

MARIS STELLA PROUDLY PRESENTS



Maris Stella proudly presents "An Evening of Absurdity", a performance of 3 comedies. All three plays offer comedy with a bizarre or unusual twist. Tom Stoppard's Hamlet in Fifteen Minutes summarizes and overdoes this classic Shakespeare to such an extent that it becomes

hilarious, with actors playing many roles and even some rap thrown in! The Actor's Nightmare, by Christopher Durang, takes place inside the mind of Georgie, an accountant, who finds herself stuck onstage, having to perform a play she can't remember rehearsing or agreeing to! Finally, Ben Elton (of Black Adder fame) offers the biting, satirical comedy Gasping! which tells the story of three power-hungry executives who find a way to start storing and selling "designer air". For a while things are looking up, until a global air-shortage occurs and drastic measures need to be taken.

SA Youth had a chance to talk with the lead actress of The Actor's Nightmare, Nandipa Khubone and the two leads of Gasping! Dominique Daruty and Mvelo Nzimande.

SAY: What is the message of your respective plays?

NK: Our play is basically about exploitation of consumers and normal everyday people by industries but at the end it shows how that can go terribly wrong.

DD: It does it in a funny way though. **MN:** Our play is literally an actor's nightmare, there are no limitations. There is no direct message except don't go on stage without knowing your lines [laughs].

SAY: How did you get into the play? Do you all study Speech and Drama or

were there open school auditions?

DD: For school productions auditions are open to the whole school but I do study Drama.

NK: Mvelo and I don't do Drama but it's a passion of ours.

SAY: What are your thoughts on Drama as a subject?

DD: I find it very interesting. I wasn't originally set on it because I was very shy but I thought it was mainly going to be a practical subject but it wasn't. It's incredibly interesting and it has given me knowledge so I can watch a movie and realise where it comes from. Drama actually links a lot with History and so it gives you a great background.

NK: I agree with Dominique. Drama should actually be a compulsory subject because it teaches you so many basic confidence lessons and when you watch something you don't just watch it, you actually think about it.

SAY: And being on stage? How is that whole experience?

MN: It's exhilarating! I only came to Maris Stella in Grade 8 so I remember in Primary school feeling like the stage was daunting. Then I came here and they give you the base and tell you that you can basically do whatever you want with your role. Even in inter-house plays you have the freedom to express your role. It's amazing, especially when you go on stage and you know what you're going to do but sometimes you have to just improvise. It's really fun being on stage.

SAY: Do you get stage fright at all?

NK: For me, no I don't get stage fright **MN:** It's on the night, like the actual opening night where you freak out a little and people see you walking around in

your costume and you think aah! But once you're in it, you're in it.

SAY: What would you say are some of the practical life skills you've gained from Drama?

MN: I've definitely learnt not to take myself too seriously. When other people think what I'm doing is silly I correct them that right now I'm not Mvelo, I'm this character. I concentrate on that and try my best to be the character and not worry about what other people think. So it has taught me to be me in a way.

DD: Is definitely gives you a huge air of confidence. Coming into it I had none but you eventually learn how to portray yourself to other people and generally how to talk.

NK: For me it's exactly like Mvelo said because I've had crazy roles and all you have to think about is that at the end of the day it's about the audience and you're entertaining them. By doing that you get to entertain yourself at the same time and get to explore so many different personas from around the world. You can be someone else for a few nights.

SAY: How do you juggle the play, sports and academics?

NK: Sacrifice **DD:** Yes there's definitely a lot of sacrifice but you have to prioritise and remember that you've willingly gone into this and have chosen to be a part of something you love.

SAY: What have you found that you've had to sacrifice?

NK: Nothing permanent but sometimes you have to not attend certain activities because you've chosen to rather go to play practice, but you can attend them next week instead.

DD: There is no permanent sacrifice, you

just have to weigh up the options.

NK: You also have to talk to your teachers and coaches to work around your schedule. The teachers have been very helpful.

SAY: Do any of you have dreams of pursuing acting as a career?

NK: For sure!

MN: Definitely! This is ironic because we don't study the subject but we're lucky enough to get this opportunity twice a year.

NK: We have dreams. We're definitely going to look back at this and be like "Mvelo, remember our first plays?"

[laughs]

MN: When we're holding our Oscars and thanking our high school Drama teacher [laughs].

NK: We made a pact that if we don't study Drama then we need to make sure we are in every play.

SAY: Do you think the confidence gained from Drama can help in the business world?

DD: Definitely. Now I can approach someone I've never met and talk to them.

SAY: How important is it for youth out there to understand Drama?

NK: It's important in that they must know that not everything is black and white and they mustn't feel restricted but rather broaden their horizons. It's important to realise that Drama actually gives you something at the end of the day and that it's more than what most parents and people in society think it is.

DD: That's ultimately what you want from life; you want to take away something good from everything you do. It's a way to be creative. You need that balance in your life among sports and academics.