

THE BAXTER THEATRE PRESENTS THE SOUTH AFRICAN PREMIERE OF

*"... powerful, thrilling ..." – Kölner Stadtanzeiger*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

# Othello

ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY LARA FOOT

**DESIGN** GERHARD MARX

**MUSIC COMPOSITION** Kyle Shepherd **LIGHTING** Patrick Curtis

## PROGRAMME







THE BAXTER THEATRE PRESENTS THE SOUTH AFRICAN PREMIERE OF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

# Othello

This production of Othello was first performed in English, isiXhosa and German at  
Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus, Germany, in September 2022.

## CREATIVE TEAM

**ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY**  
**DESIGN (SET AND COSTUMES)**  
**MUSIC COMPOSITION**  
**LIGHTING DESIGN**  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

LARA FOOT  
GERHARD MARX  
KYLE SHEPHERD  
PATRICK CURTIS  
KITSO SETI

## CAST

**ATANDWA KANI**  
**ALBERT PRETORIUS**  
**CARLA SMITH**  
**FANISWA YISA**  
**CARLO DANIELS**  
**WESSEL PRETORIUS**  
**MORNE VISSER**  
**LYLE OCTOBER**  
**TAMZIN WILLIAMS**  
**BRENDAN SEAN MURRAY**  
**CALEB SWANEPOEL**  
**AWETHU HLELI**  
**NOLUFEFE NTSHUNTSHE**  
**EXTRAS**

OTHELLO  
IAGO  
DESDEMONA  
EMILIA  
CASSIO  
RODERIGO  
BRABANTIO / GRATIANO / SOLDIER  
MONTANO / SENATOR 2 / CHORUS / SOLDIER  
BIANCA / CHORUS  
DUKE / SOLDIER 1 / LODOVICO  
SENATOR 1 / CHORUS / SOLDIER  
HERALD/ MESSENGER / CHORUS / LADIES  
LADIES / CHORUS / SOLDIER  
MOLUPI LEPELI, CHEYENNE DE SOUSA

## TECHNICAL TEAM

**SOUND ENGINEER**  
**STAGE MANAGER**  
**PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
**DIALOGUE COACHES**  
**ISIXHOSA TRANSLATIONS**  
**AFRIKAANS TRANSLATIONS**  
  
**ADMINISTRATIVE PRODUCER**  
**ASM AND WARDROBE**  
**LIGHTING OPERATOR**  
**SOUND OPERATOR**  
**MIC TECHNICIAN**  
**TECHNICAL STAGE MANAGER**  
**ASSISTANT TECHNICAL STAGE MANAGER**  
**HEAD FLYMAN**  
**FLYMEN**

**SCENIC PAINTING**  
**SEAMSTRESS /TAILORS**  
**DESIGNER'S ASSISTANT**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
**POSTER AND PROGRAMME DESIGN**

DAVID CLASSEN  
PULENG MABUYA  
MARISA STEENKAMP  
SUSAN DANFORD, LIZ MILLS, DOROTHY ANN GOULD  
SANELE NTSHINGANA, ANELE KOSE  
ANNA NEETHLING-POHL, WITH VARIOUS  
MONOLOGUES BY WESSEL PRETORIUS  
LIBIE NEL  
ASIPHE LILI  
FRANKY STEYN  
LAMONT WILLIAMS  
GAVIN LEE  
CHRISTOPHER SPOGTER  
SOLOMON MASHIANE  
WAYNE JACOBS  
XOLA MNTANYWA, AMOS NDUMILE,  
ACHMAT KHROODIEN, ANGELO MAART  
YOLANDI VAN JAARVELD  
HONOCKER KANKOLONGO, KOOS MARAIS, FAIZA JOSEPH  
REBECCA FOOT  
FIONA MACPHERSON  
BMFA

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus (sets and costumes), Nceba Gongxeba (musical advice), EA (extra sound equipment), Heineken (wine)  
Yellowlamp Productions (extra Lighting equipment), Milspec (rifles), Max Pool (smoke and wind machines).

**RUNNING TIME: FIRST HALF, 1 HOUR 35 MINUTES; SECOND HALF 1 HOUR, 15 MINUTES WITH A 20-MINUTE INTERVAL.**

**Please ensure that all cellphones are switched off during the performance.**



# PROGRAMME NOTE

By Professor Shose Kessi, Dean of Humanities,  
University of Cape Town

The adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello* by Lara Foot at The Baxter from 6 April to 4 May 2024, is highly recommended theatre. It is an ambitious and provocative interpretation of the original piece. Set in Namibia (then German Southwest Africa), it invites audiences to grapple with the legacies of the brutal violence of colonisation, hinting at the Herero and Nama genocide in the early 20th century.

Whilst the idea of genocide has been largely attributed to the Holocaust, this production brings into sharp perspective the historical connection between genocide and colonialism, an important provocation against Germany's colonial amnesia and one that sheds light on the roots of contemporary racialised violence. Against this backdrop, the play opens with a powerful scene: German generals overlook the map of Africa ending with its physical partitioning on set, symbolic of the Scramble for Africa at the 1884 Berlin conference.

