

About the South African State Theatre

The South African State Theatre is the prestigious theatre of choice for a distinctly Pan-African experience. The Theatre of Africa. The biggest in Africa and number seven in the world, SAST boasts six world class auditoriums equipped to host events and productions of any size. It is a destination of choice for inspiration, education and socio-economic transformation underpinned by unique, engaging, and diverse artistic offerings that encourage audience growth and an appreciation for the performing arts.

About Mud&Fire Parables

Mud&Fire Parables is a creative arts service provider specialising in curating and conceptualising interdisciplinary cultural programs, arts development, and job creation. The company's mission is to contribute to cultural production that is for the community by the community in an effort to reclaim the collective stolen memory. Mud&Fire Parables was founded by Mandla Mbothwe, who also serves as the company's artistic director.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Abengcongolo Collective, Infinity Moves, Thando and Doni Collective, UCT's Centre for Theatre Dance and Performance Studies, Institute of Creative Arts, Magnet Theatre and Distell for your generous support in the realisation of this project. To everyone who has contributed to the growth of this project, it has been an honour to carry this work with you all.



The South African State Theatre in association with Mud&Fire Parables presents

Nguvu ya Mbegu... eNtabelanga

*a centennial commemoration
of the 1921 Bulhoek Massacre*

directed by Mandla Mbothwe



Creative Team

Performed and developed by Thando Doni, Indalo Stofile, Lungile Lallie, Luhle Macanda, Mamello Makhetha, Katlego Lebogang, Luthabo Maduna

Director – Mandla Mbothwe

Choreographer – Mzo Gasa

Musical Director – Zimbini Makwetu

Performance Coach – Thando Doni

Composer – Elvis Sibeko

Multimedia – Sanjin Muftic

English Translation – Fundile Majola

Technical and Lighting – Bamanye Yeko

Set and Costume – Linda Mandela Sejosingoe

Production Manager – Qondiswa James

Exhibition Conceived by Mandla Mbothwe

Photographed and designed by Rob Keith

Curated by Rob Keith and Mandla Mbothwe



Luhle Macanda is an emerging performer with a BA in Theatre and Performance (UCT) specialising in Bilingual Acting. She has been seen in a number of works such as Tiisetso Mashifane wa Noni's Ayikhalanga lenkomo (2017), Mandla Mbothwe's Nguvu ya Mbegu (2017) and In His Quest (2018), as well as worked with highly acclaimed curator Khanyisile Mbongwa in her demonstration called iRhanga (2018). She has also been in an eTV winter commercial, performed in Athi-Patra Ruga's Things We Lost In The Rainbow (2018), Mthuthuzeli Zimba's Tsha-coal (2018), Lwanda Sindaphi's Esiseleni Sedini (2018).

Mamello Makhetha is an actress, voice artist, singer, performance artist, producer, and writer. She graduated from the University of Cape Town with a BA in Theatre and Performance, specialising in Bilingual Acting. She was an actor in a 2-hander melodrama, directed by Tshegofatso Mabutla, Raising Sunflowers, at Baxter's Masambe Theatre. She also completed a run of Nasty Womxn directed by Dara Beth at the Alexander Bar and Baxter's Masambe Theatre. In 2020, she performed in Vagina Monologues, staged by the Sugar Daddy Theatre Company at the Raptor Room.

Katlego Lebogang is Johannesburg-born actress with a degree in Theatre and Performance at the University of Cape Town. In 2018 she was directed by Tshegofatso Mabutla in Raising which showcased at Baxter Theatre's Masambe. In 2019 she starred in Pinky Pinky, a Showmax Original Film directed by Mandlakhe Yengo. She has also starred in a number of television commercials for Coca-Cola, E-tv, Media24, Sanlam, OK Foods and Checkers.

