

SATMag

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The Baxter Theatre Centre in collaboration with Derek Lubner present

ENDGAME

BY SAMUEL BECKETT

DIRECTION SYLVAIN STRIKE



Andrew Buckland, Rob van Vuuren, Antoinette van der Merwe, Antoine van der Merwe

"ENDGAME"

SEASON EXTENDED UNTIL 1 SEP!!!



"STELLAR CAST IN A GEM THAT EXPLORES OUR HUMAN FRILITY"

- CAPE ARGUS



"ENDGAME IS ERVARING VAN LEEFTYD"

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Editor's Note

Working together is the only way that the SA Theatre and the entire Entertainment Industry, at large, can truly grow and prosper in all aspects of business.

Uniting as one is where the start lies; reaching out, speaking up, cheering on, lending a helping hand...this all will come effortlessly after just one hello. The impact of kindness is more heartfelt than any amount gained to put up the greatest show. What the Industry needs now is the beating of one heart...question is when will we begin?

What amount of kindness have you set free today, to make the load lighter tomorrow for another artist. We often turn in the same circle skirting around true connection, filling our time with building up networks of no worth: instead of asking WHAT are you doing? Enquire rather HOW are you doing?

Moving forward is the ideal - but moving together is the ultimate! Reaching destinations are always better when shared by more - so why not share more with more...lets journey there together.

Much love,
Vianney Henry Farmer

STAGE DIRECTIONS

BLOCKING

Centre Stage 2

We have a chat with legendary performance artist Gavin Krastin.

Offstage 6

A Q&A session with the multi-faceted theatre creative David April.

Upstage 14

We take a deeper look into the Baxter Theatre's production of *Endgame*.

Fun On Stage 16

Cover: Gavin Krastin's *Yet To Be Determined*,
Photo by : Harold Gess

GENERAL INFO

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KRASTIN

A South African performance and live artist, scenographer and arts educator. His work spans the worlds of theatre, visual arts and contemporary performance and SATMag just had to have a sit down with one of the country's most profound creatives.

Gavin Krastin's interests lie within the body's representation in alternative and layered spaces. "My work is inspired by my immediate South African environment and the histories and performative identities embedded in its shifting post-colonial and de-colonial socio-political climate." The social underpinnings and philosophies of space intrigue this theatre maker and inspire a questioning and mythologizing of operational systems, behaviours, proximities and the politics of boundary-crossings and transgressions in his work.

Favouring intimate audience experiences and a proclivity for immersive and site-based performances, Krastin advocates for the extension of the performance frame and a migration towards unconventional spaces. In doing so the parameters of spectatorship are extended, positioning the audience as agents, co-conspirators and participants in live art practices; he reveals to SATMag and continues to express that: "What live art and performance art surfaces, or provokes, for me is the revolutionary and resistant potential of contemporary body-based live art and performance practices where real, live actions are able to unveil the many defeats of the body perpetrated by the traumas of history and representation." This unveiling constitutes the power of performance and live art; relies Krastin and continues; "A minor revolt where local

bodies influence global shifts and connections in a manner that challenges the weary/wary status quo and our complicity within it."



Gavin Krastin. Photo: Sarah Schafer.

To Krastin performance, in a broad sense, is the closest thing we have to real tangible magic. He explains that it's an accumulation of so many facets and layers resulting in continuous transformation. "It's about energy and life and the body and all the change (and grossness) that comes with that." He also tells SATMag that performance had always been a huge interest and influence on his life, but it was when he was shifting from undergraduate studies to postgraduate studies that there was simultaneously a shift in him from performance as an interest and holistic skill, to performance as a career, lifestyle and culture and Krastin has been able to turn each of his performances into an intriguing experience appealing to all the senses. After obtaining his Master of Arts Degree in choreography and performance and an undergraduate degree in drama and art history and visual cultures, Krastin has allowed for these various forms to aid his work in taking shape and these works have been presented at numerous festivals and platforms in South Africa and internationally. Krastin also shares his extensive knowledge while lecturing at Rhodes University and he has also worked with the First Physical Theatre Company. Currently he operates from nomadic creative spaces in Cape Town, often collaborating with his partner, choreographer Alan Parker, and lecture part-time at the University of Cape Town.