From the very start, *Othello*'s blackness is questioned through a Fanonian interpretation of the colonial encounter. The Martinican psychiatrist and revolutionary Frantz Fanon in his 1952 book *Black Skin White Masks*, speaks of the internalised violence experienced by colonial subjects who end up internalising their own socio-historical, cultural, and spiritual reality as inferior as soon as they become in contact with the 'white world'. Foot's *Othello* - born to African parents on African soil - but then adopted by English missionaries, is plagued by this internal conflict which manifests in epileptic fits. The complexity of the *Othello* character does not end there. The incantations, spiritual or ancestral callings in his journey appear as a reclaiming of his blackness, his humanity and his connection to his African roots.

In many ways, this complexity is more akin to what WEB DuBois referred to as 'double-consciousness' - the conflict of two 'warring souls' - with *Othello* wanting to embrace both his African heritage and his European home, breaking down claims to authenticity which often paradoxically insert themselves into decolonial discourses. This complexity is also mirrored in the translingual aspect of the production. The use of Afrikaans, English, and isiXhosa, represents a powerful de-linking from normative monolingual approaches, in a way that localises Shakespeare, making it not only accessible to broader audiences, but also questioning colonial hierarchies of language and culture in traditional elite theatre spaces.

Perhaps the most important decolonial challenge to Shakespeare is Foot's refusal to depict *Othello* as the stereotypical violent and hyper-sexualised black man consumed by the jealousy of Desdemona's perceived betrayal. The character of Desdemona also resists patriarchal notions of the passive and subservient woman as she fights back and challenges

*Othello*'s apparent delusion. Nevertheless, some questions remain unanswered in how to interpret this interracial romance. Fanon would be sceptical, as for him, authentic love is not possible under colonial oppression. He might see *Othello*'s love for Desdemona as linked to his abandonment neurosis, his desperate desire to be accepted in the 'white world', whilst never being able to feel certain of her love, hence *Othello*'s descent into delusion and paranoia. Foot seems to challenge this notion through very moving and passionate scenes between the lovers. Questions also remain of Desdemona. Given the forcefulness of her character in Foot's interpretation, are we to remain faithful to the typical image of the innocent white woman who is simultaneously juxtaposed with looseness and deviance? These racial and gender dynamics that manifest in this Shakespearean text are perhaps impossible to resolve but should certainly constitute areas for further reflection.

There are many aspects of Foot's production that propose a decolonial reading of Shakespeare's *Othello*. The production highlights the role of theatre as both a political instrument to challenge colonial violence and a possible site for decolonial love.

-Shose



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

At the opening of the Baxter Zabalaza Festival this year, the keynote speaker was the indomitable Prof Thuli Madonsela. She described art as having enormous transformative potency. "Art can be a mirror of who we are, the good and the bad; and a magic mirror - that shows us what we can become." She further described transformation as the space between our condition now and what we imagine, we would like to become.

In our production of Othello, we ask our audience to reflect on the world of the play, on the society that they are witnessing, and to imagine what it would be like if Othello himself had been seen through a different lens; a man who questions the very act of violence he is required to portray. It is here that I imagined Othello to read from Frantz Fanon's "O my body, make of me always a man who questions!" (Black Skin White Mask)

*\*Frantz Fanon, a French West Indian psychiatrist and political philosopher, whose works on post-colonial studies have become very influential.*

During rehearsals I said to Atandwa Kani, that the traditionalists might not appreciate or like our disruption of the text. His response was simple, "They have had their turn."

The world has indeed, thankfully, changed a little over the past 40 years and we as story tellers - have been sensitised to the constant and despicable iconography associated with the "violent black man". The disruption of these images that have been forced on humanity for centuries, is necessary and long overdue.

In our production, we ask the question, "How can decolonisation contribute to the future of humanity?" Key to our narrative is that it is set in German-colonised Southwest Africa (now Namibia). In tandem to this, we look at Othello's text and we attempt to see the story, not only through the eyes of the character of Iago, who uses Othello as a puppet, but through carefully constructed monologues, inspired mostly by Fanon; thus, disrupting and "decolonising" the original text. Our objective being for Othello, the character, along with his love Desdemona, to attempt to re-write his history:

**OTHELLO:**

'It is written so! Like the stars above us

It is the history book, the writing that governs our condition.

It is written Desdemona, that I will not, do not hear you.'

**DESDEMONA:**

'By Heaven, you do me wrong!

Let me, my love re-write the text, that we may be of the same book.'

Prof Shose Kessi wrote, "It's about changing the narrative, restoring dignity for the colonised.

And healing for the colonisers, one story at a time."

Whilst Germany committed 1,35 billion in aid

to Namibia, their apology was carefully hedged, seemingly to avoid creating precedent that could potentially apply to other colonial abuses, much less to the act of colonisation itself.

I would like to thank: My friend and colleague Bongile Mantsai who first played Othello in this adaptation in Dusseldorf in isiXhosa; Dame Janet Suzman for reading the text with me; Prof Shose Kessi for her time and contribution to the concept; Dusseldorf Scahauspielhaus for their valuable contribution of the set and costumes, Faniswa Yisa for her physical theatre assistance and Nceba Gongxeka for musical advice.