Luthabo Maduna is a musician and formally trained actor who has graduated with a BA (Honours) in Theatre and Performance from the University of Cape Town. He has acted in productions such as In His Quest directed by Mandla Mbothwe and Esiseleni Sedini directed by Lwanda Sindaphi. Apart from acting, he also performed in a series of performance art pieces curated by Khanyisile Mbongwa at the Live Art Festival in 2018. More recently he has also appeared on SABC 2's teen drama series called Signal High.

Thando Doni, Standard Bank Young Artist for Theatre 2021 is an award-winning theatre-maker, writer, teacher, and performer. Doni learned his craft at the Media and Arts Access Centre (AMAC) and with Magnet Theatre (2008 - 2010). Nominated as Best Director at the Baxter's Zabalaza Theatre Festival in 2011, Doni won Best Director in 2012 for Mhla Salamana. He was one of four 2012 Theatre Arts Admin Collective Emerging Director bursary recipients for young directors. Doni was nominated for Rosalie van der Gught prize for Best New Director at the Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards (2013), and again that same year he was nominated for the New Voices Award for the Naledi Awards. He was also nominated for Best New Work for Ityala Lamawele and Ubuze Bam at the Broadway Worlds Award, 2016. He received the Fresh Creative Award at the Cape Town Fringe Festival, 2017.

Indalo Stofile is an actress, writer and performance artist. She graduated with a degree in Theatre and Performance from UCT. Indalo has performed in Qondiswa James' A Faint Patch of Light (which won a 2019 Standard Bank Ovation Award), and Nwabisa Plaatjie's rendition of Alice Childress' Florence & Wine in the Wilderness for which she was nominated for best supporting actress and best lead respectively at the Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards (2020). She showcased an original performance art intervention on GBV+F, Esemihla ngeMihla, curated with Chuma Sopotela, at Malibongwe Women in Theatre Festival (2020). Most recently she has been in Ikrele le Chiza by Mandla Mbothwe – a digital work recorded in March 2021; and Surviving Gaza (2021) a South African action driven film by Vusi Africa.

Lungile Lallie is a Cape Town based actor who trained at the University of Cape Town. In recent years, Lungile has performed in Mandla Mbothwe's Standard Bank Ovation Award winning Nguvu Ya Mbegu: Entabelanga (2019), and In His Quest (2018). He has performed in Lukhanyiso Skosana's Nazareth, Iman Isaacs' Beyond the Wall (2018), as well as Tiisetso Mashifane wa Noni's State of the Art (2017) and Ayikhalanga Le Nkomo (2016). Lungile also works in the gallery space as a performance artist.

Minister's Note, Department of Sport Arts and Culture Memory as instrument for liberation.

In essence, our struggle for liberation, was a struggle against forgetting as well. Various scholars have been seized with the issue of memory and its significance over a period of time. One such scholar is Ellie Wiesel who wrote that: *'To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time!'*

The statement quoted above illustrates the significance of memory in nation building and social cohesion. People compose or construct their memories using the public language and meanings of culture.

This Production titled: Nguvu ya Mbegu (The power of the seed in Swahili language) ...eNtabelanga is the Centennial Commemoration of the Bulhoek Massacre of 1921 is some of the means we employ to ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes or actions of the past order. To continue with events of this nature help us as society and individuals to deal with the painful parts of our past.

Memory and memorialisation remain important avenues through which people, individually and collectively remember and preserve their past and justify their present positions and aspirations in what has recently been conceptualised as social cohesion and nation building.

It is our belief as the democratic government that we should tell our story and not wait for others to do it for us. This production is part of that process of telling our story to keep the connection with the past as we forge ahead in building a better future for our children.

I salute the team for conceptualisation and finally staging the production on this centenary year of this tragedy.

**Hon. EN Mthethwa, MP
Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture.**

Director's note

“History works through people and we have availed ourselves for histories to work through us”. Steve Biko

Nguvu yaMbegu...eNtabelanga is a Swahili title meaning the power of the seed. It reclaims the resistance and the resilience of memory. The performance seeks to resist and revolt against the dominant narratives that preserve the continued erasure of black identities. It is an attempt to water the long-buried seed by walking through the past.

