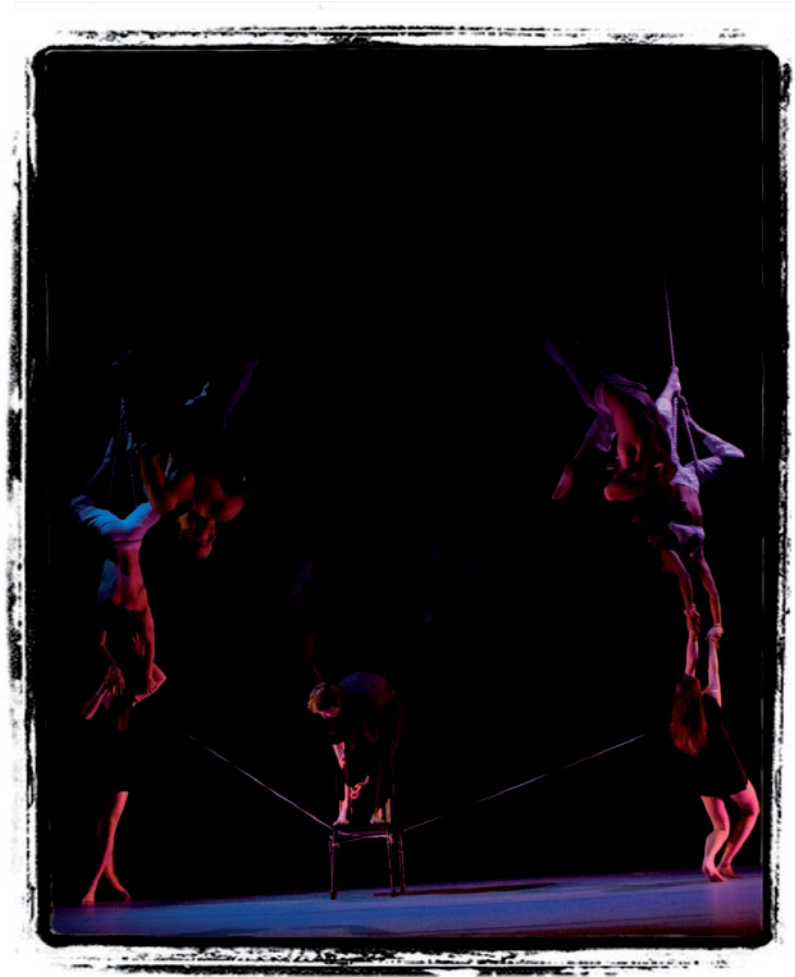




RHODES UNIVERSITY

Where leaders learn



Rhodes Drama Review 2008

Introduction

Rhodes University Drama Department excels in a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to theatre, producing a wide range of work from plays to physical theatre, site-specific work to community processes.

Rhodes Drama is led by Professor Gary Gordon and Associate Professor Andrew Buckland, with a staff active in the industry, two professional companies based in the department, and international and local community ties and exchanges. This depth and breadth of artistry and experience at the department enables an ethos of creativity and experimentation that marks the work of Rhodes Drama.

This collection of theatre photography from Rhodes Drama is possible because of the support at the Rhodes Theatre Complex (Production Manager Clay Williams and Theatre Administrator Cindy Harris). It captures some memorable moments in the productions of 2008. There are, however, many more moments that still images cannot capture, in unconventional performance spaces, in the classroom, in interpersonal exchanges, where theatre also happens.

It is fitting to remember that theatre is a live encounter, a series of “now” that is always slipping away. Theatre resists being defined by purely visual, audio or linguistic and rational mediums. The photographs invite you to remember these live encounters that you may have experienced, or to imagine the moment of aliveness that made gave birth to these images.



Professor Gary Gordon

Head of Department

2008 in brief

Artistic Director, the First Physical Theatre Company.

Nominated for Best Choreography award at the Gauteng MEC Awards for Contemporary Choreography and Dance, for the dance work *Go*.

