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Zimbabwe: Award-Winning Play Coming to Zim

The Herald (Harare)
April 19, 2007
Posted to the web April 19, 2007

Harare

DEVELOPING Artists in partnership with Northern Stage is to present the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play 'I Am My Own Wife' during this year's Harare International Festival of the Arts scheduled for May 1 to 6.

American theatre company Northern Stage will bring their critically-acclaimed production directed by Brooke Ciardelli and Catherine Doherty to the Harare International Festival of the Arts in May before joining other Developing Artists' productions at The Assembly Rooms for The Edinburgh Festival.

Broadway and film actor Kevin Loreque (Cats, Hot Shoe Shuffle, The Birdcage with Robin Williams and Virtuosity with Russell Crowe) will revive his highly-praised performance of almost three dozen different characters to tell the story of the mysterious Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, born Lothar Berfelde, who survived both the Nazis and the Stasi as a transvestite.

The production marks the start of a new relationship between Northern Stage and the creative arts in Zimbabwe, forged by Developing Artists following its successful 2006 production of 'Territory' in Harare and at the Edinburgh Fringe.

In July 2007 a Zimbabwean actor will also act in Northern Stage's production of Tales From Ovid to be presented at Dartmouth College's Summer Arts Festival directed by Brooke Ciardelli with Giles Ramsay.

Besides 'I Am My Own Wife' Developing Artists will also present a new play titled Crocodile.

"We believe in artistic fair trade" explains Developing Artists' founder Giles Ramsay.

"It's all too easy to plunder developing countries for creative talent. It is essential that the artistic cross-fertilisation goes both ways; the impact that combining American and Zimbabwean theatre has, not only on the artists but also on African and US audiences' self-perception, is profound."

Northern Stage's artistic director Brooke Ciardelli said: "Northern Stage is honoured to debut this incredible play in Harare. The universality of its themes and the power of Kevin Loreque's performance will make a great contribution to this remarkable international event."

Developing Artists was founded by Giles Ramsay as a fund to break down the barriers, practical or psychological, that prevent performing artists from fully developing their work and sharing it on the world stage.

Focusing primarily on regions where economics or politics may have failed to fully encourage creative ambitions, The Developing Artists Fund prevents the need for resources and training, logistical costs such as visas or airfares or the lack of international connections from becoming overwhelming boundaries to self-expression both within and beyond their local community.

Based in New England, Northern Stage was founded in 1997 by director Brooke Ciardelli

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