Ngxesi kwintsapho ngesi kuphosileyo.

The Bulhroeok Massacre took place 100 years ago, eNtabelanga near Komani (Queenstown) in 1921 where 193 people were shot dead because they refused to leave their mountain of prayer. The exact numbers are still widely contested. This remains one of most notorious colonial crimes in South African Eastern Cape history.

At the heart of the tragedy is land and religion. This is a familiar story in this country of the age-old dispute between African people and the white colonialists. History tells us that Enoch Mgijima, prophet and religious leader, along with his followers occupied a piece of land on which they might remember and practice independent and self-sustaining life, free from colonial laws. This land had in the first place been invaded by the British following the defeat of the amaXhosa during the wars of dispossession between 1779 and 1878. Key events in this timeline are the Nongqawuse cattle killing of 1856 and 1857; the formation of the Union in 1910; and the land act of 1913. It is said that Enoch Mgijima had earlier had a vision of the first world war that ultimately resulted in the sinking of SS Mendi in 1917 – another landmark moment.

I have always been deeply passionate about South African history, especially the history I was not taught at school, the history that has been buried deep, unable to breathe. The dominant practices of history and the mainstream performing arts continue to bury black bodies. I am always surprised at the level of narrative erasure

Linda Mandela Sejosingoe is a dance-trained set and costume designer and make-up artist based in Cape Town. She has worked with several production houses including Artscape Theatre Centre, Magnet Theatre, Cape Town Opera House and UCT's Centre for Theatre Dance and Performance Studies. She has worked extensively with director Mandla Mbothwe, most recently designing his award-winning G7: Okwe Bokhwe. She has also worked with theatre stalwarts Alfred Hinkel, Mamela Nyamza, Lara Foot, Jay Pather and others.

Bamanye Yeko is currently a freelancing technician for various venues including Makukhanye Art Room. He has been involved in various projects both nationally and internationally. He has toured internationally as a lighting designer was in 2018 touring Russia with Ashed, followed by a German tour of SOLD. He has worked as a venue technician at the Guild Theatre, East London and at the Port Elizabeth Opera house as an assistant stage manager. He was employed by the Steve Biko Centre as a technical director where he managed a variety of venues and events. He went on to join the Institute for Creative Arts as a technical manager and later Theatre Arts Admin. He is currently a senior technician at the annual National Arts Festival.

Rob Keith works within the Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies at UCT. Through various collaborations with dance and theatre practitioners, Rob creates surreal artistic interpretations of live performance work by augmenting his own performance photographs through digital design.

Qondiswa James is a cultural worker living in Cape Town, South Africa. She is an award-winning theatre-maker, performance artist, film and theatre performer, installation artist, writer, arts facilitator and activist. She is currently studying her Masters in Live Art, Interdisciplinary and Public Art at the Institute of Creative Arts. Her work engages the socio-political imagination towards mobilising transgression.



Mzo Gasa is a passionate teacher and choreographer and seasoned performer. He is Artistic Director of Sibonelo Dance Project which he founded in 2008. His dance training started with Durban-based Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre more than two decades ago and a prolific career has seen him teach dance and choreograph for companies across South Africa and abroad. With Sibonelo Dance Project he has created three critically acclaimed works in recent years, Abangabonwa in 2016, Ukuzinza and Amaqhawe in 2018.

Babalwa Zimbini Makwetu is a 2020 Fleur Du Cap Theatre awards winner for best sound design, original music/ live performance. She is an international performer, actress, and musician trained at Magnet Theatre and she is currently doing part-time teaching and facilitates music for different companies across the country. Her debut album is currently available on all the online digital stores

Elvis Sibeko is an Internationally acclaimed theatre director, choreography, dancer, fitness instructor, and festival curator. He has previously worked at Jazzart as a professional dancer, choreographer, and Community Outreach Coordinator. Most recently he received a best dancer and choreographer of the year at the DOX Awards, Netherlands. South African Arts and Culture Trust recently nominated Elvis Sibeko for an ACT Award in the field of dance. Sibeko is also a music producer and composer who has been creating music for dance theatre companies and theatre makers/artists nationally and internationally throughout his career.

concerning black South Africans, and how our memory is curated to suit the political advancement of a particular party. They govern our hearing, our seeing, our tastes, our language, our vision, our architecture, our works of art and monuments. It is incredible to think how much memory-loss we have endured. I am surprised how far away from ourselves we have walked; perhaps this is one of the reasons that we continue giving birth to furious futures.