Choreographed and performed in multi-media dance theatre production, *Ozymandias*, with John Allen, Tulane University, New Orleans. Main programme, National Arts Festival.

Choreographed *Standing, Sitting, Lying Down* for the Aids benefit concert, by the Student HIV/Aids Resistance Campaign.

Performed for film installation by Mark Wilby, *Player 1.0*, exhibited at Spier Contemporary in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg.

Supervised six Masters candidates specialising in Choreography, culminating in the Theatre in Motion '08 programme.

How does it feel to have a strong body, or a weak body?
How does it feel to have a young body, or an old body?
What does it mean to have a healthy body, or a sick body?
How do you feel about other bodies, which are not your body?
- from *Standing, Sitting, Lying Down*, text by Anton Krueger



Professor Andrew Buckland

Associate Professor

2008 in brief

Co-directed *The Amazing "Other" Show*, commissioned by the Dean of Students, Rhodes University .

Directed theatre production, *The Man Who*, for Rhodes Drama.

On leave from April.

Performed in Michael Lessack's *Truth in Translation*, and in Brett Bailey's *Dreamland* at Harare International Festival of the Arts, Zimbabwe.

Co-directed *Halo*, for Ubom! Eastern Cape Drama Company.

Performing in the show, *Love*, for Cirque du Soleil in Las Vegas, USA.

Juanita Finestone-Praeg

Senior Lecturer

2008 in brief

Choreographed *Monogram* for the First Physical Theatre Company.

On academic leave from April, conducting research in Quebec, Canada.



Alex Sutherland

Lecturer

2008 in brief

Co-directed *The Amazing "Other" Show*, commissioned by the Dean of Students, Rhodes University.

Researcher and Project Manager for *Risky Business* for Ubom! Eastern Cape Drama Company, commissioned by Higher Education HIV/Aids programme.

Directed *Siyayenza Namanje*, commissioned by the National Arts Festival, aimed at supporting and upskilling young street artists.

Book review published in *Research in Drama Education* journal. Presented a paper at Performing Heritage conference, University of Manchester, UK: *Decolonizing performances*. Presented a paper at the Dramatic Learning Spaces conference, UKZN, Pietermaritzburg: *Coconuts, Jocks and Bantus: Performing race and gender on campus*. Chaired panel of discussion on *Ethical Issues in Applied Drama and Theatre* at the African Research conference in Applied Drama and Theatre, University of Witwatersrand.



Heike Gehring

Lecturer

2008 in brief

Performed in the dance theatre production *Chaste*, by Acty Tang, at the Dance Factory, Johannesburg.

Co-created, directed and performed in the theatre production *Ekspedisie* for the 2008 Klein Karoo National Arts Festival, Oudtshoorn, and the National Arts Festival (translated into English), Grahamstown.

Directed the theatre production *In the Blood* for Rhodes Drama performance students.

Performed in the theatre production *Puck*, directed by Ingrid Wylde, at the National Arts Festival.

On *Ekspedisie*:

“a sumptuous piece of choreography imbued with myth and oral history” *Cue*



Anton Krueger

Lecturer

2008 in brief

Anton Krueger's new comedy *Chatter* played at the National Arts Festival and the 969 Festival in Johannesburg. Anton published book reviews in the *Mail and Guardian* and a range of poetry in *African Writing*, *Big Bridge* and *New Coin*, as well as two short stories in *Aerial*. He was invited to perform at the international festival, Poetry Africa in Durban. Outside of his teaching at Rhodes, Anton was also involved in workshops on creative writing for the Centre for Creative Writing (Pretoria), the Institute for the Study of English in Africa (Grahamstown) and the Centre for Creative Arts (Durban). He obtained his DLitt from the University of Pretoria and presented a paper at the Dramatic Learning Spaces conference at UKZN, Pietermaritzburg.