I sincerely hope that you are all inspired by our Othello. Enjoy!

-Lara

## DESIGNER'S NOTE

Transcribing Othello from its original placement into a context that is closer to home, is not simply a process of placing it in a different landscape, of transcribing it from its original watery environments (Venice and the island of Cyprus) to the vast, dry landscapes of German Southwest Africa (now Namibia); it is a process of finding Shakespeare itself; the complex moral struggles of Othello, the exploitative plotting of Iago, within the landscape around you.

This was not hard - given the vast scale of manipulation, greed, and blatant exploitation that has taken place within the African landscape, particularly the events that flowed from the Berlin Conference of 1884/5 to the Battle of Waterberg in 1904 and ultimately resulted in the genocide of the Herero and Nama people. I hope to think that in staging Othello in this context, we are using these personal dramas to also tell the wider story, to unearth these broader and far more fatal narratives, to speak to the horrific continuation of these practices in our current world.

Ultimately the project for the scenographer is not simply that of placing the action within a geography or timeframe; the challenge is to make that landscape another agent, another victim, another role player and actor within the drama that unfolds. It is the geography that holds the moral geography of the actor, but it is also the landscape that receives the ripple of implication that even the smallest interpersonal event might create as it rolls into broader implication - it is the act of describing the landscape as an event, as a subject, not simply as a place.

It has been a real privilege to work closely with Lara on a project of this scale and importance. It has also been a real honour to work with the phenomenal cast and the immensely committed and passionate staff and technical crew of the Baxter theatre, I thank them all for this opportunity and for making this possible. I want to thank Marisa Steenkamp, Patrick Curtis, and Rebecca Foot in particular, you have been fantastic.

-Gerhard Marx





## LARA FOOT

Adaptor and Director

Lara Foot is a multi-award-winning playwright, director and producer. She is the CEO and artistic director of the Baxter Theatre Centre; a former Rolex protégé to Sir Peter Hall in the prestigious Rolex Mentor and Protégé programme, as well as a Sundance Fellow. She is also executive producer of, amongst others, the international hit productions *Mies Julie* and *The Fall*. In 2016 she was the Featured Artist at the 43rd National Arts Festival.

Lara has directed and produced over 70 professional productions, most of which have been new South African plays. With a host of South African theatre accolades to her name, her own hard-hitting plays tackle social issues in South Africa and these have earned her great respect and recognition locally and internationally. *Tshepang*, *Hear And Now*, *Reach*, *Karoo Moose*, *Solomon and Marion*, *Fishers of Hope* and *The Inconvenience of Wings* are just a few of her plays which have won multiple awards, have toured internationally with great success and which have been published.

She has transformed, along with her team, The Baxter's development programme, the Zabalaza Theatre Festival, to become recognised and respected as one of the most vital and important platforms of its kind in South Africa.

Lara directed the hugely successful seasons of Marc Lotterings sold-out hit productions of *Aunty Merle The Musical* and the sequels *Aunty Merle, it's a Girl* and *Aunty Merle, Things Get Real*. In 2022 she directed Zake's Mda's *Ways of Dying* for the UCT Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies.

She adapted and directed JM Coetzee's *Life & Times*

for *Michael K*, which premiered at the Teater der Welt Festival 2021 at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus in Germany and at The Baxter, to great acclaim. In 2022 she returned to the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus to direct a hugely successful *Othello*.

In 2021, Lara received the University of Cape Town Vice Chancellor's Excellence award for Transformation, along with the Baxter Theatre Centre for the Zabalaza Theatre Festival and was honoured with The International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) 2023 International Citation of Merit Recipient award in New York. She also received the 2023 University of Cape Town Creative Works Award for Life & Times of Michael K.

In August 2023, Foot received the prestigious The Scotsman Fringe First award for innovation and outstanding new writing, at the Assembly Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, for JM Coetzee's *Life & Times of Michael K*, which she directed and adapted for the stage, in collaboration with the Handspring Puppet Company. It amassed six five-star reviews and received high praise from the New York Times. The production also won the Fleur du Cap Best Production and Best Puppetry Design awards.





## GERHARD MARX

Design (Set and Costumes)

Gerhard Marx (constructs drawings, sculptures and performance projects through careful dissection and transformation of pre-existent conventions to explore the poetic-philosophical potential therein. His seventh solo exhibition *Ecstatic Archive* was held at Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, 2019 accompanied by the publication of a monograph of the same title. His performance project *Vehicle* was staged at 'The Centre For The Less Good Idea' (Johannesburg, 2018) with musicians Shane Cooper and Kyle Shepherd and at the 2019 'Holland Festival' (Amsterdam) with violinist Diamanda Dramm and bassist Shane Cooper.

Marx's work was selected for the Venice Biennale 2013 and is shown at international Art Fairs, including Art Basel, Art Basel (New York), Frieze (London). He has completed several public sculpture commissions around Johannesburg including *Vertical Aerial*, Johannesburg (Constitutional Court), *The Fire Walker*, (collaboration with William Kentridge); and *Paper Pigeon*, (collaboration with Maja Marx). He has extensive experience in theatre as scenographer, director and filmmaker, including the operatic *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* (directed by Marx, film by Gerhard Marx and Maja Marx, composed by Philip Miller), performed at the Royal Festival Hall, Southbank, London (2010), the Market Theatre, Johannesburg (2008) and the 62'Centre, William's College, Massachusetts (2007).



