

American Repertory Theatre ARTicles

vol. 6 no. 3 January 2008

Dear Friends,

This issue of *ARTicles* introduces you to two productions with a strong international flavor: *Julius Caesar*, staged by the celebrated French director Arthur Nauzyciel, and the return of the unforgettable South African satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys with his latest comic skewering of political corruption and social mayhem, *Elections & Erections: A Chronicle of Fear & Fun*.

Paradoxically, while *Julius Caesar* is one of the most often studied and quoted of Shakespeare's plays, it is rarely performed. We remember it for its great set pieces – Caesar's assassination on the steps of the Capitol, Mark Antony's funeral orations – but there are many other glories in this mysterious and complex story that I look forward to rediscovering with you in Arthur's production.

The play follows a group of idealists and revolutionaries, hoping to change the world they live in, and improvising wildly as their plans unravel. But as Arthur reminds us in an interview on page 3, Shakespeare's Rome is as much a dreamscape as it is a political arena, its streets and battlefields full of dreams, ghosts, and echoes of past and future worlds. It should resonate powerfully as we navigate through the next election cycle.

Arthur and his design team are creating a vast and imaginative production, touched with the sounds and images of the 1960s and accompanied by a live jazz trio. It promises to be an unforgettable evening in the theatre.

Pieter-Dirk Uys needs no introduction to those of you who saw him in *Foreign Aids*, the sold-out hit of our 2005 South African Festival. One of the world's great political cabaret performers, Pieter is now returning to the A.R.T. with a new show, tailored to the current election season.

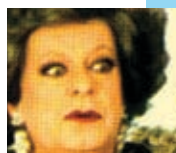
As usual, Pieter will be bringing with him a host of special guests, all of whom he performs with uncanny accuracy and deep affection, including Nelson and Winnie Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and Mrs. Evita Bezuidenhout (the self-styled "most famous white woman in South Africa").

Pieter combines a deep humanity with an astounding ability to make us laugh at political outrage and stupidity. After a year's delay, it will be a great pleasure to welcome him back to Zero Arrow Street — the theatre that he, or rather Evita, opened and inaugurated three years ago.

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All best wishes,

Gideon Lester
Acting Artistic Director

written by William Shakespeare
directed by Arthur Nauzyciel

Scenic Design
Costume Design
Lighting Design
Sound Design
Movement
Stage Manager

Riccardo Hernandez
James Schuette
Scott Zielinski
David Remedios
Damien Jalet
Chris De Camillis*



SYNOPSIS

Fearing Julius Caesar's rising power, Caius Cassius assembles a group of conspirators to assassinate Caesar. After much effort, Cassius persuades Marcus Brutus, a friend of Caesar's and one of Rome's most respected citizens, to join the conspirators' cause. On the Ides of March, Caesar ignores multiple warnings and attends the Senate, where the conspirators murder him. In the aftermath of the assassination, the conspirators permit Mark Antony, Caesar's right-hand man, to deliver the funeral oration. After Brutus convinces the crowd that the conspirators acted justly, Antony eulogizes Caesar and turns the public against the conspirators. Civil war erupts in Rome, and two factions form: one led by Cassius and Brutus, the other by Antony and Caesar's nephew Octavius.

THE CAST

Julius Caesar
Marcus Brutus
Cassius
Mark Antony
Casca
Decius Brutus
Portia/Calpurnia
Conspirators

Thomas Derrah*
James True-Frost*
Mark L. Montgomery*
James Waterston*
Remo Airaldi*
Neil Patrick Stewart*
Sara Kathryn Bakker*
Will LeBow*, Gardiner
Comfort, Perry Jackson,
Daniel Le
Jeremy Geidt
Thomas Kelley
Kunal Prasad
Jared Craig

Cicero
Octavius
Soothsayer
Lucius, the boy

Jazz Trio

Blake Newman, Bass
Eric Hofbauer, Guitar
Marianne Solivan, Singer

*member of Actors Equity Association

INFO

February 9 - March 16, 2008
Loeb Drama Center, 64 Brattle Street, Cambridge
Pre-play discussions: February 24, 27, 28
Playback post-show discussions after all Saturday matinees.
Info and Tix: 617.547.8300 amrep.org

Produced in partnership with Centre Dramatique
National / Orléans-Loiret-Centre

ABOUT THE COMPANY

REMO AIRALDI appeared in fifty-three productions at the A.R.T. He has also performed at Hartford Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Geffen Playhouse, American Conservatory Theater, Walnut St. Theatre, Prince Music Theater, Actors' Theatre of Louisville, Serious Fun Festival, Moscow Art Theatre, Taipei International Arts Festival, and Commonwealth Shakespeare Company.

SARA KATHYRN BAKKER (Portia/Calpurnia) recently appeared in *A Flea in Her Ear* at the Roundabout Theatre and *A Winter's Tale* at New York Classical Theater. She is a founding member of Rude Mechanicals Theatre. She also was seen at Williamstown Theatre Festival, Pioneer Theatre, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespearean Festival, and the Contemporary American Theatre Festival.

THOMAS DERRAH (Julius Caesar) has appeared in over 100 roles at the A.R.T. over twenty-seven years and has toured with the Company across the U.S. and throughout Europe, Canada, Israel, Taiwan, Japan, and Moscow. He was seen on Broadway in twenty-three roles in *Jackie: An American Life*, as well as off-Broadway, in regional theatres and local companies. He is the recipient of a number of awards from local critics and the Los Angeles DramaLogue Award (for the title role of *Shlemiel the First*).

JEREMY GEIDT (Cicero) is A.R.T.'s Senior Actor, a founding member of the Yale Repertory Theatre and the A.R.T., appearing in ninety-seven productions at the A.R.T. He has acted on and off Broadway, at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and the Lincoln Center Festival, and lectured on Shakespeare in India and at the Netherlands Theatre School. He received the Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Boston Actor and the Jason Robards Award for Dedication to the Theatre. He teaches at Harvard College, its Summer and Extension Schools and at the A.R.T./MXAT Institute.