The Amazing “Other” Show

Directed by **Andrew Buckland** and **Alex Sutherland**

Commissioned by the Dean of Students

Performed by Drama postgraduate students for Orientation Week 2008 and the Eastern Cape Schools' Festival

Andrew Buckland and Alex Sutherland directed this production devised by the cast, based on research by Professor Louise Vincent at the Politics department, and their own experiences. It aimed to interrogate issues of race, class and gender on Rhodes Campus. Reflection and discussion were included as part of the theatrical experience. The commission by the Dean of Students indicates a commitment to a more creative means of addressing what 'diversity' might mean on campus.

Audience feedback sample:

“The show was very controversial. It got under people’s skin and got them talking. I enjoyed that.”

“It’s really great to see people actually tackling these issues. It was very well done.”

Swedish butoh artist Frauke performed the international premier of *Void* at Rhodes Box theatre, and conducted a residency at Rhodes Drama | photo by Christo Doherty , taken at the Wits Theatre performance

The Man Who

A Theatrical Research

By Peter Brook & Marie-Hélène Estienne

Directed by **Andrew Buckland**

“In 1985 Oliver Sacks wrote a book based on his research conducted with patients suffering from neurological disorders, called *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. ... They are studies of life struggling against incredible adversity.”

“[Brook and Estienne’s text] is very unusual in its structure and theatricality and consists of a series of beautifully drawn portraits of human courage, resilience, humour and integrity. ... The work is demanding and requires the players to invest very strongly in the creation of the performance in order to mine the lodes of truth submerged somewhere between the secrets of the text and their selves.” - Professor Andrew Buckland

The production included a benefit performance for The Friends of Fort England. “Thank you to the Rhodes University Drama Department ... for their support, and presenting this play which we believe will help to increase awareness and alleviate the stigma associated with the mentally and neurologically impaired.”



In the Blood

Written By Suzan-Lori Parks

Directed by **Heike Gehring**

"In the Blood is a retelling of Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1850 novel *The Scarlet Letter*. In this novel, the lead character, Hester Prynne, is punished for adultery. As a symbol of her adultery, she has the letter 'A' engraved on all her dresses, wearing this brand on her breast. *In the Blood* outlines the dilemmas of Hester La Negrita, a homeless person trying 'to get her leg up'.

"Hester is portrayed by four women. In this manner she starts to become every woman with a universal plight." - Heike Gehring



Masters Students

Lazarus

Student Theatre at the National Arts Festival
written and directed by **Awélani Moyo**

A visual theatre production with song and puppetry, *Lazarus* is a story of unusual heroes in modern day Zimbabwe, struggling to find meaning amidst chaos.

Also at the Festival

Hamletmachine | Heiner Muller's classic, directed by **Wesley Deintje** and performed at Old Nun's Chapel.

Composition Z | by **Awélani Moyo**, the story of a strange, blue outcast making sense of Africa, performed at Botanical Gardens.

