

GBV-themed choreopoem-play *My Vagina Was Not Buried With Him* to show at Joburg Theatre, Soweto Theatre

Napo Masheane's choreopoem-play *My Vagina Was Not Buried With Him* will open at the Joburg Theatre on 19 March 2021 before moving on to the Soweto Theatre on 24 March.

Masheane, one of South Africa's multi-award-winning poet, playwright and one of the leading matriarch theatre-makers, recently virtually premiered the thought-provoking choreopoem play at the Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA) alongside other internationally renowned artists/performers from Canada, Jamaica, Sudan and the United Kingdom.



My Vagina Was Not Buried With Him is a heart-rending choreopoem-play that explores the self-mutilating circus of trauma which has painted a lot of sister-friends as poster faces of femicide in South Africa. Three out of many of these young women made it into media headlines sparking a huge hashtag movement - *#AmINext #MeToo #NotJustAHashtag #MenAreTrash* - and they were: Karabo, who was declared missing only to be found burnt alive by her boyfriend; Nene, who was raped and bludgeoned by a man who had earlier served her at the local post office; and the eight-month pregnant Tshego, who was stabbed to death by her boyfriend's best friend and found hanged on a tree.



This choreopoem told through the story *Nthates*, a Mosotho *makoti* (bride), who holds a microscope over fears that many young girls and women live under. With this finds herself conflicted and in a state of utter desolation as she struggles to cope with the dire expectations imposed on her as a *Mosotho* woman and even the perils she's forced to live with even after the death of her husband. The barriers and lines between life and death are then blurred as they bridge between the spirit world and the real world. The three sister-friends evoked by *Nthates* tears at the graveside; claw their ways out of their graves to rescue and silence *Nthate* cry. Through tears, laughter, resistance, beauty and humour, the four sister-friends set a course for a life-changing journey and embark on a road trip, which will go against traditional and cultural norms as well as exultantly ensuring them to search, find and reclaim their vaginas back.

Masheane, also best known for her provocative and humorous plays such as *My Bum Is Genetic Deal With It*, *The Fat Black Women Sing*, and *Khwezi...Say My Name*, which is a stage adaptation of Redi Thlabi's book *Khwezi: The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo*, explains why this choreopoem-play like many of her plays pulls at the heartstrings of the plight that many South African women are facing if they will be next.



Masheane, who is the managing director of Village Gossip Productions, a collaborative, multi-disciplinary production and theatre company, is artistically collaborating and co-producing, *My Vagina Was Not Buried With Him*, with Clive Mathibe from 2nd Round, as the director of the choreopoem. Mathibe, in his own right, is a prolific theatre maker, television and live and interactive media writer-director and creative producer, who has been involved in the arts industry for over a decade. He recently just directed a successfully sold out play at the Market Theatre, *Father Come Home: Tate Etila Gae*, an adaptation of Es'kia Mphahlele's book with the same name.

Masheane, an internationally recognised trailblazer who became the first Black woman to write, produce and direct a play called *A New Song*, at the Market Theatre's main stage (John Kani Theatre), presently sits as the advisory board member, underperforming arts, at Stockholm University Of The Arts (Sweden) and currently a guest lecture at SP Escola de Teatro (Brazil) where she teaches African theatre history.

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