Ningaxhalabi ngezi ntsokithileyo, zaku nifikela ngexesha lazo.

In the performance we seek to remember the narrative of the Bulhoek Massacre. We seek to reclaim the ways in which we tell it. We want to claim that we are a seed; when you bury us we grow and multiply. We want to encourage confidence in all those whose lives and existence in the world are silenced, dominated, exploited and erased. We want to help them to rise above the surface and reclaim their memory for self-healing. By doing this we breathe life into ourselves and our stories.

The methods we used to engage with the material needed to reflect both our self-love and the mutated multiplicity of our being located us in a particular continent, country, and city. The production reconnected us with the past, to unpack our memories and to map our futures with great self-pride. It is a reopening of the history books, breathing life into dusty papers, an attempt to connect missing pages, imagine faded words and embrace the magical fragments of lost narratives.

Asizango ngcwaba apha, sizokutyala!!!

Mandla Mbothwe
Director, Mud and Fire Parables

History of the Bulhoek Massacre

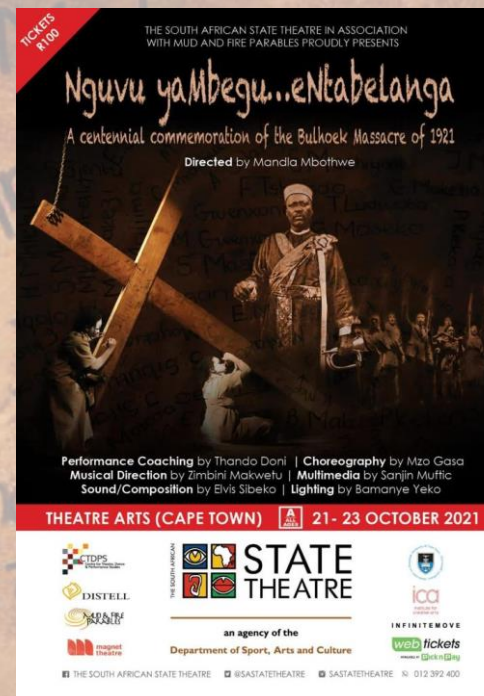
This year marks 100 years after the harrowing Bulhoek Massacre of 1921, where 193 worshippers were shot dead for refusing to leave their mountain of prayer, eNtabelanga near Komani (now Queenstown) in Eastern Cape.

In 1912 Enoch Mgijima, a lay preacher and independent evangelist, broke away from the Wesleyan Methodist Church and joined the Church of God and Saints of Christ, a small church based in the United States of America. In November 1912 he began baptising his followers in the Black Kei River near his home eNtabelanga. He decided to call his followers 'Israelites' as he identified with the Hebrews of the Old Testament. Towards the end of 1912 Mgijima was excommunicated for his prophetic visions and as a result, in 1914 the South African Church of God and Saints of Christ split, with one of the groups following Enoch Mgijima as Israelites.

At one of his services early in 1919, Mgijima expressed a prophecy which led to pilgrimage, with followers from all over South Africa – about 3 000 people – responding and arriving eNtabelanga to await the coming of the Lord. The pilgrims proceeded to occupy the property, erecting a tabernacle and some huts without registering with the authorities or paying tax.

On 23 May 1921 the police, acting agents of the Crown, mobilised and moved to a farm close to Bulhoek. The force was armed with machine guns, a canon and artillery. Some men remained in Queenstown as there were rumours of a possible Israelite attack on the town. During the night the final preparations were made for the operation and the next morning the government force took up their positions on the hills at Bulhoek.