WILL LeBOW (Conspirator) has appeared in fifty productions at the A.R.T., as well as in multiple roles at the Huntington Theatre, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Gloucester Stage Company, and all the male roles in *Shear Madness*. He has been the narrator for the Boston Pops' rendition of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* since its premiere, and appears on television in the Cable Ace Award-winning animated series *Dr. Katz, Professional Therapist* as the voice of Stanley.

MARK L. MONTGOMERY (Cassius) was seen on Broadway in *Mamma Mia!* and in *Macbeth* at Shakespeare in the Park. He is a member of the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre with multiple credits, appearing at the Steppenwolf Theatre and the Goodman Theatre, among others.

NEIL PATRICK STEWART (Casca) is a recent A.R.T. Institute graduate who was seen in *The Onion Cellar* and in several Institute productions in Cambridge and in Moscow. He appeared in *Hello Herman*, *Feiffer's People*, *E to Jamaica Center* in New York and in *Broadway!* at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. His films include *Up to the Roof* and the upcoming *Choozie (Strangers)* by celebrated Russian director Yuri Grymov.

JIM TRUE-FROST (Brutus) is a member of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago where he appeared in *The Pillowman*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*, among others. His films include *Off the Map*, *Affliction*, *Singles*, *The Hudsucker Proxy*, *Normal Life*, and *Far Harbor*. He appeared on television in *The Wire* (Prez), *Medium*, *CSI: Miami*, *Karen Sisco*, *Early Edition*, *Crime Story*, *Law & Order*, and *Law & Order: CI*.

JAMES WATERSTON (Mark Antony) was seen in New York in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at BAM, *As You Like It* at the New York Shakespeare Festival, and *The Jew of Malta* at Classic Stage Co. He has numerous regional credits, including the Huntington Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Old Globe Theatre, South Coast Repertory, George Street Playhouse, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival. He appeared in several films and on television.

Special Event at the ICA: Art Meets Performance



Panel discussion featuring director Arthur Nauzyciel.

Thursday, January 31, 6:30 pm

Tix: \$5; Free for members, students and seniors.

MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE

Gideon Lester talks to Arthur Nauzyciel,
director of *Julius Caesar*

Gideon Lester: How are you approaching *Julius Caesar*?

Arthur Nauzyciel: Whenever I direct a play, the context in which it's produced is very important. Why are we doing the play here, now, for this audience? *Julius Caesar* is almost never produced in my own country, France, so when you asked me to read it, I was coming to it for the first time. Of course I immediately saw connections between the play and the fact that this is an election year in the United States. I don't want that to be obvious in the production, but it provides a strong context. The play also resonates with the political history of Boston – the Kennedys, for example. For me, classical plays are a memory of the future. They're time capsules – they come from long ago, but they're with us now and they'll be here for centuries. They contain a collective memory of human behavior – aspirations, expectations, illusions. As time capsules, it's interesting to catch them and open them. They are like holograms or like stars, whose light arrives long after their death.

GL: What about the play feels contemporary to you?

AN: There's something "contemporary" about *Julius Caesar*, which sounds ridiculous, because it was written in the sixteenth century; it cannot literally be speaking about our own age. In a sense the play is a user's manual for the next generation, written by Shakespeare for the future, a guide to politics and humanity. It's not that Shakespeare's observations are still accurate; it's more than that. It's as if nothing has happened in politics since the story that he writes about took place. It's as if we're stuck, like a scratched record; we're still in the final scenes when Octavius arrives. Nothing has evolved in terms of democracy or politics. Like Cassius and Brutus, we believe that democracy is the best system, but it's still a compromise. So many so-called democracies are still really empires, like Rome in the play. What has changed is our experience of tragedy. We come from a century that invented Auschwitz and Hiroshima, after which we can never stage tragedy the same way again.

GL: You mentioned the Kennedys, and your production will include many references from the 1960s. Can you explain why?

AN: The production isn't set in the 60s – I believe that all theatre takes place here and now, so it's not really a question

“ In a sense the play is a user's manual for the next generation, written by Shakespeare for the future, a guide to politics and humanity. ”



of being in the past, whether that's Caesar's Rome or Shakespeare's London or 1960s America. But we will be highlighting images from the 60s, for many reasons. There's the obvious link between the assassinations of Kennedy and Caesar, but more than that, I'm intrigued by the way the 60s represent both past and future for us. It was a time of great invention and innovation, obsessed with the future. The best Sci-Fi movies were made in the 60s. And the aesthetic is still inspiring; if you look at furniture or clothes from the 60s, they could belong in today's design magazines. *Julius Caesar* is a play about the invention of the future, a dream of a new world, so the resonances are strong.

GL: What else interests you about the 60s?

AN: It was also a period in which the image triumphed over the word. There's a wonderful story about the debate between Nixon and Kennedy. I don't know if it's true, but apparently people who listened to it on the radio voted for Nixon, and people who watched it on television voted for Kennedy. JFK was the first president whose image was more important than the content of his words. Suddenly visual icons and illusions were more powerful than speech. *Julius Caesar* is so much a play about language and rhetoric, and I think it'll be interesting to create this double layer by using elements from a time in which language



PHOTO: Jacques Lowe

JFK and his sister Patricia Lawford on the campaign trail.

We'll be highlighting images from the 60s. It was a time of great invention and innovation... *Julius Caesar* is a play about the invention of the future, a dream of a new world.

and rhetoric failed. And at the same time, there was a revolution in American art history, with the advent of Pop Art, installations, and performance art. The art and photography of that period was a strong influence in the design for our *Julius Caesar*, particularly Andy Warhol's repeated images and the installations of the Ant Farm. All this seemed appropriate for a production at the Loeb Drama Center, with its 1960s architecture. I like it when the theatrical design and the architecture of the building come together and the distinctions between the two spaces are blurred.

GL: The set design incorporates huge repeated photographs of the auditorium. Can you explain why?

AN: In part we wanted to remind the audience that the theatre in which they're sitting is essentially the same shape as the theatres of ancient Greece and



Riccardo Hernandez's set model for *Julius Caesar*, as seen from the audience.