## KYLE SHEPHERD

Music Composition

Kyle Shepherd is a leading jazz, film and theatre music composer and pianist of his generation. He is the 2014 Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year for Jazz and the 2019 UNISA piano competition winner, and has performed in 33 countries around the world, including performances in prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall (New York), The Sydney Opera House, Theatre de Chatelet (Paris) and The Stadsschouwburg (Amsterdam). He has released seven jazz albums with an impressive number of film, television and theatre score credits. These include *Unseen*, season 1, *Blood and Water*, season 2 (Netflix), *Savage Beauty*, season 1 (Netflix), *Surviving Paradise*, as additional music composer (Netflix), *Indemnity* and *Barakat* (South Africa's official entry into the 2022 Academy Awards and winner for Best Score at the 2022 Silwerskerm Film Festival, *Fiela se Kind* (2019) also winner for Best Score at the 2020 Silwerskerm Film Festival, *Vlugtig* (Kyknet) and *Noem My Skollie* (South Africa's official entry to the 2017 Academy Awards). He received the 2018 South African Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) Award: Book, Creative Collection and Digital Contribution 2018, hosted by the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), for Best Musical Composition for his score for, *Noem My Skollie*. Shepherd is also the co-creator of the hit Afrikaans television show, *Koortjies* with Jonathan Rubain (Kyknet). Along with multiple SAFTA, SAMA and Silwerskerm nominations, he was nominated for a Fleur du Cap Best Sound Design, Original Music, Soundscape or Live Performance award for Lara Foot's award-winning *Life & Times of Michael K*. Kyle has just completed a celebrated run of performances at the Theatre de Chatelet in Paris and continues international touring with *Waiting for the Sibyl*, a chamber opera created in collaboration with William Kentridge and co-composer Nhlanhla Mhlangu. The opera won the Laurence Olivier Theatre Award (2023) in the UK. The 36-year-old Shepherd holds a master's degree (Cum Laude) in Music upon receiving a scholarship from York University (UK) in collaboration with the Africa Open Institute (Stellenbosch University).





## PATRICK CURTIS

### Lighting Design

Patrick Curtis is a multi-award-winning lighting and stage designer with a career in the theatre that spans four decades. After six years at the Johannesburg's Market Theatre, five years at The Performing Arts Board of the Cape and six years at the University of Cape Town's Little Theatre, his most significant years have been spent at UCT's Baxter Theatre as Production Manager from 2002 to 2018, where many of his set and lighting designs were nominated for awards. After retirement he has continued to design and light productions for the Baxter Theatre, including *Life & Times of Michael K*.

He won Fleur du Cap awards for *Vanya/Oom Wanja*, *Betrayal and Fishers of Hope*, for which he also received the Naledi Award for set design. Other production designs include *The Inconvenience of Wings*, *Endgame*, *The Goat*, *Aunty Merle the Musical*, *Aunty Merle, it's a Girl*, *Solomon & Marion*, *Kamphoer* and David Kramer's *Danger in the Dark*. In 2012, he was nominated for three separate Fleur Du Cap awards in set design for *Doodsnikke*, *Mies Julie* and *Did We Dance: The Sinking of the Mendi*, for which he was also nominated for Best Lighting Design. He also designed *Scrooge*, *Missing*, *Blue Orange*, *Born in the RSA*, *Karoo Moose* and *Scenes from an Execution*.

Patrick has toured extensively to theatres in London, Paris, Vienna, New York, Washington, Toronto and Pittsburgh, among others, with Baxter Theatre touring productions as Set and Lighting designer, and Production Manager. Most recently he designed the sets for Athol Fugard's *Life of Babyboy Kleintjies*, Nadia David's *Hold Still* and UWC's *Charlotte Maxeke*.



## KITSO SETI

### Assistant Director

Kitso Seti holds a master's degree in political science and is currently a PhD candidate in Theatre at the University of Cape Town. His research is focused on how Black (Consciousness) theatre can be used to conscientise people and make sense of Black-positionality-in-the-world.

In 2014 he became involved with theatre, beginning with the annual UCT Res4Res Festival competition. In the same festival, he and his team won an Innovative Play award in 2015. He later produced *Imbawula*, which won the Best Writer and Best Innovative Play, with multiple nominations, at the 2018 Res4Res Festival. The production was later staged at the Baxter Theatre in July and December 2019. Kitso was part of the cast of *Dipalo*, which won the Standing Bank Ovation Bronze Medal Award at the 2021 National Arts Festival in Makhanda. He wrote and directed his new play, *Four Fathers: Bananas for the Baboons* through the Baxter Masambe Writing Residency, under the supervision of Lara Foot and Nwabisa Plaatjie. He hopes to grow as a theatre-maker and an arts critic. His article, *The Land of Many Mothers (2020)*, a review of Nwabisa Plaatjie's play *When We Awake*, can be found in iLiso Magazine. He runs a journal titled *ngaphakathi*, where he writes theatre reviews and has written feedback on Thando Doni's *Ndiza Kuwe*. Recently, he staged a performance reading of *A House on Fire* through the Theatre Arts Reading Room.