Gavin Krastin's *NIL*. Photo by Mia van der Merwe

His career highlights include the various commissions he has been afforded by festivals and curators that he respects across South

Africa and internationally. His work "Rough Musick" has taken him to Wales, England, Scotland and Brazil, while "Pig Headed" took him to the USA, Germany and The Netherlands and other works traveled to Prague and Canada. "It's incredible, and often surprising, to be on a platform where you have been programmed alongside artists that you respect so much and who inspire you; when the distance is drastically shortened." states Krastin and expresses how fortunate he was, last year, to be part of a contingency of South African artists touring performances across The Netherlands for AfroVibes Festival. Krastin lend a helping hand to assist young upcoming artists with the support from the National Arts Council, he initiated and curated "Arcade", a two-day pop-up performance art and live art exhibition comprised of multiple durational performances occurring simultaneously. The project directly benefited 8 up-and-coming artists working in interdisciplinary and performance arts, 2 production managers and technicians and 2 photographers. "Arcade" not only supported freelancing young and emerging artists in the creation of their new works, but also introduced these artists to new audiences and communities within the professional arts industry and public arena. This also give artists opportunity to learn how to create quality theatre productions. Krastin informs SATMag that theatre to him must be the innovation and initiative. "I think what makes South African theatre and performance exciting, particularly fringe theatre, is how our hostile environment forces one to be inventive with the body, as opposed to be inventive with 'fancy' extraneous devices." He also points out that as a country we have a sordid history full of omissions and one-sided accounts. "I love how our theatre both exemplifies and challenges our history;" he states and continues explaining how it gets into the problematic cracks of time and exposes new questions and tells new stories or takes fresh approaches and contexts to familiar stories.

He also comments on creations by makers fresh out of university saying that they tend to be quite didactic and rather message-heavy, sometimes leaving little room for interpretation. He adds on that youngsters are good at marketing and play the social media game well, which is advantageous of course as such media has become a currency of our time. Some of the biggest obstacles of being part of SA Theatre, to him, are low self-esteem and a very little sense of worth. He continues to express: "There is no blue-print to success and surviving capitalism and competition is volatile – we are rejected and shamed daily." He also touches on how artists constantly compare themselves to other people in very unhealthy ways: "I suppose it is a symptom of being a plugged-in and uploaded global citizen. It is maybe worth remembering that different people carry different crosses and thrive in different conditions at different times and in different spaces." Gavin explains that he was raised to muster up as much integrity as one can, focussing on oneself and the goals of one's practice and put in the required work (and more); a poignant sentiment we all should constantly remind ourselves of and moreover remind each other of.

Gavin further comments on the theatre finance crises in his interview by stating: "I think as artists we are going to be continuously plagued by financial obstacles and that's when one's creativity and problem-solving ability is really tested." He also points out that the impact has been massively reducing marketing, publicity and advertising budgets across the board for projects as one simply cannot be spending often large amounts of money on advertising when there is barely enough support for salaries. "I have had to also reduce the size and scale of some projects. I mean there is a reason why I am a soloist and it has a lot to do with support." He supports his choice by referring to when, in May of this year, he initiated and curated a group show of durational live art encounters by young artists called

"Arcade"; at the Theatre Arts Admin Collective in Cape Town. Although it was a large success, he had to whittle down the reach of the project and the amount of artists involved which has sad repercussions and ripple effects for the individual and their practice. Therefore he highlights again, that is where one has to work shrewdly regarding budgets.

Apart from finances, what frustrates Gavin the most is any sense of fundamentalism and/or singularity towards performance and theatre. As he puts it: "It's a vast and porous arena where multiplicities and different manifestations should be celebrated. A "my way or the high way" approach, or "that's not real art" rhetoric, is tantamount to censorship and just ignorant." And it is indeed time for all artists to join and become one – uniting to make SA Theatre's worth more profound, rather than forming separate entities that boost only a particular part of SA Theatre. SA Theatre practitioners need to start communicating as 'we' and not 'I'. for it is within the amalgamation of us all that we can shape the ideal industry for all of us! **SATMag.**



Gavin Krastin's *On Seeing Red*, at the National Arts Festival. Photo by Sarah Schafer.