Rome. If you stand on stage and look out at the seats, you see that the configuration is exactly the same, two thousand years later. It's also good to remember with this play that theatre and democracy were invented at the same time, and that the theatre was, in its origins, a political space as much as a place of entertainment. In this election year, the images of those theatre seats may remind us of public assemblies, or the Senate. And I also want to create an uncertainty for the audience: Are we onstage or offstage? Who are the watchers and who the actors? Are we part of the performance? What is illusion and what is reality? On which sides are the dead and the living?

GL: How do those questions of illusion and reality relate to *Julius Caesar*?

AN: The play is full of dreams and supernatural events, of ghosts and burning men and lions roaming the streets of Rome. The world that it describes doesn't literally exist — it's an imaginary dreamscape, a distortion of reality, and we can't stage it realistically. The production has to feel truthful but not realistic. I hope that the audience will feel connected to an invisible world, seeing things they can't usually see, listening to things they can't hear.

Gideon Lester is the A.R.T.'s Acting Artistic Director.

JULIUS CAESAR

AS SASSY AS YOU DARE

- the aesthetics of Arthur Nauzyciel

by Njål Mjøs

Catching the audience off guard is Arthur Nauzyciel's artistic signature. "I want to create uneasiness, the anxiety of a quasi – dream state," the director explains. "What happens onstage is a dream, but at the same time, it is not a dream. It exists in concrete reality and at the same time it's an unsubstantial vision. The stage lives in between the visible and the invisible."

One way the director conjures up this dream state is by creating stylized movements that explore the subtext. Directing Mike Leigh's *Abigail's Party* for the A.R.T. Institute last season, Nauzyciel and his actors captured the rage roiling beneath the polite veneer of a middle-class cocktail party. Nauzyciel turned the play's finale into a terrifying yet hilarious revolt against British decorum. Interrupting the party, the host put on a record of Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony" full blast to drown out his guests' vapid conversations. Conducting the music while performing a strip tease, we discover he is in fact staging his own death: a violent heart attack takes his life, stiffens his body, and turns him into a human sculpture as Beethoven's grandiose chords pound away. Caught off guard, the audience does not know quite how to respond.

No matter how bizarre Nauzyciel's movement may appear at first, it always emerges from a thorough excavation of the text. He is an archeologist of the word. The director spends several weeks with the actors at the table, treating the text like a body to dissect. He refuses to bully the words to fit a preconceived concept. By tracking word choice and rhythmic patterns, Nauzyciel forces the actors to listen to the writing with fresh ears. Only after the actors have established an intimate relationship with each word does the director begin to block the show. "Have fun with the words," Nauzyciel insists, "and you'll never be lost."

Encouraging a playful mood in rehearsals, the director likes to challenge actors trained in psychological realism. "Try to tap-dance the rhythm of your lines while having that telephone conversation," Nauzyciel told an actor during rehearsals for *Abigail's Party*. "You see, it's fun, right? And much more interesting to watch." Trained as an actor himself, he knows how to stir an actor's imagination: "Strike a pose worthy of Donna Summer," he chuckled, goading the lead actress to heighten the imperious tone of her lines. "Use the gesture as an exclamation point. Internalize the written text, transform it with your body, and play it up as sassy as you dare!"

Njål Mjøs is a second-year dramaturgy student at the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theatre Training.



PHOTOS: Alain Fonterey

Arthur Nauzyciel's French productions of Beckett's *L'Image*, Molière's *The Imaginary Invalid*, and Beckett's *Happy Days*.

IT CAME, IT SAW, IT

By Sean Bartley

1599

When *Caesar* opened at the Globe Theatre in 1599, Queen Elizabeth's reign was at its weakest point. Military conflicts with Catholics in Spain and Ireland spread the Crown's armies thin. Parliament openly challenged Elizabeth's authority to grant monopolies. And with the death of Lord Burghley, her chief political advisor, confidence in her inner circle began to fade. Like Caesar, Elizabeth was an aging ruler without an heir. A play exploring the fall of a powerful leader could not have been timelier.



A.L. Hirschfield cartoon of the Mercury Theatre production of *Julius Caesar* (with Orson Welles as Brutus).

1937

By the time of *Caesar's* next major American production in 1937, another military conflict loomed large. The Mercury Theater, an innovative New York repertory company headed by producer John Houseman and director Orson Welles, made *Caesar* the premiere offering of their first season. In his memoir, Houseman explained the production's impetus:

"All over the Western World sophisticated democratic structures were breaking down. First in Italy, then in Germany, dictatorships had taken over; the issues of political violence and of the moral duty of the individual in the face of tyranny had become urgent and inescapable. To emphasize the similarity between the last days of the Roman Republic and the political climate of Europe in the mid-thirties, our Roman aristocrats wore military uniforms with black belts that suggested the current fashion of the Fascist ruling class: our crowd wore the dark, nondescript street clothes of the big-city proletariat."



John (left), Edwin (center), and Junius (right) at the "Booth Benefit for the Shakespeare Statue Fund" in 1864.

1864

Caesar's first major American production, starring Edwin Booth, also came at a point of crisis. By 1864, the Civil War had been waging for three years. Both Union and Confederate generals were constantly being fired and replaced. Draft riots broke out regularly in both the North and South. Two weeks before Booth's *Caesar* opened, Abraham Lincoln won his reelection by the narrowest of majorities. Lincoln's political position, like Elizabeth's and Caesar's, was tenuous.

The 1864 production in New York was Booth's only public performance with both of his famous brothers, Junius Brutus and John Wilkes. The one-night-only benefit, intended to raise funds for a statue of Shakespeare in Central Park, was the season's hottest ticket; box seats were scalped for \$100 (over \$1000 by today's prices). Critical acclaim was fervent: *The Castle Square Theatre Magazine* wrote that "...as they entered together, at the opening of the piece, it would be difficult to look on three finer types of physical and intellectual perfection." Five months after the *Caesar* benefit, John Wilkes Booth would borrow Brutus' famous words, shouting "sic semper tyrannis" as he shot Lincoln and ran from Ford's Theater.