## ATANDWA KANI

### Othello

Atandwa Kani is the son of South African veteran actor John Kani. He studied theatre performance at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) where he graduated in 2008, with an Honours degree. He made his international stage debut in *The Tempest*, a collaboration between the Baxter Theatre Centre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, where he played Ariel alongside his father (Caliban) and the late Sir Anthony Sher (Prospero).

Kani's local theatre appearances include Paul Grootboom's *Rhetorical* (2012) for which his portrayal of former president Thabo Mbeki, won him Best Performance by a Breakthrough Artist Naledi Award, *Hayani* (2009) and *ID Pending* (2009), winning a Naledi Award for Best New South African Script in 2013, *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* (2014), *Poison/ Gift/ Ityhefu* (2017), receiving a KANNA Award for Best Actor as well as, *Fences* in 2023. He was part of Sylvaine Strike's Fortune Cookie Theatre Company.

His international theatre appearances include *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* in New York City, *Dangerous House* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts as well as, *A Kid Like Rishi*, at the Cell Theatre in Manhattan. His international television appearances include *Black Panther* (2018) as a younger King T'Chaka, CW Television Network's program *Life Is Wild*, an American adaptation of the hugely popular ITV1 family drama, *Wild at Heart* (2006 -2012), BET's series *The Book of Negroes* (alongside Cuba Gooding Jr), *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* (as the young Nelson Mandela) alongside Idris Elba, *The Suit* (2016), *Love By Chance* (2017) as well as, *Choices* (release date still to be determined). Local television appearances include *Soul Buddyz* (2010), *90 Plein Street* (2011) and *Kowethu* (2011) and *It's Complicated* (2016).

Kani received the Award for Best Actor at the Houston Black Film Festival in 2018. He then went on to record *The Prison Letters of Nelson Mandela* on Audible, receiving an AudioFile Award for the recording. He served as Master of

Ceremonies for the 46664 Legacy Bangle, alongside Tokyo Sexwale and Hlubi Mboya. In early 2019, Atandwa took on the role of a cultural consultant, translator and dialect coach for a production of *Boesman and Lena* at the Signature Theatre in New York, directed by Yael Farber.

Kani appears on TV commercials for Cappella University in the US and for Chicken Licken in South Africa. His voice can be heard in Marvel's *What If ...* Season 2, reprising his original role of King T'Chaka. He was recently nominated for a Best Supporting Performance in a play for The Naledi Theatre Awards for his role in *Fences*. Atandwa is studying for his master's degree in Graduate Acting at NYU TISCH and currently resides in New York.





## ALBERT PRETORIUS

Iago

Albert Pretorius started attending acting classes with Shareen Swart in Pretoria and went on to study Theatre and Performance at the University of Cape Town. He graduated from UCT in 2008 with a BA in Theatre and Performance. This was also the year in which he made his professional acting debut in Jaco Bouwer's *#Untitled* and started the Pink Couch with Tara Notcutt, Gideon Lombard and Mat Lewis, a theatre collective that is responsible for the hit production ... *miskien* that travelled all over South Africa, Australia and The Netherlands.

Since 2008, Albert has worked and collaborated with some of South Africa's most exciting theatre makers, resulting in productions such as *The Three Little Pigs* (which was also performed in Australia, The Netherlands and Edinburgh) with Rob van Vuuren and James Cairns which was directed once again by Notcutt, Athol Fugard's *Playland*, directed by Albert Maritz for The Fugard Theatre and Chekov's *Die Seemeeu*, directed by Christiaan Olwagen to name a few. He also collaborated with the Dutch theatre company Toneelgroep De Appel on three occasions with *Insomnia*, *Ararat* and *Messen in Hennen*, all directed by David Geysen. In 2018 he went to The Hague once more to collaborate with Geysen on the one-man show *Another Medea*. He played various characters in the critically acclaimed production, *The Promise* based on the Booker Prize winning novel by Damon Galgut and directed by Sylvaine Strike.

He also regularly appears on the small and big screens, starring in movies such as *Johnny is nie Dood nie*, *Die Seemeeu* and *Griekwastad*. Television audiences know him from the series *Buurtwag*, *Die Waterfront*, *Fynskrif* and *Nêrens*, *Noord-Kaap*. He was seen in the Netflix series *One Piece*, the hit series *Spinners* and the action-thriller *Devil's Peak* based on the Deon Meyer novel with the same name. He was nominated various times for his work in film and theatre and has won several awards including a Fleur du Cap, two Silwerskerm Awards, two Kannas and a Fiësta. He was recently nominated for Naledi Theatre Awards for Best Ensemble in a Play for *The Promise* and Best Lead Performance in a Play for *Tien Duisend Ton*.