The Israelites were also readying themselves, and about 500 men were armed with clubs, assegais and swords. When Colonel Truter of the police force sent two isiXhosa-speaking officers to negotiate, they were told by the Israelites, "From Jehovah, we will not allow you to



History of the Production

The play was initially researched and created with 2nd year students from UCT's Centre for Theatre Dance and Performance Studies (CTDPS) in 2017 under the direction of Mandla Mbothwe with song composition and musical direction by Nolufefe Mtshabe. It was an attempt to excavate the invisible story of the Bulhoek Massacre of 1921 eNtabelanga in the Eastern. The work formed part of the Nguni Bilingual curriculum whose objective is to both centre indigenous languages in teaching, and also indigenous knowledge, theatrical traditions, and pedagogical practices.

In 2019 the production was revisited, and this time staged as a semi-professional student production at the CTDPS' Little Theatre with four sold out performances. This iteration was also directed by Mbothwe, but this time with the choreographic input of Mzokuthulu Gasa, musical direction by Bongani Magatyana, and original sound composition by Elvis Sibeko. Zimbini Makwetu came in as the vocal coach, Chuma Sopotela as the acting coach and Jackie Manyapelolo as the movement coach. That same year, the production toured to National Arts Festival, Makhanda where it received a Standard Bank Ovation Award.

The creation of this work has been an opportunity to reflect on religion, spirituality, history and the complicated discourse around these. We hope that exhuming the dead of the tragedies we have faced help us to understand ourselves today. By encouraging linguistic inclusivity and mainstreaming national memories, Nguvu ya Mbegu is attempting to write our indigenous languages into the lexicon. The work explores the many complexities of South African history, and therefore South African life, encouraging the gathered community of performer and audience to collectively reflect on erasure and the possibility of recovering ourselves through active remembrance.

The original cast members include Lungile Lallie, Luhle Macanda, Mamello Makhetha, Katlego Lebogang, Zolisa Nkonyana, Mfundo Zono, Zizo Solontsi, Lwanele Ngqambi, Anathi Rubela, Mthuthuzeli Zimba, Lukhanyiso Skosana.

scatter our people from eNtabelanga. We will not allow you to burn our huts, and we will not allow you to arrest the two men you wish to."

It is not clear how the battle started but some reports say it may have begun after a shot was fired by accident. Soon afterwards the Israelites launched an attack and Colonel Truter ordered his force to advance. Warning shots were fired over the heads of the approaching Israelites but they were not deterred. The troops were ordered to shoot and a large number of Israelites were wounded. Some of the injured got up and continued to charge. One of the commanding officers, Colonel Woon, said the Israelites were "the most determined and fanatical I had ever experienced, and it was only by shooting them down that the attack could have stopped". About 200 people were killed, more than 100 were wounded and 141 were arrested, including Enoch Mgijima and his sons.

In November 1921 the trial of the 141 Israelites arrested began in Queenstown. They were charged with "violent and forcible conduct against the authority of the state" (Edgar, 2010: 37). The trial lasted two weeks, at the end of which all 141 were found guilty. The judge, Thomas Graham, sentenced Mgijima, his elder brother Charles, and Gilbert Matshoba to six years' hard labour at DeBeer's Convict Station in Kimberley. A few were given suspended sentences, but the remaining 129 Israelites were sentenced to between 12 and 18 months of hard labour. Mgijima was released from prison in 1924 and died some years later, on 5 March 1929.

Some historians believe that the Israelites were the victims of the segregationist government, as their struggle was a fight for land and exemption from taxes, as well as self-rule to end White oppression.