Welles drew the visual concept for his production from what he dubbed "The Nuremberg Festivals": Hitler's lavish rallies in the early days of the Nazis' rise to power. Smoke filled the stage. Steel platforms and stairwells sounded an ominous banging that announced the entrance of actors. In his strongest visual metaphor for the Nuremberg Festivals, Welles created his signature "Nuremberg Lights." Set into the metal grating of the stage floor, the lights cast vertical beams running up the actors' bodies and often as high as the proscenium arch.

New York critics roared with praise. John Mason Brown of the *New York Post* called it "the most exciting, the most imaginative, the most topical, the most awesome, and the most absorbing of the season's new productions. The touch of genius is upon it." Brooks Atkinson claimed that "it puts fire back onto the American stage." *Variety* gushed, calling the show "Bard Boffola."

CONQUERED:

Shakespeare's *Caesar* through Political Strife

1953



MGM poster for *Julius Caesar* featuring Brando as Mark Antony in the classic Caesar pose.

Fifteen years later, Houseman would again produce *Caesar*, this time for MGM Films. The cast was a laundry list of top-rate actors: Deborah Kerr as Portia, John Gielgud as Cassius, James Mason as Brutus, and a young Marlon Brando as Antony. The MGM movie was filmed in no less a politically explosive time than the Mercury production. European nations were actively testing their hydrogen bombs. Joseph McCarthy's House Committee on Un-American Activities was in its third year of investigations. The Korean War claimed thousands of U.S. soldiers. Followers of Houseman's career expected another strong anti-war statement.

Yet, Houseman and Mankiewicz produced what might be considered the most apolitical *Caesar* in American history. In stark contrast to the 1938 Mercury staging, this *Caesar*'s strictly Roman sets and costumes made no contemporary allusions. Houseman articulated the aim of his new *Caesar* in bland terms: "We had one dominant artistic aim: to bring to motion-picture audiences in all its clarity, energy, and beauty the direct dramatic impact of Shakespeare's

tragedy." Why didn't Houseman and Mankiewicz use the bard's play to speak to contemporary problems?

The answer may simply have been fear. Mankiewicz was aware that the McCarthy committee would be watching his film closely. The nephew of the man who would become, in the 1960s, Senator Robert Kennedy's press secretary, Mankiewicz was close to prominent liberals and was a friend of several members of the infamous "Hollywood Ten," a group of screenwriters and directors arrested and blacklisted for their supposed Communist links just six years prior. Political scrutiny would continue to dog Mankiewicz throughout his career: some theaters refused to show his more overtly political work. Just as he had in *Caesar*, Mankiewicz would create an apolitical adaptation for his film of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*. Greene and Mankiewicz feuded over the film's ending; Greene claimed that Mankiewicz had turned his book into "a propaganda film for America." In 1963, speaking of the hostile responses to his films, Mankiewicz said, "I feel like the guillotine is about to drop."

2005

A half-century later, British director David Farr would move *Caesar* into the 21st century. At London's Lyric Hammersmith, Farr used *Caesar* as a parable for the fear of terrorism. In acts four and five, the armies of Octavius and Antony became elite terrorist cells, hidden by ski masks as they executed the conspirators. Brandishing flashlights, the terror troops invaded the auditorium to search for more conspirators amongst the audience. Farr's production, opening just two months after London's 2005 subway bombings, brought the role of terror to the forefront of the play.



Gary Oliver as Mark Antony in the 2005 Lyric Hammersmith production.

Arthur Nauzyciel will be staging his A.R.T. production in yet another politically explosive era. Just as in the days of *Caesar* and Elizabeth, Americans find themselves engaged in foreign wars that drain their resources and weaken their defenses at home. Just as in the age of Welles' *Caesar*, some Americans choose to ignore distant atrocities. Just as in the time of Mankiewicz's *Caesar*, when civil liberties dissolved under the pressure of McCarthyism, Americans cannot be confident of their constitutional rights, facing secret phone tapping and the possibility of imprisonment without trial. Just as in the time of Farr's production, the

fear of terrorism creates a stranglehold on the political landscape. The groundwork for another powerful parable has been laid: How will Nauzyciel bring *Caesar* into the political malaise of 2008?



Sean Bartley is a first-year dramaturgy student at the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theatre Training.

Evita Bezuidenhout, Uys's alter ego, is the ambassador to the fantasy nation of Bapetikosweti. Cartoon by Zapiro.



created and performed by Pieter-Dirk Uys

Pieter-Dirk Uys

Pieter-Dirk Uys appeared at the A.R.T. to great acclaim in 2005 in *Foreign Aids*, as part of the A.R.T.'s South African Festival. He was born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1945, and has been in the theatre since the mid-1960s. He was closely associated with both the Space Theatre in Cape Town and Johannesburg Market Theatre during the 1970s and 1980s; he has written and performed twenty plays and over thirty revues and one-man shows throughout South Africa and abroad. His plays *Paradise is Closing Down*, *Panorama*, *God's Forgotten*, *Faces in the Wall*, and *Just like Home* have been performed internationally, and his one-man shows *Adapt or Die*, *One Man One Vote*, *You ANC Nothing Yet*, *Truth Omissions*, *Live from Boerassie Park*, *Dekaffirmated*, and *Foreign Aids* have been presented in the United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany, Holland, U.S.A., and Canada. His performance of *Foreign Aids* at La Mama received the Obie Award in New York in 2004. Most of his satirical work is available on video, and so, despite of government censorship during apartheid, he built up a very large multiracial audience. Recently, Uys has been traveling around South Africa, visiting over 500 schools and one million school children, as well as prisons and reformatories, with a free AIDS-awareness entertainment called *For Facts Sake!*. He has also released corporate AIDS-information videos (*Having Sex with Pieter-Dirk Uys* and *It's Just a Small Prick*) as well as one for the family (*Survival Aids*). His latest one-man satire celebrating ten years of democracy, *The End is Naai*, was performed throughout South Africa in 2004 and abroad as was *Elections & Erections*. Pieter-Dirk Uys lives in a small town near Cape Town on the West Coast of South Africa called Darling. There he has converted the old railway station into a cabaret venue called "Evita se Perron" (Perron is Afrikaans for "station platform").