## CARLA SMITH

Desdemona

Carla Smith is an actor, writer and director with her first love being theatre and live performance. She started out with the Tygerberg Children's Choir when it won the World Choir Games, and later she joined the much-lauded Stellenbosch University Choir. Her theatre career started when she was 18, playing Nina in *Fiela se Kind* (2015) alongside Lee-Ann van Rooi, Charlton George and Nicole Holm. She studied at Stellenbosch University on a DALRO performing arts bursary, where she co-founded a student theatre collective whose play, N.R.N.N.S.A, managed to break into the festival circuit. She also wrote, directed and/or featured in *Deurmekaar*, *Wag, Wat?* and *Lycra & Petticoats*. She collaborated with Marthinus Basson on *Bloed en Bodem*, for which she received a Fiësta award nomination and again collaborated with Basson in the multi-award winning *Terminaal 3* and *Mirakel*.

Other theatre work includes Jemma Kahn's *The Epicene Butcher*, Nico Scheepers' *Engel by die dam* and Niel Rademan's classical music piece, *Clara*, with the renowned pianist, Nina Schumann. Carla made her TV debut as the lead in Etienne Fourie's SAFTA-winning Showmax dramedy, *Tydelik Terminaal*, for which she won an ATKV Mediaveërtjie. She also played the lead, Cézanne, in *Mooi Weer & Warm*, Young Kleintjie in *Ekstra Medium* and Lex in *Troukoors*. Her film work includes Nico Scheepers' *Die Maan val Bewusteloos*, Beer Adriaanse's *Laastes*, Dian Wey's *Motel* and Etienne Fourie's *Stiekyt*. She won two Silwerskerm awards for her performances in Mila Guy's *Skyn*, which she also wrote, as well as Kabous Meiring's *Die Tragiese Saak van Pamina Vermaak*. Carla has written and directed various short films, including *Lycra and Petticoats*, *Grootste Treffers*, as well as a feature film, *Desemberdiewe*.

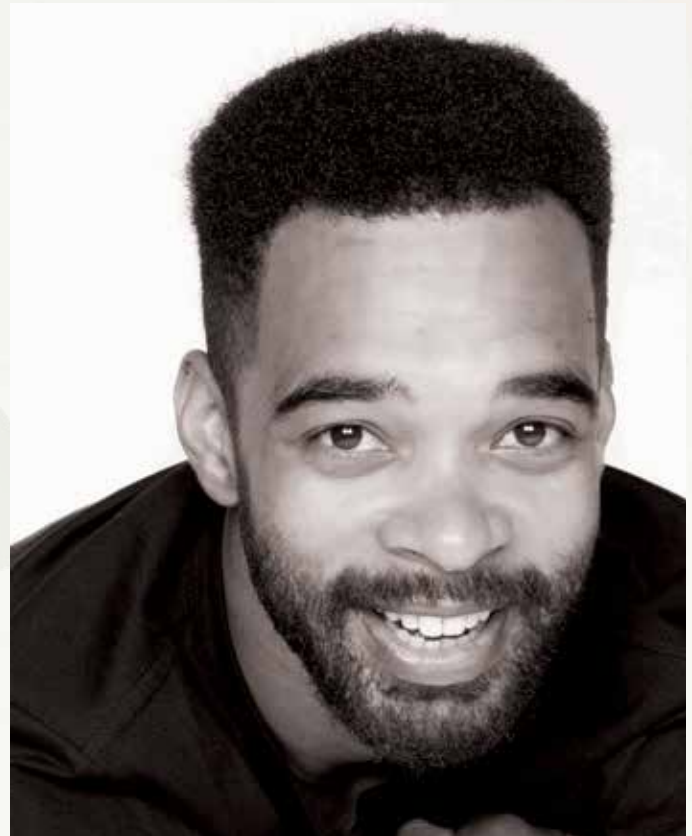




## FANISWA YISA

Emilia

Faniswa Yisa is a theatre, film and television actor and a University of Cape Town drama school graduate. She was part of The Mothertongue Project where she co-created and performed in *Beading my Soul*, *Uhambo* and *The Space of Dreams* and did a residency in India in 2003. She performed in *Madiba Magic*, *The Suitcase*, Reza de Wet's *Missing*, *Ityala lamawele*, *19born 76rebels* (in France), *Cargo*, *The Native who caused all the trouble*, *Born in the RSA*, *Voices Made Night* (Mozambique., Scotland) *Autopsy*, *Richard III*, *Othello*, *Doubt*, *Slowly*, *The Jungle book*, *Vagina monologues*, *Orfeus*, *Oedipus*, and *Medea* which toured in Europe. *Every Year*, *Every Day*, *I am Walking*, toured 19 countries and was nominated for best foreign production in Argentina, Pick of the Festive at the National Arts Festival. She was joint Best Actress winner at Aardkloop. Yisa received the Baxter CEO Artist of the Year award and won the Fleur du Cap Best Actress award for Nadia David's *What Remains*. Faniswa is part of the cast of Lara Foot's critically acclaimed *Life & Times of Michael K* and she is the curator of the Baxter's Masambe Theatre.