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DIRECTED BY
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APRIL

David April exudes passion and this admirable quality transcends in all his efforts to develop SA arts and culture. Using twenty years of extensive knowledge, infused with a decade of senior management experience, topped off with a professional approach to any project he tackles - from fundraising, teaching and skills development to planning, marketing and management. April has shown great leadership skills as a director, teacher, choreographer and lobbyist in South African Dance. In addition he within the performing arts sphere, he has filled the roles of performer, project manager, fundraiser, dance activist, developer of education through dance and movement, dance adjudicator, motivational speaker and reviewer.



David April

1) For those who are not familiar with your work, give us a rundown of some of your career highlights thus far.

The Tunkie Award was created in remembrance of Xolani Nettleton Dyusha and his commitment to the development of the arts in South Africa. As Marketing Manager of the Nedbank Arts & Culture Affinity products he was very involved with the establishment of the Arts & Culture Trust of the President. 2018 marks the 15th anniversary of when I was bestowed the honour of being the first recipient of the prestigious Tunkie Memorial Award for *Outstanding Dedication and Leadership in Dance*. Two years later, after a rigorous selection process, I reached the semi-final stage as a nominee of *Amstel's Salute to Success* where individuals are honoured for hard work and achievements in their field of excellence in 2005.

Rewind to the year 2003 , the same year I was honoured with the Tunkie Award , I was

in my 10th year in the performing arts industry having fulfilled the roles including performer, project manager, fundraiser, cultural activist, developer of education through dance and movement, dance adjudicator, motivational speaker and reviewer.

The year 2018 also bears great significance for me as an independent consultant. My consultancy, *David April Arts Consultancy* will celebrating 10 years and has been a provider of individualized, hands-on consulting services for arts organizations, both the public and corporate sector and educational institutions. What the Arts Consultancy stands for is that it has been focused on improving clarity of purpose, management and financial sustainability of cultural organizations, exploring partnerships between the private, public and non-profit sectors, which in turn allows the development of creative industries. In addition it has been providing business training to cultural workers so that they have the necessary skills to manage and develop their enterprises.

2) What is your earliest memory of theatre?

I grew up in Galeshewe Village, Kimberley in the Northern Cape, where opportunities for young people interested in formal dance training were very limited, in fact non-existent. There were 'dance clubs' in the township, which offered Latin and ballroom, with older people teaching the youngsters at weekends. This means that there was very little exposure nor access to theatres. The earliest memory I have is watching community-based groups performing plays and we used to refer these as "sketches" in the local community arts centres.

3) Why theatre and not something else?

Oscar Wilde captures my sentiments quite well where like him, I regard theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.

4) When did you realize that you wanted to be part of the theatre world?

Music, dance and by extension theatre are all part of African cultural expression. It is the fibre of one's being and all these art forms are inextricably intertwined into one's everyday existence. It was not a realisation but rather an acknowledgment and appreciation that theatre, unawares to me, IS my world!