INFO

April 3 – May 4, 2008
Zero Arrow Theatre, Corner of Mass. Ave & Arrow St., Cambridge.
Playback post-show discussions after all Saturday matinees.
Info and Tix: 617.547.8300 amrep.org

Awarded South Africa's 2001 Truth and Reconciliation Award, members of the present democratic Parliament remember seeing Uys's videos in prison and in exile.

Pieter-Dirk Uys at his home in Darling



ELECTIONS & ERECTIONS

By Pieter-Dirk Uys

Someone suggested that my show to play at the A.R.T. in April 2008, called *Elections & Erections*, must be about Hillary and Bill. A tantalizing thought but not a very long performance.

Elections & Erections refers to the two things that were illegal during my life as a young South African growing up in apartheid Cape Town. Elections did happen and white people voted for white people to represent white people in a white government that ruled over a voiceless black majority. So democracy was a virtual experience. We knew what it was supposed to be and pretended we were. Erections happen. As a young man I also discovered that there were areas of sex that were as illegal as freedom. The Immorality Act made all sexual contact between blacks and whites punishable by imprisonment. Homosexuality during apartheid was also against the law, as well as the Word of the Calvinist God, and not always in that order. But common sense in a brainwashed society always seeks refuge on a backseat when things get really hard. And during sex they do. So by following erections, I was led into minefields of danger, tinged with delight and occasionally discovering hope.

When a relationship developed with someone my own age in the 1960s it was a new chapter of growing up. There followed secret meetings on a secluded beach and surprisingly long hours of conversation. I was also discovering a life across the railway line separated by a fence, fear and apartheid. He was black. It was illegal. Not only would we go to jail, I would go to hell! Actually no, I went back for more. And so more and more I was exposed to the lies that dominated my life as a supposedly decent educated person. Everything in South Africa around me, be it education, religion, culture or entertainment was based on and dictated to by legalized racism. It was wrong. It was strong. It could not easily be changed.

Was I ever in real danger? No. I was white and Afrikaans with relatives in the right places. But the responsibility was chilling, knowing that if we were caught the other young South African would disappear in chains and probably lose his life. Because he was black and loved me.

When I discovered humour as my weapon of mass distraction for the first time it seemed possible to confront fear and make it less fearful. Politicians, no matter how grave, how moral, how frightening they are wielding total power, will always be like monkeys. The higher they climb the pole of ambition the more of their arses we can see. So when the arseholes in power painted themselves into a corner with their apartheid laws, the laugh was on them.

They became the best scriptwriters I could wish for. Who could make up laws of such hilarity combined with such pain and affront? They put the words into my mouth. Hypocrisy became their vaseline of political intercourse. Some of them were laughed out of power. But little did I know what lay ahead after apartheid, in the world of true democracy and freedom. In today's thirteen-year-old rainbow confusion called the New South Africa, I don't pay taxes. I pay royalties.

The government of the day writes me my material. Not just in South Africa but also in the U.S.A., thanks to the impaired creativity of the prime clown, George W. Bush. He discovered the wisdoms of my erstwhile bread and botha, President P.W. Botha. Our apartheid icon said: "He who is not for us is against us." He used the phrase "war on terror." He frightened us into giving him full power while W was still a bush baby on daddy's farm. It is now a logical step to stand on an American stage, celebrating the virtual freedoms of the world's only superpower and reflect an equally frightened and traumatized society ready to say: "Enough! I'm sick and tired of this and I won't take it anymore!" A presidential election is an ideal way to throw the baby out with the bathwater. This U.S. baby holds the soap. Do the American people have an erection for this election? If so, maybe my show in Cambridge in April is about Bill and Hillary, Barack and Rudy, Osama and George. Me and you.

ERECTIONS: *A Chronicle of Fear & Fun*



“ *Elections & Erections* refers to the two things that were illegal during my life as a young South African growing up in apartheid Cape Town. ”

FOREIGN AIDS

by Pieter-Dirk Uys



Evita with her grandchildren in December 2001

While performing *Foreign Aids* at the A.R.T. in January of 2005, I also visited schools in Boston with a message of hope: “Look fear in the face and win!” It was an enriching experience of diversity and feedback from the youth. But my experience visiting schools in the United Kingdom had been different.

“When a white person gets AIDS, do they go black?” I thought she was joking. No one laughed. This young black girl was quite serious. And she wasn’t at a school somewhere in the backwaters of South Africa. This was Wembley in North London! It was during my 2003 season of *Foreign Aids* at the Tricycle Theatre. I visited a few local schools with my AIDS-awareness presentation, *For Facts Sake*. This assault on the stigmas and denials around HIV and AIDS was strengthened by the weapon of mass distraction — humour. When

people laugh, they lower their defences. When they laugh at something they don’t even want to think about, new areas of understanding are possible. And ultimately, to laugh at fear can only make that fear less fearful. It can still kill you, but now at least you feel in charge. How can you be frightened of something you’ve laughed at? Not because it’s funny, but because you now know it is so much smaller than you once thought.

I’ve toured *For Facts Sake* to South African schools for the past six years and have so confronted over one million school kids with the raw facts of life. Happily, there is much laughter. Sex can be very funny. Unless of course you’re trying very hard to do it successfully. Kids know so much nowadays, especially with the info-orgy on cell phones, the internet, and television. But often they’ve not had first-hand experience. And that’s the agenda

ELECTIONS & ERECTIONS

— don't deny the threat of the virus, but inform them what it is and how to live with it.

In Wembley, within a few minutes of the presentation, the discomfort was tangible. Teachers squirmed. The young people looked embarrassed. And when someone had the courage to ask a question, what answer could I give? "No, whites don't turn black when they have AIDS. AIDS is democratic. It doesn't take sides. Everyone is susceptible."

