

General Media Release | **Young Directors' Season 2009** | 5 August 2009
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The Honours directors (Saint-Francis Tohlang, Roshnee Gupta, Natasha Lech and Byron Davis) | Photo by PJ Waugh

Rhodes University Drama Department Presents

Young Directors' Season 2009

26 – 29 August 2009 | Rhodes Theatre Complex

The Rhodes Drama Department invites you to witness the works of four young vibrant Honours directors in this year's **Young Directors' Season**.

The **Young Directors' Season** is an opportunity for young directors to demonstrate their ability to transform a text into a fully realised theatrical production. This year's **Young Directors' Season** sees Natasha Lech, Saint-Francis Tohlang, Roshnee Gupta, and Byron Davis direct provoking and diverse works.

All the pieces are woven by a common thread that packages different experiences of the human condition ranging from addiction, infidelity, power, lust, relationships and gender politics into accomplished works of theatrical expression.

Age recommendation | 14 upwards

Duration | 30 minutes each piece [excluding interval]

Tickets | Theatre Café | Theatre Foyer | 09:00 – 16:00 weekdays

Limited seating

Ticket price | R20 full ticket & R15 student/senior citizens

Further Information | www.ru.ac.za/drama

Theatre Café will be running a special during shows | 10% off all menu items between 5:00pm and 7:00pm until the kitchen closes and 10% off other items thereafter.

About the Pieces |

Revolutionary Road by Justin Haythe directed by **Natasha Lech**

"Hopeless emptiness... Plenty of people are onto the emptiness, but it takes real guts to see the hopelessness."
(*Revolutionary Road* Screenplay).

The pervading thematic concern of this text is the notion of trying to escape the constant human state of being *stuck*; the idea that once a career has been established, a marriage has been realised and children have been attained; one ends up stuck in the empty routine of day to day living. The spontaneity of youth is lost and dreams and desires that once seemed so important fall to the way side. The leading character, April Wheeler, finds a way to escape the routine, but the routine seems to be so embedded in the other characters that surround her that in their inability to escape the routine, she in turn is forced to accept that there is no escape.

Closer by Patrick Marber directed by **Saint-Francis Tohlang**

Closer is a text raw in emotion, action, feeling and sound. It carefully dissects modern relationships and questions the collusion of lust, love, desire and intimacy in relationships. The core of *Closer*, just as of human nature, is sex. "In the play, sex is tender, romantic, loving, casual, intense, brutal, selfish, squalid, savage, a blessing and a curse" writes Richard Eyre. It is the underscoring of our lives.

Closer weaves the lives of four different characters into an intricate fabric of deceit, infidelity and intimacy. The quest for truth becomes greater. It shows us that truth may be painful sometimes, and that truth can devastate as oppose to heal.

In *Closer* we see ourselves as characters 'seemingly' unknown to us and there manifests some sort of glaring, painful and guilty recognition: The power-struggles in the quest for love, the damage inflicted by them and the ultimate disillusionment of the lovers all ring true.

The Love of the Nightingale by Timberlake Wertenbaker directed by **Roshnee Gupta**

The Love of a Nightingale is about asking questions. It is about interrogating the past to try and gain an understanding of the present. It is about sex, guilt, shame, vengeance, gender roles and how those roles influence how we think as men, and as women. It is about the impact of those thoughts and how they transmit into actions and how those actions affect our lives. We live in a country that is plagued by anger, frustration and violence, we, now more than ever, need to ask the question(s) 'why?' and we need to keep asking it until rape statistics stop reflecting those of countries in civil war

Withnail and I by Bruce Robinson directed by **Byron Davis**

London: 1969. Two down-on-their-luck actors (Withnail and Marwood) fed up with the damp and cold, the piles of washing up, mad drug dealers and psychotic Irishmen – find solace in drinking (and other narcotics). Seeking respite from their uneventful lives they leave their squalid flat for an idyllic countryside holiday, courtesy of Withnail's Uncle Monty and his stone cottage in Penrith in the north of England. Faced with no modern conveniences, a bunch of oddball locals and a surprise visit from an amorous "Uncle Monty", their wits are tested, along with their friendship. *Withnail and I* is a dark and twisted comedy that subtly explores the more sinister and destructive nature of relationships.