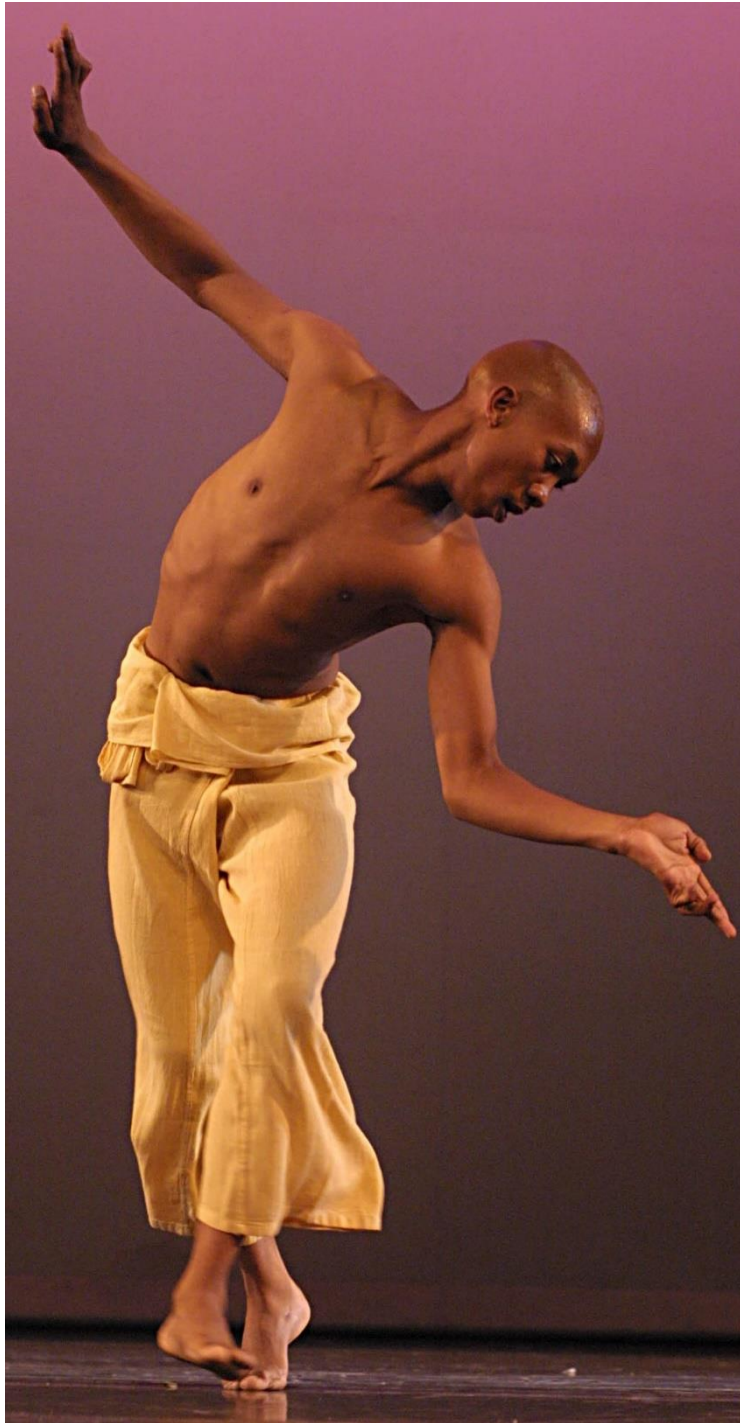
Gregory Maqoma in David April's *Mummy, mummy, I have seen this piece only once and I know what it's about!*

5) What does theatre mean to you?

It is about Healing, Escapism, Connecting, and Reflection; and enables us to see ourselves through the eyes of others.

6) After all your years in this field, what still excites you about SA theatre?

The immediacy of experiencing one's life through the lives of others and they are a mirror of society. What excites me most is the fearlessness of theatre makers to tell our stories bravely and without fear or favour dealing with socio-economic and political themes.



Luyanda Sidiya in David April's
Emerveillement II

7) The theatre of the modern age varies greatly from what it was, why do you think this is?

This can be attributed to the evolution of technology but I still believe that the nuances of storytelling remain the same, the power to move people, challenge their thinking, and face issues head-on.

8) Which young theatre artist's (performer/director/ choreographer/writer) work do you admire, that you don't know on a personal level, and why?

I am absolutely in awe of how young artists approach story-telling whether it is in dance, theatre and even writing. The various works across all these genres include critical thought and look at socio-political issues and what it means to be a contemporary artist. It will be very unfair for me to single one individual that I admire. I am incredibly inspired by and honour all the young artists I have had the privilege of working with.

9) What role do you play, as an individual, in assisting up and coming artists?

