

Press release
For immediate release

Lara Foot turns the classic *Woyzeck* into a sensual and visual treat at the Baxter

From the creators of the multi-award-winning *Karoo Moose*, joined by the popular theatre actor and television personality Rob Van Vuuren, comes the brilliant tale of *Woyzeck*, directed by Lara Foot, at the Baxter Golden Arrow Studio from 26 August to 11 September at 18h30 or 20h15 nightly.

This version of the classic play, written by German playwright Georg Büchner in 1834, this version of the classic play is based on the adaptation by Daniel Kramer, which Lara and the company have adapted further, setting it in a contemporary African landscape.

This is Lara's first new direction project since her appointment as CEO and Artistic head of the Baxter Theatre Centre in January. For this world premiere of *Woyzeck* she is assisted by Mncedisi Shabangu, with set and costume design by Leopold Senekal, lighting design by Patrick Curtis, choreography by Ina Wichterich-Mogane and music by Bongile Mantsai. Newcomer John Ndouma is the singer.

The dynamic and versatile cast who bring the story to life are Zoleka Helesi (*Udaba Bafazi, House of the Holy Afro*), Mdu Kweyama (*Shooting Stars, Onnest'Bo*), Bongile Mantsai (*Udaba Bafazi, Big Dada*), Thami Mbongo (*The Tempest, Shooting Stars*), Chuma Sopotela (*The Tempest, Beneath Silent Waters*), Apollo Ntshoko (*Greensman, Kwamanzi*) and Rob van Vuuren (*SA's Got Talent, Corné and Twakkie*). The entire company, except van Vuuren, has been performing *Karoo Moose* to great acclaim at the Baxter after the production 15th award recently at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown.

With this production of *Woyzeck* Lara continues her signature style of exploring and creating filmic opportunities for the stage, and has come up with a sexy, sensual and visual feast for all serious theatre-lovers. "I like to play with dense texts and bring out the elements and characters that they deal with by creating a multi-sensory experience for theatre and film," says Lara.

But why *Woyzeck*? And why now? She explains, "I've always wanted to tackle this play. The story is packed with dark intrigue and textured themes - there's love and romance, jealousy, envy, deceit, betrayal, adultery, suicide and murder or homicide. Great stuff to make up the psychological tragedy. It was, however, important to find the perfect collaborators and actors for what I had in mind. I was lucky; I found my dream team and co-creators in the *Karoo Moose* company with the addition of the extraordinary Rob van Vuuren to complete the picture."

With nearly 20 top awards under her belt, Lara has directed over 40 professional productions, 29 of which have been new South African plays, and she has been integral in the development of more than 35 new South African plays. Some of the contemporary classics which she has directed include Peter Shaffer's *Equus* and *Amadeus*, Athol Fugard's *Hello and Goodbye*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Samuel Beckett's *End Game* and *Waiting for Godot*, Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*. Her four plays *Tshepang*, *Hear And Now*, *Reach* and *Karoo Moose* have all toured internationally with great success and they are published by Wits Press and Oberon books.

Johannesburg-based assistant director Mncedisi Shabangu has a long theatre history with Lara which dates back to their days at the Market Theatre. Last year he performed in *Tshepang*, another of her highly praised and award-winning productions, which travelled to Canada after its season at the Baxter.

Woyzeck was the first German literary work whose main characters were members of the working class. Far from being a simple tale of village murder, the play shows the systematic debasement, even intellectual and spiritual 'murder,' of the protagonist and all his class. It has become one of the most performed and influential plays in the German theatre repertory.

The play deals with the dehumanising effects of misguided doctors and the military on a young man's life. It is often seen as 'working class' tragedy, though it can also be viewed as having another dimension, portraying the perennial tragedy of human jealousy.

Woyzeck is not recommended for children under 16. The production previews at the Baxter Golden Arrow on 26 and 27 August at 18h30, opens on Saturday, 28 August at 18h30 and runs until 11 September at 18h30 or 20h15 nightly. Patrons are encouraged to check starting times when booking. Ticket prices range from R70 for the Baxter Monday special offer, which includes a light meal and show, to R130 at weekends.

Booking is through Computicket on 083 915 8000, online at www.computicket.co.za or at any Shoprite Checkers outlet countrywide. For discounted block, corporate or school bookings, charities or fundraisers contact Sharon on 021 680 3962, email sharon.alexander@uct.ac.za or Carmen on 021 680 3993, email carmen.kearns@uct.ac.za.

Production Information

Woyzeck

CAST

Zoleka Helesi
Mdu Kweyama
Bongile Mantsai
Thami Mbongo
Apollo Ntshoko
Chuma Sopotela
Rob van Vuuren
John Ndouma (singer)

Written by:	Georg Büchner
Based on the adaption by:	Daniel Kramer
Adapted further by:	The Company
Director:	Lara Foot
Assistant Director:	Mncedisi Shabangu
Set and Costume Design:	Leopold Senekal
Lighting Design:	Patrick Curtis
Choreography:	Ina Wichterich-Mogane
Music:	Bongile Mantsai

Dates:	26 August - 11 September, 2010
Times:	18h30 (Aug 26, 27, 28, 31, Sept 2, 3, 4, 7) 20h15 (Aug 30, Sept 1, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11)
Venue:	Baxter Golden Arrow Studio
Ticket prices:	Baxter Mondays (30 August, 6 September at 20h15) - R70 Tues to Thurs - R120, Fri to Sat - R130

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