## CARLO DANIELS

Cassio

Carlo Daniels is a physical theatre actor, singer and theatre maker who grew up in Mitchell's Plain, where he started performing on street corners. In 2011, he started working with David Kramer and played in many of his productions. In 2016, Carlo travelled to the Northern Cape with Clowns Without Borders SA and performed for children. He studied full-time at Magnet Theatre under Jennie Reznick, Mark Fleishman and Mandla Mbothwe, graduating in 2019. At the 2018 Baxter Zabalaza Festival, he won Best Actor and Best Production for *Onweer*, which he wrote, directed, and performed in. Carlo was nominated for KKNK's Kanna Awards in 2019 for Best Actor with his solo play, *Klippiess Van die Grond* and won Best Actor with the same play at Suidoosterfees. In 2019, he received a Fleur du Cap nomination for the most promising student at Magnet Theatre, and in 2020 he received a Fleur du Cap nomination for his solo performance in *Klippiess van die Grond*. He was a cast member of Magnet Theatre's *Okwe Bokhwe* directed by Mandla Mbothwe which won Best Ensemble at the Fleur du Cap Awards in 2020. In 2020, Athol Fugard cast him in his latest play, *Concerning The Life Of Baby Boy Kleintjies*, directed by Fugard. He performed in *Snapped*, with Jennie Reznick, directed by Mark Fleishman at Magnet Theatre and at Baxter Theatre. Later he played in *Antigone* (not quite/ quiet), directed by Mark Fleishman at the Baxter Theatre Studio. He won a Kanna award and a Fiësta award for his performance at the 2022 KKNK for *Ek, Anna Van Wyk*, directed by Marthinus Basson. He won the Fleur du Cap for Best New Director at the 2023 Fleur du Cap Awards. He won the 2023 Fleur du Cap Award for Best New Director. Carlo is one of the cast in Lara Foot's stage production of *Life & Times of Michael K*, which traveled to Galway, Edinburgh and New York. Most recently he was part of the cast who won Fiësta Awards (Best Festival Production and Best Ensemble) for *Droomkraan-Kronike*.





## WESSEL PRETORIUS

Roderigo

Wessel Pretorius received his degree in Drama from the University of Pretoria and his Honors in Acting from the University of Stellenbosch. In 2011, he wrote and performed his first solo-show *Ont-* which travelled across South Africa and was awarded four KykNet Fiësta Awards, including Best Actor. It was later translated into English as *Undone* (winning Standard Bank Ovation Gold at the National Arts Festival) and travelled to Edinburgh, Amsterdam and Vienna. His next solo show *Die Ontelbare 48* (nominated for four KykNet Fiëstas and a Fleur du Cap Award) toured the Afrikaans festival circuit and had a run at the Baxter Flipside in 2016. His play *Klara Maas se Hart is Gebreek, ensomeer: Die Vloeistof Trilogie* (nominated for four KykNet Fiëstas) was later translated into *The Waterworks Anthology* (four Fleur du Cap nominations and awarded Best Ensemble). Highlights as a performer include Albee's *Wie's Bang vir Virginia Woolf?*, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and Puig's *Kiss of the Spider-Woman*. His plays *Ont-*, *Die Ontelbare 48*, *Die Dag is Bros* and Sandton City's *Grootdoop* have been published by Protea. Wessel is currently a freelance actor, writer and theatre-maker in Cape Town.



## MORNÉ VISSER

Brabantio / Gratiano / Soldier

Morné Visser made his Shakespearean debut in *Anthony and Cleopatra* at Artscape in 1993 and followed it up with *The Tempest* at Maynardville Open-Air Theatre in 1994. Morné won the 2023 South African Film and Television Award (SAFTA) for Best Actor in a TV Drama, for NETFLIX, *Justice Served*. He was also nominated for Best African Actor, 2023 at the Septimius Awards. In 2016, he also won, Best Actor in a Feature Film, at the Silwerskermfees for *Dis ek, Anna*. He can be seen in Netflix, *Kissing Booth* 1, 2 and 3, opposite his on-screen wife, Molly Ringwald. Other notable credits include, HBO's, *Warrior*, *The Fragile King* for Amazon Prime, *The Harvesters* and *The Forgiven*, with Forest Whitaker and Eric Bana by Oscar nominated director, Roland Joffe. Hollywood Reporter described his scene with Whitaker as "the most powerful scene of the film".





## LYLE OCTOBER

Montano / Senator 2 / Chorus / Soldier

Lyle October is an actor and storyteller, fluent in both Afrikaans and English. At high school he performed in several plays with notable roles such as Osmo in *Waiting* and Mingus in *Sophiatown*. In 2021, he completed his degree in Theatre and Performance, specialising in Acting, at the University of Cape Town. He performed in a variety of plays including Anwaar in *Kinnes* and Gesinde in *Women of Owu*. After graduating, he appeared in Enrico Hartzenberg's *Vloeibare Moed* as Sherwyn, Oliver in Nadia Davids' award-winning *Hold Still*, Charlie in Daniel Newton's *The Rangers*, and most recently in *Of Loss - Handle with Care*, which was nominated for a Fleur Du Cap Best Ensemble award. His short film *Die Blokke* is currently on Showmax and Dstv. He is one of five actors who part of the Baxter Theatre's resident company, *Fire's Burning*.



## TAMZIN WILLIAMS

Bianca / Chorus

Tamzin Williams graduated with a BA in Theatre and Performance at the University of Cape Town in the bilingual (Afrikaans/English) acting stream in 2021. She is one of the five actors in the Baxter Theatre's new resident company - Fires Burning Company. In 2023, she made her professional theatre debut in the play *Of Loss - Handle with Care*, directed by Billy Langa and Mahlatsi Mokgonyana, which received a Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards nomination in the category, Best Performance by an Ensemble earlier this year.