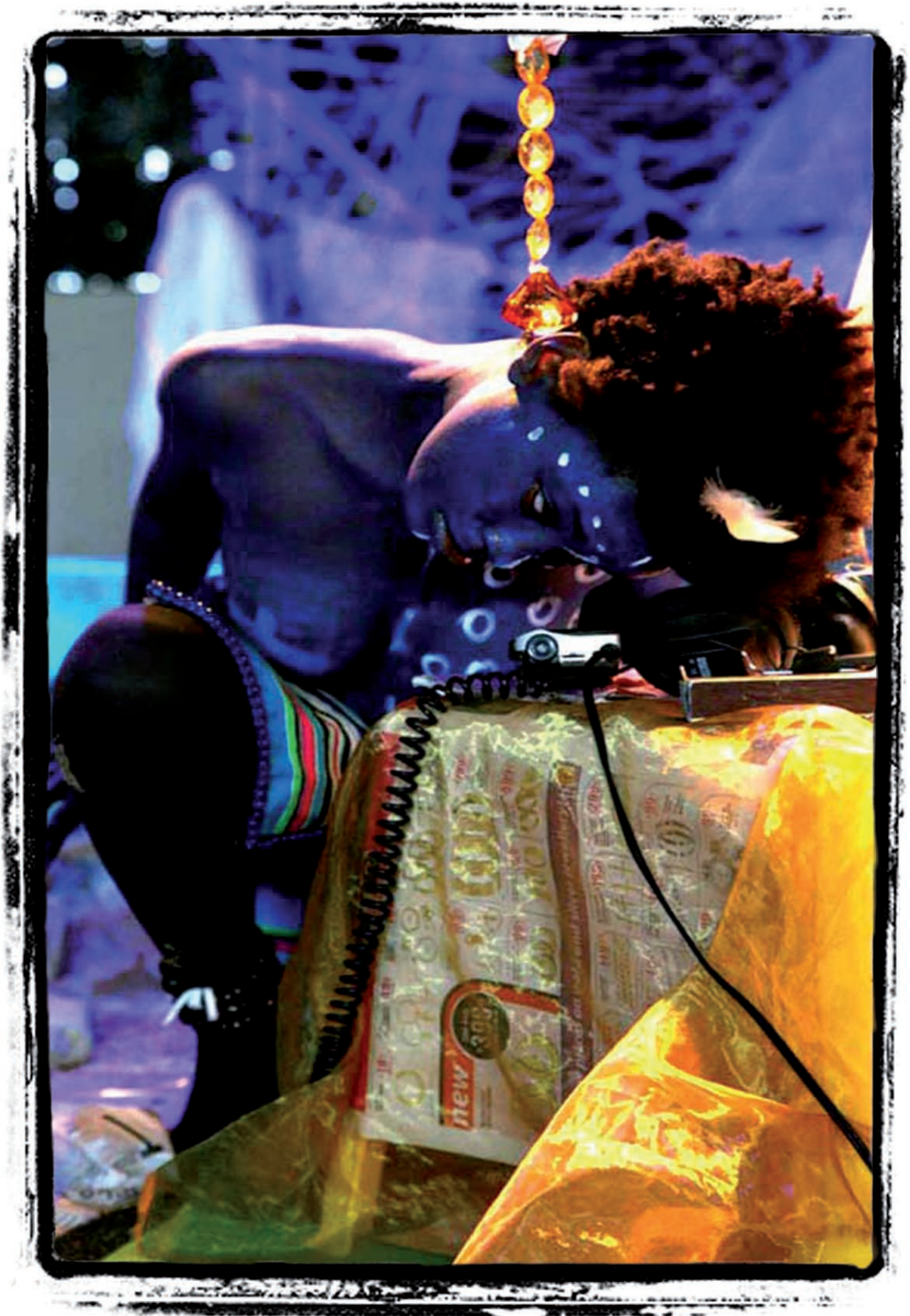
Ordinary Dance | Choreographed by **Nicola Elliott**, a dance entirely of ordinary movements at the Mosaic on the Drostdy lawns.

Conferences

Joni Barnard, Kyle de Boer, Nicola Elliott, and Alan Parker (recent graduate) presented three papers at the Confluences 5 conference at UCT School of Dance, Cape Town.

Brink Scholtz (recent graduate), along with two other staff members, presented papers at the Dramatic Learning Spaces conference at UKZN, Pietermaritzburg. Awélani Moyo won the Debut Paper Award for the conference.

Composition Z | Awélani Moyo | photo by Lauren Clifford-Holmes



Young Directors' Season '08

Marlboro Country

written and directed by **Emma de Wet**

"Jenny (played by Chiminae Ball) ...karate chops conversations into bits until the words ricochet around the room and she habitually entertains herself by slicing any opposition with the gleaming blades of her brain ... annihilating dialogue." - Gillian Rennie, *Grocott's Mail*

W;t

written by Margaret Edson

adapted & directed by **Robert Haxton**

"The careful attention to detail, and therefore to meaning, sets this production apart. ... Haxton places the characters as carefully as sculptures on exhibition, and paints emotional landscapes with lighting, set and costume." - Gillian Rennie, *Grocott's Mail*



