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News Release
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Andrew Buckland brings a feast of African Heritage to the stage

Andrew Buckland, back after a host of projects including performing for the Cirque du Soleil in Las Vegas, brings to Grahamstown a unique and inspiring play called *Morountodun*. This production combines African dance, music and a thrilling performance by talented and passionate Rhodes University students.

The play, taking place from 21 to 24 April in the Rhodes main theatre, will be of particular interest to scholars, students and anyone interested in contemporary African performance, including those curious about art and expression born in the African continent.

Morountodun, or “I Have Found A Sweet Thing”, is an explosion of song, dance, visual treats and exciting theatricality. Written in 1983 by renowned Nigerian playwright, Femi Osofisan, it is set in 1969, during the Nigerian Civil war.

The performance deals with contemporary African issues in contemporary African ways, reclaiming our continental heritage. *Morountodun* employs the myths, rituals and traditional performance forms of Nigeria and, with wit and skill, interlaces playful commentary on Western theatre forms. It includes performances by committed and energetic students on a journey to discover what it means to be African.

About the story itself:

A young woman from the privileged class, modelling herself on the mythic figure of Moremi allows herself to be captured by the rebels to bring their leader to the authorities.

During her time with the rebels she discovers that these are not bloodthirsty violent revolutionaries but simple farmers. Men and women who are driven by the most powerful motivation and hunger, and who justifiably fight for their rights and against the exploitation of their situation by the ruling classes.

She is converted to their cause and joins the rebel forces.

The use of Moremi as heroic figure provided fuel for a great deal of controversy among Nigerian critics and artists including Wole Soyinka, Osofisan's one time lecturer, claiming he was joining in the game of ‘traducing one's history for ideological gains’.

For Osofisan, the use of Moremi, who holds a special place in Yoruba collective memory as one of a group of women who have “actively used their femininity or overcome its limitations in exemplary action on behalf of their people” (Abiola Irele), and has been consecrated by the middle class, was a way of exposing the appropriation of tradition by the ruling class to legitimise its present dominant position. The controversy did little to dull the play's popularity which was based, according to audiences, on the vibrant and joyful expression of theatrical skill in performance.

Production details:

Title:	Morountodun
Written by:	Femi Osofisan
Directed by:	Andrew Buckland
Venue:	Rhodes Main Theatre
Date:	21 – 24 April 2010
Tickets:	R20 and R15 for scholars, students and pensioners
Website:	www.ru.ac.za/drama