Life Coach and Mentor in the business and the management of the arts. In addition to that I am an independent consultant and project manager and share as much as I can in terms of my knowledge and experience in the cultural and creative industries.

10) What do you love about SA Theatre?

The diversity, vibrancy and unending narratives at our disposal to make the world laugh, cry, reflect and face their everyday realities through the power of theatre.

11) What changes do you see in younger theatre makers today in terms of theatre as an art form?

I am fascinated at their innovative ways of integrating and making use of technology to tell our stories.

12) What would you say is the biggest challenge that South African theatre makers are facing today? What would your advice be to them?

One of the biggest challenges and threat for artists is audiences across the board to access their work and the necessary support of the state to invest in the arts. My advice - continue being resourceful! In many instances where artists have NOT been resourced to present and showcase their work, they continue being resilient and somehow rise to the occasion –KEEP ON KEEPING ON! This resilience will not prevent theatre makers from expanding and producing elite multi-skilled employable artists for the local and international industry.

13) What are your hopes for the future of SA theatre?

We have an abundance of talent and the one of the biggest problems is that there are not enough platforms for these artists to perform, making them practically unemployable. It is encouraging that there is a huge interest by international companies and productions that land up employing South African artists. Those are the artists who best showcase South African talent overseas, acting as ambassadors for those who most aspire to be like them and to continue the industry's positive growth trajectory. I hope for a more thriving arts industry where all concerned have access to the theatre world and this will be made possible through more government funding, private interest and other support structures to build a financially sustainable and stable industry.

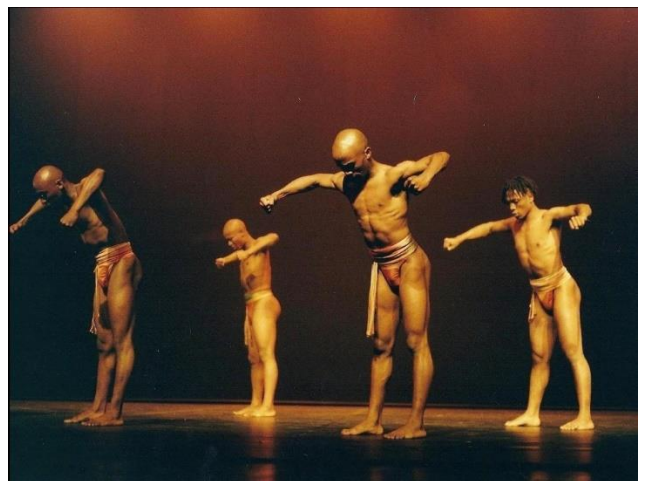
14) What theatre projects are you dreaming of and why?

Theatre incorporating all arts forms for the people – and for young arts practitioners to keep on telling their stories unreservedly.

15) What has been your most outstanding theatre experience?

When I matriculated from St Boniface High School I was awarded a scholarship to do

my post-matric at Hilton College in Pietermaritzburg. I chose to study Computer Science. This journey continued at the ML Sultan Technikon (now Durban University of Technology) for another year and this was a great source of unhappiness as I could not connect with the subject matter. One day when I was taking a break from my studies I saw a poster advertising a dance production which was showing at the Natal Playhouse. It was performed by the then Phenduka Dance Theatre which was founded in 1989 by Wouter Gildenhuys as a project for unemployed youths. The first training was done by Alfred Hinkel former Artistic Director Jazzart Dance Theatre in Cape Town who acted as facilitator and teacher. I was absolutely enthralled by this experience and the two dancers who stood for me then were Sbonakaliso Ndaba and Sifiso Kweyama. I decided there and then that this is what I wanted to do. The following year whilst I was contemplating whether I was going to continue with my studies, by chance, I heard an advert on Radio 5 (now 5fm) for dance auditions at Moving Into Dance – this was in the early 1990s. I knew this was an opportunity for me and, after speaking to Sylvia Glasser, I auditioned. Out of about 50 people, 12 of us made it into the class of 1992. And that was the beginning.....and the journey continues! SATMag.



David April in action on stage.