The first world and its passionate sexy generation of warriors have relaxed the 1980s vigilance of HIV and AIDS. The days are over when every movie star wore a red ribbon. Now they're lost under the multi-coloured explosion of different ribbons and armbands representing every cause imaginable. Besides, today there are medications, treatments and cocktails for survival.

No one needs to die of AIDS in 2007. And yet we in South Africa are still losing 1000 people every day. Every three days we have a 9/11 situation and hardly anyone says anything. We are still waiting for President Mbeki to acknowledge publicly that HIV leads to AIDS.

So we are still on Square One. Occasionally international questions are asked and answered with a smooth-tongued, Tony Blairish burst of gesture-politics. "We will roll out ARVs by 2011," the Minister of Health bumbled recently. Cheers to her, this now notorious alcoholic kleptomaniac nut, who single-handedly has buried a generation of her people through lack of care. She's still way off the mark. 2011? No, we need roll-outs by

twenty past 11:00 tonight! The urgency is critical.

So is the need for education and the focus on survival. School children are not the problem. Their parents are. I suppose this is a universal hangover from the days of "sies" and "hush" and silence. We mature kids had to find our own way through the minefield of sex, confronting disease and morality with fear and fantasy. But today's teenager needs to know the full alphabet of facts to be in control of their life ahead.

The challenge is to avoid the dreaded dreariness of a lecture, filled with dry facts, confusing percentages and figures that bore. Education through entertainment is one way. When school children are taken out of the classroom routine and confronted with a comedy turn about a serious issue, they will remember most of the laughs. Those facts might save their lives. Speaking the language they understand is also a bridge between my generation and theirs. You use that f-word not to celebrate freedom of speech but to

“Ultimately, to laugh at fear can only make that fear less fearful. It can still kill you, but now at least you feel in charge. How can you be frightened of something you've laughed at?”

focus on where the minefield is. The kids are riveted. The teachers go white, especially the black ones. And I've seen one or two nuns smile.

International AIDS Day is December 1st. Why only one day in the year to dust off the red ribbon and pat the condom in the pocket? Every day should be AIDS Day, because every day brings the opportunities to invite the virus into one's life. Sex and drugs and rock and roll? If only it was that simple. It's through semen and blood, stupid! While modern medical miracles allow lives to be extended and lived to the full, God help us in Wembley, Washington, Boston, Beijing and Cape Town if the HI-virus reinvents itself and re-enters our lives, immune to all our efforts to neutralize it. The only salvation is knowledge. During apartheid the South African Government killed people. Now in our democracy it just lets them die. Time to change all that. Let the people lead and maybe the government will follow.



PHOTO: Kati Mitchell

Pieter-Dirk Uys and a student of the Boston Arts Academy during his visit there in 2005.

Pieter-Dirk Uys performed Foreign Aids at the A.R.T. in January of 2005.

Fighting Words

By Sarah Ollove

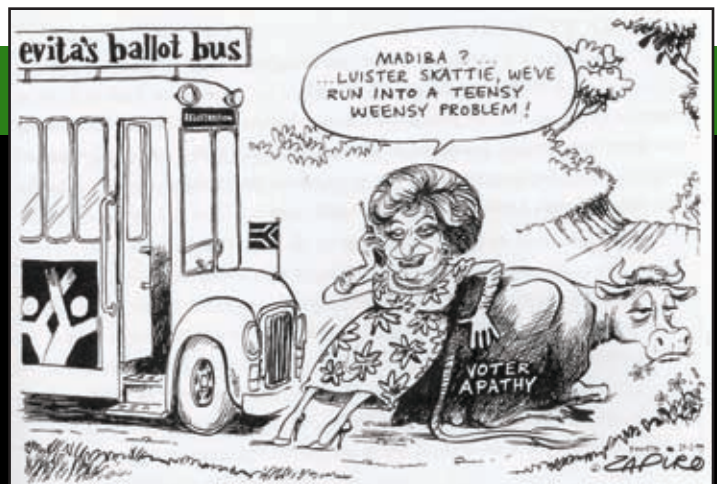
Sticks and stones break bones, but words hurt most. Through words, satire can topple regimes. Satire bubbles up from anger. Disguised as comedy, satire uses laughter as a weapon. Satirists candy-coat their barbs in the hopes of effecting change. Although a symptom of rage, satire remains humorous. Finding the balance between jokes and venom, satire treads a thin line. Dip too far in one direction and the satire fails. Maintaining this equilibrium can prove difficult because satire takes serious problems for its subjects.

Pieter-Dirk Uys is an angry South African with a serious agenda. As a privileged white Afrikaner, he wondered why apartheid was accepted. He got angrier and angrier until he just had to laugh. In his memoir, *Elections and Erections*, Uys writes of his mission: "[I]t became my aim in life to make [the government] so angry with humour, to drive them so crazy with laughter, that they had heart attacks and died...Fighting...political madness with humour has been my way of life since the 1970s." For Uys, nothing is funnier or sadder than the absurdities of his country: "The democratic government for

Pieter-Dirk Uys is an angry South African with a serious agenda. He got angrier and angrier until he just had to laugh.

which I voted is doing me proud. Never a dull moment...Careless government has turned South Africa into my favourite funny fair!"

To point out absurdities, Uys used a common tool of satirists. He created an outlandish character. Evita Bezuidenhout, his alter ego, is the ambassadress to the fantasy nation of Bapetikosweti. Much to Uys's surprise, South Africa embraced a drag queen as its "most famous white woman." Uys repeats over and over that performing Evita allowed him more freedom than he



Zapiro's cartoon of Voter Registration.

could have imagined. When he performed as himself, some people found it difficult to separate the performer from the character. Uys, staunchly progressive, and Evita, comically conservative, must not be confused. So he invented a persona as far removed from his own Puckish self as possible. With her loud outfits, gaudy jewelry, bright lipstick, and carefully coiffed black wig, Evita looks every inch a grande dame. Evita makes suggestions like how to bring back apartheid through Jim Crow shenanigans. Coming from Evita these suggestions seem at first sight laughable, on second, chillingly accurate.