Dates |

WEDNESDAY 26th AUGUST 2009 -

19:00pm - *REVOLUTIONARY ROAD* by Justin Haythe directed by NATASHA LECH (in the THEATRE RECESS)
20:30PM - *CLOSER* by Patrick Marber directed by SAINT-FRANCIS TOHLANG (in the BOX THEATRE)

THURSDAY 27th AUGUST 2009 -

19:00pm - *THE LOVE OF THE NIGHTINGALE* by Timberlake Wertenbaker directed by ROSHNEE GUPTAR (in the BOX THEATRE)
20:30pm - *WITHNAIL AND I* by Bruce Robinson directed by BRYON DAVIS (in the THEATRE RECESS)

FRIDAY 28th AUGUST 2009 -

19:00pm - *CLOSER* by Patrick Marber directed by SAINT-FRANCIS TOHLANG (in the BOX THEATRE)
20:30pm - *REVOLUTIONARY ROAD* by Justin Haythe directed by NATAHSA LECH (in the THEATRE RECESS)

SATURDAY 29th AUGUST 2009 -

19:00pm - *WITHNAIL AND I* by Bruce Robinson directed by BYRON DAVIS (in the THEATRE RECESS)
20:30PM - *THE LOVE OF THE NIGHTINGALE* by Timberlake Wertenbaker directed by ROSHNEE GUPTAR (in the BOX THEATRE)

About the Directors |

Natasha Lech

Having recently received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama and English Literature, Natasha is now currently doing her Honours degree in Drama, focusing on: Acting, Directing and Writing. She is currently directing an adaptation of "Revolutionary Road" for her final Honours project. She is also a 'Theatre Making' tutor for first year drama students as well as the Rhodes University's Drama Department 'Front of House Manager'. She is also part of a local Grahamstown band called "Marbo and the Vibes" and hopes to one day follow her dream career in Musical Theatre, combining both her passion for acting and music.

Saint-Francis Tohlang

Saint-Francis Tohlang is an aspiring Director/Producer and Entrepreneur. An individual driven by creative passion, he envisions a career in theatre/film producing and entrepreneurship where he has already established a growing entrepreneurial repertoire. He is the founding director of a small business named *Avenue Events*, which has hosted a number of events including Grahamstown's first fashion show and the Vanity lab Fashion Show. Tohlang has been invited to direct the SHARC Benefit Concert for 2009 and the Amnesty International Moving Exhibition. He is also a partner in a branding company named *Qurious Branding*. As an emerging director, his developing directorial voice is inclined to magical realism and enjoys "raw texts, texts with feeling laden with emotions that embody the human condition". Tohlang plans to further his studies and read towards a Master of Fine Arts degree specialising in producing for theatre/film at AFDA next year.

Byron Davis

After finishing his BA in Drama and Human Kinetics & Ergonomics, Byron took a year off studying. Since returning to do his honours he is focussing on aspects of performance, such as acting and contemporary performance as well as directing. Most recently he performed at the 2008 National Arts Festival in Wesley Deintje's *Hamlet Machine* and Emma de Wet's *Malboro Country* at the end of 2008. He has worked with such names as Reza de Wet and Anton Krueger, and appeared at 2009 National Arts Festival in Martin Sherman's *Cracks* and the Rhodes University student production *Story*. Having worked with a plethora of directors, his experience of different artistic styles would serve, he hopes, in bringing his own personal edge to an incredible text.

Roshnee Gupta

Roshnee has received her BA degree in English and Drama and is completing her Honours degree in Drama, specialising in Directing, Writing and Contemporary Performance. She is a published author, two time director at the National Arts Festival and a partner in a growing Film Production Company. Roshnee is driven to ask questions, to interrogate tradition and culture and all social norms that prevent women from realizing their full potential. *The Love of a Nightingale*, by Timberlake Wertenbaker, is a pinnacle piece for Roshnee because it asks the question, WHY? Why are there different standards of behaviour for men and women? Why are people oppressed and why do we live in a violent world and finally, Why do women experience the brunt of that violence?

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