Rhodes Drama Review 2008

Theatre in Motion '08

Masters Contemporary Performance

Bleeding Mermaid

conceived and created by **Zanne Solomon**

"This piece began as a personal exploration of my body, my weight and my size in social, sexual and psychological contexts. Through experimentation and play, a story has emerged – a story that belongs to anyone who has ever been trapped in their body or mind; anyone who has ever struggled to communicate with their inner selves; anyone who has ever lost themselves." - Zanne Solomon

Stilted

conceived and created by **Richard Antrobus**

"I have explored placing physical limitations and constrictions on the body and/in space as a means to evoke and inform theatrical conception. I have also been exploring the body at risk, removing the body from the realm of the ordinary. 'Stilted' explores themes of the exposed performer-self caught in an imposed world, society, body, theatricality." - Richard Antrobus



Rhodes Drama Review 2008

Theatre in Motion '08

“The Rhodes University Drama Department is perceived as a dynamic centre for choreographic investigation in the country. Up to this point, four graduates from this department have received the Young Artists Award for dance. These (postgraduate) choreographers are making brave statements in an attempt to assert and identify their particular space in the field of South African choreography.” - Professor Gary Gordon

Masters Choreography

Far From Home | **Shaun Acker** | Aerial dance theatre for a forgotten existence

Displayed and Framed | **Joni Barnard** | Female body and desire

Narcissus | **Kyle de Boer** | Coming out of a gay man

Crooked | **Sonja Smit** | Lilith and desire in butoh performance

This part should be uncomfortable | **Nicola Elliott** | Postmodern wry humour

Outside & Beside Herself | **Zoë Reeve** | Ensemble tanzteater on drowning

Honours Choreography

Inside Out | **Lebo Phakedi**

Through Her Looking Vitrine | **Robert Haxton**

Duet in Passing | **Alice Thompson**

Caterpillar | Honours Physical Theatre | by **Gary Gordon & Alan Parker**



First Physical Theatre Company

Ozymandias

American-South African collaboration between Tulane University, New Orleans and Rhodes University, Grahamstown

choreographed by **John Allen** and **Gary Gordon**
with dancers from Brazil, America, Durban and Grahamstown

at the National Arts Festival, main programme
and National Schools' Festival

"Ozymandias is a meeting between New Orleans and Grahamstown, a gathering of choreographers, dancers, musicians, visual and film artists, and writers to share our arts and experience. Energetic American dance meets expressive South African choreography for a multi-media dance experience that is powerfully motional and emotional." - programme note

"Gary Gordon's First Physical Theatre Company had the final say on transcontinental collaboration in the powerfully danced Ozymandias, co-created with the John/Allen Project, from New Orleans. The Shelley poem explodes into an outpouring of imagery and physicality, with Marc Duby and John Edwards' evocative music, on the treachery of time and the vulnerability of human beings who are mere, rotting, crustaceans."
- Adrienne Sichel, *The Star*

Ozymandias received funding support from Tulane University, Rhodes University, and the National Arts Festival.



First Physical Theatre Company

At the 2008 Gauteng MEC Awards for Contemporary Choreography and Dance:

Winner of Best Female Newcomer: **Tshego Tlholoe**

Nominees for Best Male Newcomer: **Alan Parker** and **Ricardo Daniels**

Nominee for Best Choreography: **Gary Gordon**

At the FNB Dance Umbrella:

“Grahamstown’s First Physical Theatre Company is still producing distinctively original works such as *Between ...* Gender and race politics melt in a tango between intelligent bodies.” - Adrienne Sichel, *The Star*

Collections

Concert programme with works by Juanita Finestone-Praeg (*Monogram*), Alan Parker, Tshego Tlholoe (*Between*), Nicola Elliott (*Ballad*) and dance film *Textures* (directed by Acty Tang).