SAMUEL BECKETT'S *ENDGAME*

Samuel Beckett's incandescent classic *Endgame* - featuring a star-studded and multi-award-winning cast and creative team - explodes onto the Baxter's Golden Arrow Studio stage from 8 August to 1 September, with Andrew Buckland, Rob van Vuuren, Antoinette Kellerman and Soli Philander, directed by Sylvaine Strike.

Nothing makes more sense than to have Samuel Beckett's brilliant play about senselessness, performed by two ludicrous clowns who are finally joining forces - Andrew Buckland and Rob van Vuuren," says director Strike. Not forgetting her own sense of the absurd and magic that she cleverly weaves into all her work and which has become her signature of success.

She continues, "In addition, having two theatre icons, Antoinette Kellerman and Soli Philander play in the supporting roles, is a dream for any director. If, for no other reason, than to spend time in the company of these South African theatre

greats, performing one of the most extraordinary plays ever written. They will take the audience onto a journey into the dark heart of the post-apocalyptic circus of this play."

This production brings together the combined talent and expertise of comic and theatrical craftsmen and women in what has been described as one of Beckett's favourite plays. Buckland plays the role of Hamm, with the inimitable van Vuuren as Clov and veterans Philander and Kellerman as Nagg and Nell. Set and lighting design is by Patrick Curtis and costume design by Birrie le Roux.

Johannesburg-based Sylvaine Strike has become widely respected as a leading director in South African theatre for her fine work that has won her many accolades and awards. Last year she directed Moliere's *Tartuffe* to great acclaim and some of her other productions at the Baxter over the years include *The Travellers*, *Black and Blue*, *The Miser and Tobacco*, and *the Harmful Effects Thereof*.



The cast of the Baxter Theatre's *Endgame*.

In recent years at the Baxter, Buckland was seen in *The Inconvenience of Wings*, *Tobacco*, and *the Harmful Effects Thereof* and *Blue/Orange*; van Vuuren performed in *A Doll's House*, *Life and the Jive Cape Town Funny Festival*; Kellerman was seen in *As Die Broek Pas*, *Samsa-Masjien* and *macbeth.slapeloos* and Philander returned to the Baxter stage last year in his own solo show *Nice Coat (Lekker Jas)*.

Samuel Beckett was born in Dublin, Ireland, on Friday 13 April 1906. He is described as an avant-garde novelist, playwright, theatre director, poet, and literary translator, who lived in Paris for most of his adult life where he wrote in both English and French. In 1969 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature with *Endgame*, *Waiting for Godot* and *Krapps Last Tape* being some of his best-known plays which have been, and are still being, performed all over the world today.

Beckett's work offers a bleak, tragicomic outlook on human existence, often coupled with black comedy and gallows humour, which is why he is considered one of the last modernist writers and one of the key figures in what is called "Theatre of the Absurd".

Endgame explores, with precisely crafted eloquence, the relationship of master and servant; boss clown and underdog and in some contexts father and son; parent and child. All of these are either delicately or robustly disembowelled with the rhythmical precision evocative of a *Magnus Opus*. The laughter triggered when watching the play allows its audience to come to terms with the horror and ecstasy of existence, all at once.

In this apparently simple symbiosis lies the intricate complexity of a toxic co-dependency in all its familiar dark hilarity and pain; for at the core of this classic work by Beckett, is the desperately funny, heart breaking interplay between two classic characters of world theatre.

Beckett highlights one theme in particular, that of "finishing" which is presented right in the opening moments, with Clov saying, "Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be finished." This same theme is later echoed by Hamm. However, what soon becomes clear is that the act of actually finishing, represents the longed-for and dreaded end.

Director Strike explains, "Simply by existing in 2018, we face the possibilities of apocalyptic devastation and simple redemption. There could not be a more appropriate time to delve into the glory and misery of our human existence so concisely captured by Beckett during the horror that echoed through humanity during and after World War 2."

SATMag



3 Questions to 3 Artists

1. What music/ artist / song do you listen to that you will not necessarily admit in public?
2. What's the biggest embarrassment that you've experienced on stage?
3. Which theatre play best describes your life and why?