For more information visit sahistoryonline.co.za

Artistic Director's Note, South African State Theatre

I first saw *Nguvu ya Mbegu...eNtabelanga* at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda. I never knew or heard of the massacre until I saw this work by Mandla Mbothwe. I found the work striking, enlightening and haunting. I couldn't shake off the images, the sound of the drum and the cast which was perfect in all shapes and sizes. They all belonged to *eNtabelanga*. Days, even months after I saw the work, I still felt the impact of the work. I remember calling Mandla and telling him that I would, one day, like to bring the work to the South African State Theatre (SAST). The fact that this piece is based on real events, made it a perfect production for the SAST as we pride ourselves with the development of new work and telling of South African stories.

Nguvu ya Mbegu is the sort of content and artistic excellence that the SAST likes to share with audiences in Gauteng and worldwide. When the time came to produce the work in Tshwane, COVID 19 struck, and all activities of our lives changed. We therefore couldn't stage the work in 2020. Most of the productions on our artistic programme were postponed to 2021 but, even then, it seemed impossible to do the work due to the Covid 19 restrictions. We kept on postponing performance seasons, not knowing when will the right time be to present theatre.

Eventually I met with all the directors and producers of the programmed productions to discuss and negotiate ways in which we could keep all the works alive and importantly have the artists work. Artists, like many other industries and individuals, were hit hard by the impact of Covid 19. With travelling restrictions in place, and reduced number of audiences, it became impossible for artists to practice and earn a living. But for SAST, we were not going to let this situation prevail without action. We had to adapt and keep art alive. This is when we decided to allow the productions to happen regardless of attendance number or central venue which in this case was the SAST. Together with the producers and directors, we agreed to minimize travel and reduce touring costs but ensure that artists can practice and earn a living. We then agreed to allow works that were

Karabelo Lekalake Plaatjie holds a Master's Degree in Drama and Theatre Arts from the University of the Free State. She has directed works by prominent playwrights such as Zakes Mda (*And the Girls in their Sunday Dresses*), Sue Pam Grant (*Curl Up & Dye*), and Fatima Dike (*So, what New?*). She has also produced and directed *Poetry Cries*, a play confronting the dark industry of human trafficking, written by Mosili Makuta. She is a published theatre scholar and is currently writing a book chapter titled 'Representation of Femicide on Theatre Stages: the urgency to respond to the scourge of violent murders of women in postcolonial South Africa' for *Routledge Handbook on African Theatre and Performance*. Lekalake Plaatjie, is the chairperson of non-profit organisation *Free State Wombman in Theatre*, a collaboration of aspiring, developing and professional women artist.

Mandla Mbothwe is a multi-award-winning South African theatre-maker, published playwright, researcher, festival curator, director and art teacher who has been in the industry for over twenty years. Over the years he has created and presented theatre productions of high quality, which have been staged across South Africa and abroad. He has conceptualized and curated multiple commissioned international festivals, awards ceremonies and colloquiums. He has presented papers and public lectures on art and pedagogy and is a published theatre scholar. He successfully heads various institutions and serves others as a lecturer, curator and board member. Mbothwe is the founder and Artistic Director of creative arts service provider, *Mud&Fire Parables*.



Nomusa Makhubu is an associate professor in Art History and deputy dean of transformation in Humanities at the University of Cape Town. She was the recipient of the ABSA L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto Award in 2006 and the Prix du Studio National des Arts Contemporain, Le Fresnoy in 2014. She received the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) African Humanities Program fellowship award and was an African Studies Association (ASA) Presidential fellow in 2016. In 2017, she was also a UCT-Harvard Mandela fellow at the Hutchins Centre for African and African American Research, Harvard University. Recognising the need for mentorship and collaborative practice in socially responsive arts, she founded the Creative Knowledge Resources project. She co-edited a Third Text Special Issue: 'The Art of Change' (2013) and co-curated with Nkule Mabaso the international exhibition, Fantastic, in 2015 and The stronger we become in 2019 at the 58th Venice Biennale in Italy.