To write satire, the satirist must have a yardstick by which to judge his society. In every satire there exists an implicit ideal that lies within reach. The satirist uses his wit to nudge his audience towards this goal. To do so, the satirist identifies the chief obstacles that keep society from progressing. He then proceeds to reduce these obstacles to the absurd, hoping to laugh them into oblivion.

Uys used satire to push his country towards democracy. He wanted to live in a country in which everyone had equal rights, so he directed all his energy towards fighting apartheid. Uys used Evita to get his message across. Evita's naive promotion of apartheid made democracy seem the only sane choice.



Though Uys thought he might retire Evita after apartheid fell, the new democracy quickly provided him with fresh material: a President who denied that HIV leads to AIDS and his sidekick, the Minister of Health, who thinks sick people should find the solution themselves. So Uys brought Evita out of her box again, and Uys set off, a new target in sight. Traveling to schools in South Africa to educate students on AIDS prevention, Uys uses humor to reach young people

at first dismissive of AIDS presentations. Having proved that satire can impact governments, Uys sets out to see what it can do against a virus. Perhaps laughter is the best medicine.

Sarah Ollove is a second-year dramaturgy student at the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theatre Training.

Trigger

by Kyle Jarrow
directed by Marcus Stern

SYNOPSIS Ryan's wife gets in a crippling car accident while he's in bed with another woman, and he begins to wonder: do his actions have the power to cause disaster? A darkly funny, provocative new play about placing blame and struggling to survive tragedy.

INFO Zero Arrow Theatre, corner of Arrow and Mass. Ave., Harvard Square
Feb. 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23 @ 7:30pm
Tix: \$10; \$5 for A.R.T. subscribers, students, seniors.
617.547.8300 or amrep.org.

The Lacy Project

by Alena Smith
directed by Scott Zigler

SYNOPSIS A young woman held captive by her own childhood, Lacy embodies a generation adrift in a sea of excess, raised in a culture of indulgence and unable to grow up.

INFO Zero Arrow Theatre, corner of Arrow and Mass. Ave., Harvard Square
March 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29 @ 7:30pm
Tix: \$10; \$5 for A.R.T. subscribers, students, seniors.
617.547.8300 or amrep.org.



A.R.T. CALENDAR

						Saturday
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	9 FEB.
10 JC 2pm	11	12 JC 7:30pm	13 JC 7:30pm	14 JC 7:30pm	15 JC 8pm TR 7:30pm	16 JC 2pm JC 8pm TR 7:30pm
17 JC 2pm JC 7:30pm TR 7:30pm	18	19 JC 7:30pm	20 JC 7:30pm	21 JC 7:30pm TR 7:30pm	22 JC 8pm TR 7:30pm	23 JC 2pm JC 8pm TR 7:30pm
24 JC 2pm PJC 7:30pm	25	26	27 JC 10am PJC 7:30pm	28 PJC 7:30pm	29 JC 8pm	1 MAR. JC 2pm JC 8pm
2 JC 2pm JC 7:30pm	3	4 JC 7:30pm	5 IA 10am JC 10am JC 7:30pm	6 IA 10am JC 7:30pm	7 JC 8pm	8 JC 2pm JC 8pm
9	10 pARTy 2008!	11 IA 10am JC 7:30pm	12 IA 10am JC 10am JC 7:30pm	13 IA 10am JC 7:30pm	14 IA 10am JC 8pm	15 JC 2pm JC 8pm
16 JC 2pm	17	18	19	20 EE 7:30pm	21 EE 8pm LP 7:30pm	22 EE 2pm EE 8pm LP 7:30pm
23 LP 7:30pm	24	25	26	27 LP 7:30pm	28 LP 7:30pm	29 LP 7:30pm
30	31	1 APR.	2	3 EE 7:30pm	4 EE 8pm	5 EE 2pm EE 8pm
6 EE 2pm EE 7:30pm	7	8 EE 7:30pm	9 EE 7:30pm	10 EE 10:30am	11 EE 8pm	12 EE 2pm EE 8pm
13 EE 2pm EE 7:30pm	14	15 EE 7:30pm	16 EE 7:30pm	17 EE 7:30pm	18 EE 8pm	19 EE 2pm EE 8pm
20 EE 2pm EE 7:30pm	21	22 EE 7:30pm	23 EE 7:30pm	24 EE 7:30pm	25 EE 8pm	26 EE 2pm EE 8pm
27 EE 2pm EE 7:30pm	28	29 EE 7:30pm	30 EE 7:30pm	1 MAY EE 7:30pm	2 EE 8pm	3 EE 2pm EE 8pm
4 EE 2pm EE 7:30pm						

@ Zero Arrow: IA = Island of Anyplace EE = Elections & Erections TR = Trigger LP = Lacy Project
P = pre-play discussion (one hour before curtain).
Playback (post-play) discussions held after every Saturday matinee for *Julius Caesar* and *Elections & Erections*.

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music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
directed by Jason Lazarcheck
and Catherine Powell
music directed by Jesse Wiener
April 25 – May 3, 2008

HRDCtheater.com

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by Charles Marz
directed & choreographed by Thomas Derrah

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March 5, 6, 11–14
10:00 am
Zero Arrow Theatre

Info and Tix:
617.547.8300 amrep.org
School groups:
Call 617.496.2000 x 8844

News & Notes

Individual donors, Harvard support brings hundreds of local students to *No Child...*

The conversation began, literally, during the opening night standing ovation for A.R.T.'s most recent production, *No Child...* Two donors, inspired by Nilaja Sun's virtuosic performance, immediately turned to each other and to A.R.T. Development Director Sharyn Bahn and wondered how they could help bring Boston and Cambridge students to see a play that speaks directly of their experiences.

And it didn't end there. In December, a group of donors and Harvard's Office of Government and Community Relations contributed funds to enable more than twelve schools and youth programs to attend the production. These included Boston Arts Academy, Brighton High School, Charlestown High, and others. More than 750 students visited the Loeb, and many stayed for post-play discussions with Ms. Sun. When Sun asked some students what about *No Child...* rang true to them, the awestruck teenagers whispered, "Everything." One teacher claimed, "I've never seen my students so enthralled." Seeing these young men and women spellbound by the message of *No Child...* reaffirmed how important it is to bring student audiences into the theatre.