## BRENDAN SEAN MURRAY

Duke / Soldier 1 / Lodovico

In his final year at UCT, Brendan Sean Murray scooped up the class medal for acting, the Ruth Pepper Prize for Excellence in Dramatics and a nod for Fleur du Cap Most Promising Student. He performed in Lara Foot's *Amadeus*, Artscape's *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* at Maynardville. He turned to film, appearing in Stephen Campanelli's *Momentum*, opposite Ethan Hawke in *24 Hours to Live* and making a powerful turn as Jack Damon in *Warrior* (HBOMax). He appeared in the critically acclaimed films *Matwetwe* (Kagiso Lediga) and *The Umbrella Men* (Jon Barker) and will next be seen in the local comedy *Niemansdorp* (Alan Shelly) coming out late 2024.



## CALEB SWANEPOEL

Senator 1 / Chorus / Soldier

Caleb completed his theatre and performance training at the University of Cape Town. His experience crosses both traditional film and stage. Alongside his acting career, Caleb is a keynote speaker; has represented South Africa in para-sport and worked in the tech industry. His most recent creative project is a short film, *And yet, I remain*, which reflects on his experience of surviving a great white shark attack, where he lost his right leg, and his subsequent relationship with the ocean. His film is currently in eleven international film festivals and was most notably a semi-finalist at Cannes Online Film Festival. Last year, Caleb took on the exciting role of Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the highly acclaimed season at Toyota US Woordfees for which he received a nomination for Best Newcomer. He was recently nominated for a Best Supporting Performance in a Play as well as Best Breakthrough Performance Naledi Theatre Awards for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.





## AWETHU HLELI

Herald/ Messenger / Chorus / Ladies

SAFTA Award winner (2023) and recent Fleur du Cap Theatre Award nominee, Awethu Hleli graduated top of her Acting class from the University of Cape Town in 2014, with a Performers Diploma in Theatre and Performance. She has worked extensively in the theatre performing leading roles, in both Shakespearean and Original works, on renowned Joburg and Cape Town stages. She portrayed the role of Viola in *Twelfth Night* at Maynardville. She has also worked with some of the country's most acclaimed writers and directors including Mike Van Graan, Pamela Nomvete *Another One's Bread* and Koleka Putuma's *Mbuzeni*. In 2014, she made her first television debut in the SABC 1 series titled *When We Were Black* Season 2, followed by her first feature film *Knuckle City*, currently streaming on Netflix. She is also featured on the new South African ground-breaking epic series titled "*Blood Psalms*" which is currently streaming on Showmax. It was her second feature *You're My Favourite Place* which earned her a SAFTA Award and NFTA nomination for 'Best Supporting Actress in a feature film'.

She is currently a resident member of the Fires Burning Company at The Baxter, which was nominated for the Best Performance by an Ensemble at the 2024 Fleur Du Cap Theatre Awards. She was also nominated in the category for Best Performance by a lead Actress in a Musical Theatre for Nwabisa Plaatjie's *Ziyana*.



## NOLUFEFE NTSHUNTSHE

Ladies / Chorus / Soldier

Nolufefe Ntshuntshe is currently a member of the Baxter Theatre's Fires Burning Company which received a Fleur du Cap Theatre Best Ensemble nomination for *Of Loss - Handle with Care*, directed by the Theatre duo, Billy Langa and Mahlatsi Mokgonyana. She is one of the cast members in Lara Foot's award-winning adaptation of J.M Coetzee's *Life & Times of Micheal K*, which has toured internationally. She performed in Qondiswa James' *Silindile* in Gqeberha as part of Umhlaba Wolahleko (On earth as it is here), a project curated by Boyzie Cekwana as part of the Common Ground International Festival. She performed in Nwabisa Plaatjie's *When We Awake*, for which she was nominated for a Fleur du Cap Best Ensemble Award.

She was assistant director to Koleka Putuma's *Scoop*, a kitchen play for carers and babes which toured to Canada. She also performed in *Knock*, a Magnet Theatre Early Year's production directed by Koleka Putuma which toured to Belgium and the US. Nolufefe facilitated a workshop for the University of Cape Town's Res4Res Festival and in 2019, she toured France with the Early Years piece *Ekhaya*, directed by Koleka Putuma.

She also played Rivo in *Mbuzeni* at the Edinburgh International Film Festival, directed by Koleka Putuma and participated in the Mothertongue Project Walk at the National Arts Festival, curated by Sara Matchett. In July, she went to Reunion Island with *Ekhaya* for the Retro Festival. She was part of *Caught in the Crossfire* at the Infecting the City Festival and was cast in Thando Mangcu's *Blue*, at the Theatre Arts Admin Collective. Nolufefe collaborated with the Mothertongue Youth Group on Ebusweni bothando - *Ons is Hier*, a poetry production for the McGregor Poetry Festival (facilitated/directed).

# HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS FOR MAKING THIS PRODUCTION OF OTHELLO POSSIBLE



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