Nangamso Ka NomaHlubi Koza is an education development practitioner and strategist She is a published author and owner of Ingomso Books, a publishing company focusing on Afrikan content. She is an advocate for the preservation of indigenous languages and literacy development. A historian at heart with a special interest on land and heritage. Ka NomaHlubi has served in various international platforms which include but not limited to; the Graca Machel Trust Women Advancing Africa Forum; the Mandela Washington Fellowship; A-World-At-School Global Ambassador and the Mail and Guardian Top 200 Young South Africans.



programmed from different parts of the country to proceed without having to travel to Tshwane at the SAST. This would mean that some of the costs intended for travelling and accommodation would be used to improve the work and to allow artists better wages, but most importantly it would take the SAST to different parts of the country.

Since then, we have produced work at Mmabana Sports and Arts and Culture Foundation in the North-West, at the Playhouse in Durban, at the Baxter in Cape Town and at Luthando Arts Academy in Sebokeng, Gauteng Province. Nguvu is another chapter as we navigate through the challenges that Covid 19 has presented to us. More than anything, Nguvu ya Mbegu is a striking reminder of one of the painful episodes in our history that many, like me, do not know about. As historians continue to search for the truth as to how many Israelites were killed on 24th of May 1921, I am pleased that on the centenary of the massacre, theatre continues to enlighten and remind us of where we come from.

I remain hopeful that this story of the Bulhoek Massacre, which left many dead and many wounded, will one day be on the SAST stages in Tshwane. For now, we continue to share with audiences countrywide. This is a treat for the audiences in trying times. I wish the cast and crew a great season.

Aubrey Sekhabi
Artistic Director, The South African State Theatre





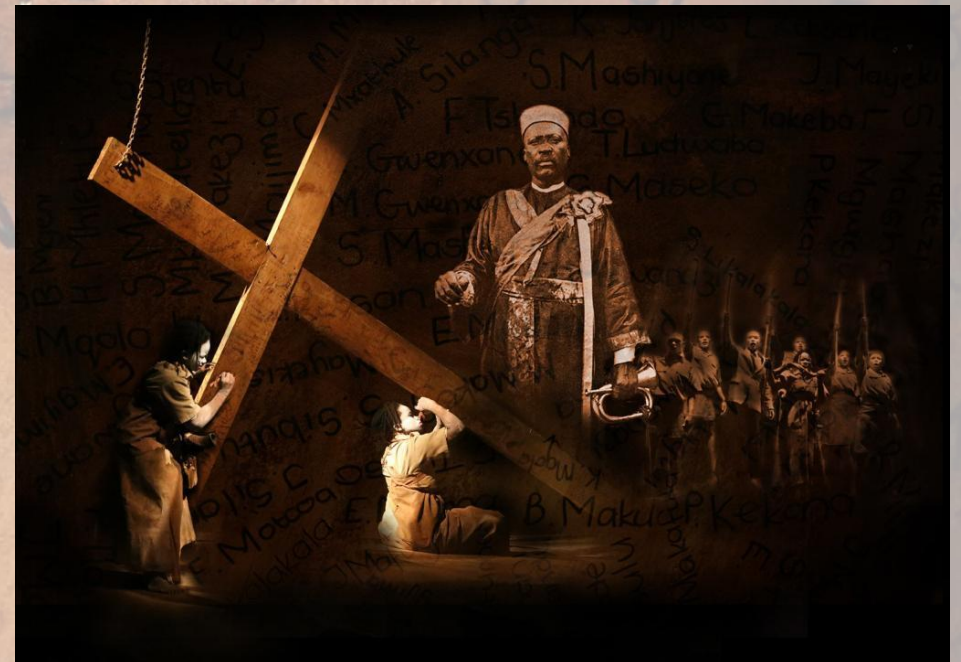






Opening Night Programme

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| 18h30 | Reception |
| 19h30 | Show |
| 20h45 | Interval |
| 21h00 | Panel: Nomusa Makhubu, Nangamso ka NomaHlubi Koza, Karabelo Plaatjie, Mandla Mbothwe |
| 21h30 | End |



Exhibition In Progress