New Voices

Concert programme with works by Nicola Elliott (*Quartet in Fast and Sparse*), Tierney St. John (*A Series of Us's*), The First Physical Youth Company (*Changing Minds*) and Joni Barnard (*Epicene: Portrait in Two*).

Fizz Theatre

Supper theatre programme for the Grahamstown summer.

First Physical is supported by the National Arts Council and Rhodes University.



Ubom! Eastern Cape Drama Company

Janet Buckland: Artistic Director, Part-time Lecturer at Rhodes Drama
Winner of Shoprite/Checkers Woman of the Year
and Rotary Grahamstown Citizen of the Year

Ubom! company

Winner of Impumelelo Gold Awards by Distell Foundation, for innovative work in poverty reduction and community development

Awarded Makana Municipality Acknowledgement for Community Service

Resident Director: **Brink Scholtz**

Living Here

A poetry kaleidoscope of African and South African poems, songs and stories, on forging identity out of the fractured and traumatic past of the country.

“This production will make you leave the theatre freshly alive to the gift poetry offers us in its rhythm and insight of well-chosen words.” Deborah Seddon, Rhodes English lecturer and poet

Halo

Co-directed with Andrew Buckland, performed at the National Arts Festival and Schools’ Festival.

“explores intense questions of history and the circularity of life” *Cue*



Ubom! Eastern Cape Drama Company

Betti and the Yeti

Children's production on accepting difference and overcoming fear. Also performed at the Children's Festival at the National Arts Festival.

Meltdown

A production on global warming performed throughout the Eastern Cape, SciFest and Schools' Festivals. "Just how much are we living in conflict with our planet?" Sponsored by the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement.

Risky Business

A collaboration between Alex Sutherland and Brink Scholtz. Commissioned by Higher Education HIV/Aids Programme. Performed for specific student and staff audiences throughout university campus, generating discussion and reflection on attitudes and stigma.

The Christmas Show

Directed by Ingrid Wylde, the annual Christmas Show brings young talents of Grahamstown on stage (with a star performance by a six year-old) for a festive celebration.

"an ensemble to reckon with on the national stage" - Adrienne Sichel, *The Star*

Ubom! receives its main funding support from the National Arts Council, the National Lottery, and Rhodes University.



Acty Tang

Choreographer-performer, Part-time Lecturer at Rhodes Drama

2008 in brief

Nominee at the Gauteng MEC Award for Contemporary Choreography and Dance, for Best Male Performer.

Presented dance theatre *Chaste* at the Dance Factory, Johannesburg.

Choreographed and performed at the Spier Performing Arts Festival, Cape Town, directed by Brett Bailey and Jay Pather.

Directed dance film *Textures*, shown at Montage festival in Johannesburg and at the National Arts Festival.

Directed *Ozymandias* for the First Physical Theatre Company, in collaboration with New Orleans-based John/Allen Project.

Created and performed solo contemporary performance work, *inscrutable*, for China Week at Rhodes University.





Stilted | Chris Fisher, Richard Antrobus | photo by Michael Dexter

Studying Drama at Rhodes

The best of professional artistic, technical, educational, administrative and community-based practices can be found at Rhodes Drama, with opportunities for hands-on experience as well as rigorous academic studies of theatre.

Students also choose to study at Rhodes Drama for the wider education that can be gained through a BA degree. The different fields of knowledge and critical faculties developed in a humanities degree nurture an intelligent, informed approach to creating theatre.

Honours and Masters degrees offer specialisations and intensive training that prepare the student for the demands of the industry. Graduates from Rhodes Drama work as performing artists, teachers, theatre administrators, choreographers, lecturers, performer-creators, stage managers and workshop leaders; others work in film, television, creative arts therapy, industrial theatre, advertising, community development and arts journalism.



Bleeding Mermaid | Zanne Solomon | photo by Michael Dexter

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Thank you to the staff and students of Rhodes University Drama department for the creative energies that gave life to these images.



Drama postgraduates, Gary Gordon and John Kani at Port Elizabeth's Opera House for a performance of *Sizwe Banzi is Dead*