

HERE, THERE, NOW

A Digital Storytelling Collaboration
BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE | LONDON, UK

newsletter #1 JUNE 2021

HERE, THERE, NOW is an exciting artistic collaboration, an international storytelling project between young women actors of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and West London, UK, in partnership with the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre of London, UK, under Nhimbe Trust's long-running Women in Theatre & Television programme.

The project is carried out in partnership with the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Nhimbe Trust and funded by British Council as part of their Digital Collaboration and Storytelling Grants scheme.

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre said in their announcement on 8 April, "We are delighted to be partnering with Nhimbe Trust Zimbabwe and the British Council on Here, There, Now, a new digital storytelling collaboration that will bring together young Black women, aged 18 – 25, from West London and Bulawayo, Zimbabwe to create work exploring themes of womanhood, identity and race. UK-based theatre director and writer Monique Touko and Zimbabwe based award-winning actor, creative, poet and director 'Lady Tshawe' (Nomashawekazi Damasane) will lead a series of workshops throughout May 2021.

In response to Black Lives Matter and events of 2020 including the ongoing effects of the pandemic, the online collaboration HERE, THERE, NOW will provide young women the agency, power and platform to share their voice and stories with others who are experiencing the same issues from the other side of the globe. Online workshops will run simultaneously from London and Bulawayo as participants come together to create monologues inspired by their individual experiences yet which will be performed by their counterpart overseas. The monologues created through the workshops will be filmed and shared online and available to watch in July.

/The Creative Team ...



Bulawayo - London

London is located in the United Kingdom at the longitude of -0.13 and latitude of 51.51.

Bulawayo is located in Zimbabwe at the longitude of 28.63 and latitude of -20.13 .

- Driving Distance : 12386 KM and 121 meters / 7696.4 miles.
- Straight Line Distance : 8446 KM and 800 meters / 5248.6 miles.
- Driving Travel time : 247 hours and 36 minutes.

The Creative Team

The all-female creative team will be led by UK-based theatre director and writer Monique Touko and Zimbabwe based award-winning actor, creative, poet and director 'Lady Tshawe' (Nomashawekazi Damasane), who will work together to create workshops, writing provocations and direct performances; working online to plan and evaluate workshops.

Both producers from Nhimbe and the Lyric have worked together since 2015 but this will be the first digital collaboration and new learning for all involved.

Monique Touko is a London-based multidisciplinary artist working in theatre, radio and film with many credits to her name. She is a theatre director, and her directing training includes Regional Theatre Young Directors Scheme at Royal Exchange Manchester. At the Young Vic (London), her training has involved the Intro to Directing course led by Sacha Weres, Boris Karloff Trainee Assistant Directors Programme and the Jerwood Assistant Director Scheme.



Monique is a producer in film and music videos, her credits include an independent project for Franklyn Lane Film Productions. She is also part of **The Ubunifu Space**- A definitive guide to music and culture from the youth of Africa and the diaspora - the Ubunifu way. Monique is Partnership Manager and Assistant Producer for Ubunifu Radio as well as a regular member of the UK reaction team on the youtube channel which has a global following of 270K+ subscribers and over 40 million views.

Monique said: "Here, There, Now provides a great opportunity for young Black women to not only develop skills in playwriting, creative writing and performance but also to explore their identity in their home country and empathise with those based in their partner nation. I hope they will feel emboldened through this exchange of ideas and feel a strengthened sense of community."

Personally too, Bulawayo is the birthplace of my Mother and a place I hold dear to my heart. The opportunity to make and create cross-culturally particularly at this time is beyond exciting. In addition, being a Black woman is beautiful and complex and exploring it in this way in the shadows of Black Lives Matter feels right and highly nourishing. I'm looking forward to seeing what we create."

/The Creative Team - Cont

The Creative Team ... Continued

The multi-talented award-winning artist **LADY TSHAWE (Nomashawekazi Damasane)** is the Zimbabwe Director for HERE, THERE, NOW. Her artistic style, expression and image embody her abilities, aspirations and achievements as a musician, poet, writer, dancer, actress and creative thinker. She is a force whose convictions and views about equal opportunities for self-expression influence her writing, theatrical roles, music and conversations.

She advocates for expressing herself as a person, which is far from the need to be afforded privileges because she is a woman. She aspires to influence the performing, entertainment and research sectors globally.

Lady Tshawe has performed in numerous theatre productions in and outside the country such as Zambezi Express, Tellers: The Musical and Blood Tongue which saw her win best theatre actress in 2018 at Bulawayo Arts Awards (BAA), to name but a few. Also in 2017 she was selected as the Zimbabwean Scriptwriter for the Zimbabwe/UK collaboration 'Unified Women' under Nhimbe's WiTT programme. In 2019 she wrote and directed her first theatre production '6.55' which won the 2020 BAA Best Theatre Production.

Tshawe is a holder of a BA in Drama and Ethnomusicology from Rhodes University and is currently studying towards her MBA. She is a committee member of the International Theatre Institute (Zimbabwe).

She said: "I am excited and honoured to be given this opportunity to be a part of this project. I am particularly looking forward to seeing how the young ladies interact with the topics and with each other using the 'new normal' format of work being done online. This exchange, I believe, will not only foster working relationships but will inspire the participants to explore and challenge themselves creatively."



/The Zimbabwe Participants ...

The Zimbabwe Participants

The Zimbabwean artists include:



Thandy Dhlana



Edith Masango



Getrude Munhamo



Laura Ngwenya



Antonatte Maphosa



Priviledge Mathema



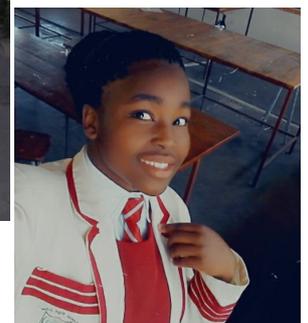
Pamela Mnkandla



Shammah Banda



Sidumisile Mthethwa



Hazel Moyo



/Partners ...

Partners

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, London



The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is one of London's leading producing theatres. For a hundred and twenty five years, they have welcomed some of the world's finest writers, directors, actors and theatre companies to their stage. From Harold Pinter to Tanika Gupta; Sir John Gielgud to Sheila Hancock; Complicite to Frantic Assembly.

Right in the heart of Hammersmith, they **produce bold and relevant world-class theatre**, committed to being vital to, and representative of, their local community and to being a major force in London and UK theatre. They develop and nurture the next generation of talent, and provide opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to discover the power of creativity.

<https://lyric.co.uk/here-there-now-international-digital-storytelling-project-announced/>

Rob Lehmann of Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, and Director of Young Lyric, said: "Here, There, Now is a new and exciting opportunity within the Young Lyric offer that connects young people from West London internationally with their peers to acquire a local, national and international perspective on the world through the use of theatre and creativity. We are delighted to be working with both local and international collaborators and look forward to developing a partnership with Nhimbe Trust who have a track record of artistic excellence with young people."

Nhimbe Trust, Bulawayo



Based in the city of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Nhimbe Trust is an arts education organisation and a leader in cultural policy research, training, advocacy and defending freedom of creative expression.

Nhimbe's *Women in Theatre and Television (WITT)* programme provides vocational training and resources to emerging women writers, actresses, directors and producers. WITT regularly presents the work of these women and empowers women's voices on stage. The programme has grown through the support of Africalia, Belgium over a number of years.

www.nhimbe.org

The British Council



The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. They build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year they reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, and through broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 The British Council are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

www.britishcouncil.org