Additionally, Ms. Sun taught master theatre classes at several area schools — Boston Arts Academy, Brighton High School, Fenway High School, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, and Roslindale's Irving Middle School. In each school she worked with students, using theatre games as a tool to explore issues of stereotypes and self-esteem.



Nilaja Sun and students with Cambridge Mayor Ken Reeves and Cambridge Public School Coordinator of Visual and Performing Arts Elaine Koury at the Loeb in December.

The generosity surrounding *No Child...* is a stunning example of how individual and institutional support can come together to make a profound impact on connecting theatre to the community. All of us — the company and staff at A.R.T., the students and teachers who were able to attend, and Nilaja Sun — want to express our thanks to everyone who contributed.

Is there an outreach effort you would like to support? Contact Sharyn Bahn, Director of Development, so you too, can make a difference.

The A.R.T. pARTy Goes Backstage, Onstage, and Online!

Join us for cocktails "backstage" and dinner "onstage" as this year's pARTy heads to Boston's EpiCenter on Monday, March 10, 2008. The A.R.T. pARTy committee, chaired by Mary Wendell, has planned a wonderful evening, featuring a delicious dinner by MAX Ultimate Food and décor by Dan Mathieu and A.R.T.'s own Derek Wiles.

Chris Cooper and Marianne Leone are honorary chairs of this year's pARTy, which celebrates the American Repertory Theatre. In addition to the auction, the program includes live performances, the annual presentation of the Robert Brustein Award, and, to cap off the evening, a truly spectacular live auction led by pARTy committee member Kate Chertavian.

Can't make it in person? Bid in our online auction! The online auction allows bidders to bid and win fabulous items before the live event even begins. Additionally, live auction items can be previewed in anticipation of the pARTy.

Visit www.amrep.cmarket.com after February 1, and plan to begin bidding in mid-February. In true A.R.T. spirit, this year's catalog of auction items reaches "beyond the boundaries," offering exceptional travel, fashion, sports, dining, and experiential packages. Be sure to visit our online auction often to learn about new additions and — of course — to bid!

Join the "cast" at this year's pARTy. For more information, or to request an invitation, call Jessica Obara at 617-496-2000 X8832.

Photo: Leslie Appleby and Adam Sandler on the set of *You Don't Mess with the Zohan*. Leslie was the high bidder for the visit with Sandler at A.R.T.'s pARTy.

Mark your calendars...

pARTy

March 10, 2008
EpiCenter, Boston



Waterston, Baldwin Visit A.R.T./MXAT Institute

The students at the A.R.T. Institute had several special treats in December, enjoying visits by the actors Alec Baldwin (30 Rock) and Sam Waterston (Law and Order). Baldwin and Waterston were in town courtesy of Harvard's Office for the Arts; Waterston was happy to re-visit the Loeb Drama Center, where he had starred with Hume Cronin in Marsha Norman's play, *Traveler in the Dark*. They talked about their careers, answered questions from the students, and gave advice on how to follow in their footsteps.

Below: Alec Baldwin with Institute student Doug Chapman; Sam Waterston and A.R.T. Executive Director Rob Orchard.



TASTE OF THE A.R.T.

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UP NEXT: CARDENIO

by Stephen Greenblatt & Charles L. Mee
directed by Les Waters

May 10–June 8 Loeb Stage

Shakespeare scholar Stephen Greenblatt (*Will in the World*) and playwright Charles Mee have joined forces to produce a midsummer comedy of love based on *Cardenio*, a play by Shakespeare that was lost soon after its first performance. Fragments survive, which Greenblatt and Mee have woven into a contemporary reconstruction of the story, now set at a wedding party on the terrace of a villa in the Umbrian hills. Presented in association with The Public Theatre, New York.

**To order, call 617.547.8300
or visit amrep.org today!**



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LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a green building rating system that was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2000 through a consensus-based process. LEED certification offers third party validation of a project's green features and verifies that the building is operating exactly the way it was designed to.

LEED certified projects blend environmental, economic, and occupant-oriented performance. They cost less to operate and maintain, are energy- and water-efficient, have higher lease up rates than conventional buildings in their markets, are healthier and safer for occupants, and are a physical demonstration of the values of the organizations that own and occupy them. For more information visit www.usgbc.org.

curtain times

Tue/Wed/
Thu/Sun eves 7:30pm
Fri/Sat eves 8pm
Sat/Sun matinees 2pm

single ticket prices

LOEB STAGE	A	B
Fri/Sat evenings	\$79	\$56
All other perfs	\$68	\$39

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Fri/Sat evenings \$52
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discount tix

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Based on availability.

50 @ \$15 @ noon

\$15 tickets on sale at noon
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availability.

box office hours

LOEB STAGE
Tue–Sun: noon–5pm
Monday: closed
Performance days: open until
curtain

ZERO ARROW THEATRE

Box Office opens one hour
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exchanges

Ticket exchanges are FREE for
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Single ticket buyers can
exchange for a fee of \$10.

pre-play discussions

Held one hour before 7:30
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Department.
Julius Caesar: February 24, 27, 28

playback

Post-show discussions after all
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Tell us what you would like to see in ARTicles.

Visit us at www.amrep.org/survey or write to us:

American Repertory Theatre, Attn: ARTicles
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WELCOME TO **ARTicles**,
the A.R.T.'s quarterly newsletter.

JULIUS CAESAR
FEBRUARY 9 - MARCH 16

ELECTIONS & ERECTIONS:
A Chronicle of Fear & Fun
APRIL 3 - MAY 4

AND...ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS!
THE ISLAND OF ANYPLACE
MARCH 5 - 14

ARTicles

SEASON 07/08
02.09 – 03.16 JULIUS CAESAR
03.04 – 03.14 THE ISLAND OF ANYPLACE
04.03 – 05.04 ELECTIONS & ERECTIONS:
A Chronicle of Fear & Fun
05.10 – 06.08 CARDENIO

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