Why Babangile Gwiliza loves SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE



"It creates many doors of opportunities in exposing the work of the upcoming Theatre practitioners such as Theatre workshops and festivals, without any discrimination of gender, age, colour or experience for that matter."

Ambrose Uren, Performer

1. That person would be musical composer Max Richter.
2. A few years ago i was doing High School Musical and we were dancing and singing, some accidental snot flew out of my nose mid song and some audience and friends saw and laughed. cringe moment, ive learnt to control that since...
3. Probably Footloose. The struggle of wanting to move your feet in a place where no one allows it, is the same struggle i had initially with bboying (breakdance). So i can totally relate to that story..



Anja van den Berg, Actress

1. Taylor Swift 'Don't Blame Me'. I'm not a Taylor Swift fan AT ALL, so it pains me to admit it, but this song never fails to get me going!
2. It was probably the moment just after a scene change during one performance of our cabaret 'Dis 'n Land' at Woordfees this year when I went completely blank and literally had to ask my fellow actor "wat doen ons volgende?" out loud because I seriously couldn't remember what came next. It was at this moment that I seriously questioned my acting skills.
3. 'Rocky Horror Picture Show', because it is sexy, crazy, provocative, fun (but serious at the same time) and completely out of this world!



Andrico Goosen, Actor

1. I have to admit that nothing can make me happier than singing out loud to a Bee Gees song in the car every now and then. I mean, who doesn't like singing along to *Stayin' Alive* and *How Deep is Your Love*..
2. I had quite an embarrassing moment when I played Gus in Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*. There was a door onstage leading to the kitchen. I went to the kitchen through the door. When I finished my business in the kitchen I got blinded by the FOH light and walked straight past the door; realising it, I turned around, went back to the door, and walked through it, much to the audiences' amusement..
3. *Avenue Q*. Why? Well I am still young. I also have a BA degree, like Princeton. I also try to figure out the complexities of race, gender, sex and religious issues. Lastly, my love for puppets came from the characters of Sesame Street as a child.



Wait! Whose got a Theatre Crush on who....!?

QUINTIN WILS TELL'S US MORE ABOUT HIS THEATRE CRUSH...

There are so many people that I have a theatre crush on in the theatre industry, it's too difficult to choose just one! I would have to go with **Vianney Farmer, Deanre Reiners, Carina Nel, Cintaine Schutte and Tiaan Slabbert**. These are all wonderful theatre makers and actors in their own right with an immense amount of talent! I am always astounded when I see them working at their craft. All of them are extremely hard working and will give their everything until their last breathe and personally I love working these type of people!



5 Q'S FROM THE Editor to... Danica de La Rey

1) When did your dramatic "powers" first manifest itself?
I think the first time I knew I loved "performance" was when I did a grade four oral. I switched between reviewing the book, becoming the character and creating the story. The class cheered. The next Merit award they called in assembly the following week was "Danica De la Rey, for her beautiful book oral." I will never forget that feeling. The rest came naturally...

2) When was the most nervous you've ever been on directing a production and why?
I haven't directed a production as yet. More recently though we are seeing such amazing work coming from our local female directors. It's incredible!
There is still so much more I need to learn so I can find my story, or it can find me. I feel I will want to direct in time. My time and that transition from being directed to directing, yeah, that makes me nervous.

3) If you could be anything in the world for 24 hours, what would it be and why?
I would want to be "nothing". I would want to feel what it is to exist without existing, without cause and effect, without being anything. It's a hard theory to explain. I guess I want to exist as something I can't mimic. Something I can't ever be.

4) You've been reincarnated as a pizza, which toppings can we expect?
Avo. Avo and more avo. Does one need anything else on a pizza even?

5) If you were the opposite sex for one day, which role would you like to play in which show?
Jared Leto in anything and everything. I am in awe of his range, but the role I am thinking about as we speak, is his portrayal of an AIDS patient "Rayon" in Dallas Buyers Club.





PRODUCTION
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