mkhondo continues to inspire through her artistry and unwavering dedication to community upliftment. She remains a powerful voice in South African theatre, using her platform to bridge the gap between professional performance and youth development.



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CHOREOGRAPHER
THEMBA NKABINDE

Themba Nkabinde is a Director, Choreographer, Dance Teacher, Project Manager and Administrator. A graduate of Theory and Practice of Dance Teaching at MIDM, Nkabinde boasts over 17 years of experience in Dance, Theatre and Dance Education.

His extraordinary choreographic work has been seen across the country, Washington DC, Finland and Malaysia. In 2001, he facilitated Edudence and Afrofusion dance workshops at DaCi (Dance and a Child International) conference in Kuopio, Finland. He received a Philip Stein Young Choreographers grant for the FNB Dance Umbrella Festival in 2003. He trained with Adam Benjamin, a British choreographer who was the first dance practitioner to introduce integrated dance or dance and disability to South Africa.

In 2006, he was part of the Dance Internship in Montpellier, France which included dance and choreography workshops, contact improvisation. His touring experience includes several European and African countries. His versatility as an artist has seen him working and collaborating with organisations such as Moving into Dance Mophatong as Artistic Director, African Footprint 2 as Rehearsal Director, Drum Café as Rehearsal Director and refining work produced for Drum Café, Assistant Artistic Director for Pale Ya Rona Gauteng Carnival and more.

Currently, he is a freelance and independent artist whose work includes project management.



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**COSTUMES AND PROPS
DESIGNER**
SINENHLANHLA ZWANE

Sinenhlanhla Q. Zwane is a young designer, theatre practitioner and entrepreneur. She holds a BA (Hons.) in Dramatic Arts from the University of Witwatersrand and is currently pursuing her Masters in Cultural Policy and Management.

She started her career in the 2016 Sex Actually Festival, and has since generated a number of skills such as that of facilitating, directing, managing and designing sets, props and costumes. In addition to 'Katanga, January 17', she has worked on several productions such as 'Itsoheng' (2017), TenBush (2017), 'The Color Purple SA' (2018), 'Devil on the Cross' (2018), 'Eqhudeneni' (2018), 'Ndikho' (2018 – 2019), 'Chilahaebolae' (2017 – 2024), Askari (2021-2022) and 'Space Rocks' (2024), to mention a few.

Her bona fide passion for the arts has also led to the birth of her own novelty business, Konke Mo(ve)ment Art (Pty) Ltd, which focuses on arts and social development for women and youth in rural and disadvantaged communities in Newcastle, Northern KwaZulu-Natal.

Sinenhlanhla has won multiple awards for her academics and creative roles.



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LIGHTING DESIGNER NOMVULA MOLEPO

Nomvula Molepo is the Head of Technical and Stage Services at The Market Theatre Foundation. She started her career in 1996 – 1997 as an intern at The Market Theatre Foundation, before being employed as an assistant stage manager in 1998. In 2000, she was appointed as the lighting technician and later started doing lighting design for The Market Theatre productions. In 2008, Nomvula won a Naledi Theatre Award (Best lighting design) for her work in 'Jungle Book', which was directed by Graig Higginson. Overall, she has three Naledi nominations to her name!

Having been mentored by Declan Randall, Mannie Manim and Dennis Hutchinson, Nomvula's career has seen an upward mobility that led to her working with artists like Mbuso Khoza, Nduduzo Makhathini and Soul Brothers, among

others. Furthermore, she has added her brightness to shows like 'The Hill', 'Sizwe Bansi is dead', 'Woza Albert', 'The mother of all eating', and the Joy of Jazz. She has lit venues and events spanning the Soweto Theatre, The South African State Theatre, Joburg Theatre, the National Arts Festival, Aardklop Festival and The Market Theatre.

Additionally, Nomvula has toured to Sweden, Las Vegas, Austria, Manchester, just to name a few, and has impacted local communities by facilitating lighting workshops for young people across Gauteng townships.



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Shows Coming Soon

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THE GOOD WHITE

A BOLD NEW PLAY BY MIKE VAN GRAAN
DIRECTED BY GREG HOMANN

8 MAY - 1 JUN 2025
THE MARKET THEATRE

South Arts & Culture, Arts Council, nati, Market Theatre

THE LAST COUNTRY

DIRECTED BY NEIL COPPEN

FANISWA YISA, MPUME MTHOMBE, NOMPELO MAPHUMULO, ANDILE VILAKAZI

15 MAY - 1 JUNE 2025
THE MARKET THEATRE

South Arts & Culture, Arts Council, Market Theatre

ARTS CENTRE THEATRE DANCE TRUST PRESENT

A NEW DANCE THEATRE WORK DEVISED WITH THE KOSHA THEATRE COMPANY AND MOVING INTO DANCE TRUST

FATHER & I

BEST CHOREOGRAPHY
BEST PRODUCTION
Dance Theatre Festival of Cape Town

DIRECTED BY GREG HOMANN
CHOREOGRAPHED BY SUNDUSOYI MOTAU
MUSIC BY KONGILE LESOBE-ZULU

21ST - 31ST AUGUST
THE MARKET THEATRE

BACK FOR 10 PERFORMANCES ONLY!

South Arts & Culture, Arts Council, Market Theatre, IMI

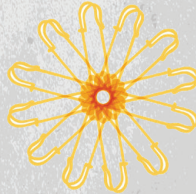
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Aranda



THABO MAKHETHA