

LALELA ULWANDLE

Listen to the sea



TOUR SCHEDULE

*All shows are free,
Audience numbers are limited –
please RSVP timeously*

Port Shepstone Civic Centre

10 Connor Street, Port Shepstone, 4240

7 Oct 2019 12h00 & 19h00

Scottburgh venue TBC

8 October 2019 18h00

Hluhluwe venue TBC

10 October 2019 12h00 & 18h00

Sodwana venue TBC

11 October 2019 12h00 & 18h00

Zululand Chamber of Business Foundation Community Park

(Alton Rd, Richards Bay Central, Richards Bay, 3900)

12 Oct 2019 15h00 & 19h00

**Durban Run: Square
Space, UKZN Howard
College campus,
University of Kwa Zulu
Natal**

Tuesday 15 Oct:
12h00

Wednesday 16 Oct:
12h00 & 19h00

Friday 18 October:
19h00

Saturday 19 October:
12h00 & 19h00

RSVP Tamlynn Fleetwood
TamlynnF@dut.ac.za | 079 186 4423
(RSVPs per phone or email only please)



UK Research
and Innovation

Lalela uLwandle press release

BRIEF SUMMARY

Lalela uLwandle (isiZulu for 'listen to the Sea') is an interactive immersive theatre and public storytelling experience, led by the [Empatheatre collective](#). The project makes visible the stories of living with the ocean that are seldom heard in the public domain. Drawing from seven months of collaborative action research into the lives of different KZN citizens along our coast. This project brings to the surface the lived realities of people involved directly and indirectly with the ocean, as well as creating a new social platform that makes public dialogue possible regarding our collective pressing concerns regarding our ocean's health.

The writing team, led by Neil Coppen with contributions from Helen Walne, Gcina Mahlope, Mpume Mthombeni, Dylan McGarry, Taryn Pereira and Kira Erwin, pieced together verbatim oral histories, interviews, focus group discussions, archival research and traditional local stories into a rich and thickly described narrative of fictional characters hopes, dreams and concerns for our shared coastal and oceanic heritage. After the show the audience are encouraged to participate in a public dialogue space facilitated by the research team from Rhodes University and the Durban University of Technology.



Image 1: Durban based award winning Actress and Empatheatre co-director Mpume Mthombeni performing as Nolwandle, a marine educator who tells the story of her grandmother (a traditional healer from Kosi Bay) and her mother (a Zionest healer). We learn the long legacy of forced removals through her captivating performance.

Lalela uLwandle is performed by Durban-based actors Mpume Mtombeni (playing Nowandle, an isiZulu marine educator with an ancestral heritage in Zulu mysticism), Alison Cassels (playing Faye, a retired marine scientist and recent widow) and Rory Booth (playing Niren, a young South Durban Indian social and environmental activist, and descendent of a long line of Durban Indian fisher folk) . This talented and award-winning cast, perform a captivating production based on the first-hand testimonials that have been crafted into a theatrical journey. As Coppen explains: "...is a theatre based methodology that intentionally aims to inspire and develop a greater empathy and kindness in complex social learning spaces that are experiencing conflict or injustice."

The production is led by Dylan McGarry and Taryn Pereira at the Environmental Learning Research Centre, Rhodes University, in close collaboration with Kira Erwin at the Urban Futures Centre, Durban University of Technology and forms part of the One Ocean Hub, a global action research network led by Strathclyde University, and funded by the UKRI Global Challenge Research Fund.



Image 2: Kiroshan Naidoo plays Niren, a young Durban South Indian Activists, struggling against the legacy of environmental apartheid in Durban. Playwright Neil Coppen immersed himself in the archival research conducted by Neelan Govender and Viroshen Chetty which documents the long histories of South Indian Durban fisher folk and the ways in which their cultural, spiritual and livelihood practices are intimately connected to the wellbeing of the ocean. Niren will be performed next month by Durban actor Rory Booth.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director: Neil Coppen **Written:** Neil Coppen, with contributions from Helen Walne, Gcina Mahlope, Mpume Mthombeni, Dylan McGarry, Taryn Pereira, Kira Erwin.

Producer: Dylan McGarry **Research:** Kira Ewrin, Taryn Pereira, Dylan McGarry, Mpume Mthombeni, Nomkhosi Xulu-Gama, Tanya Dayaram **Facilitators:** Kira Ewrin, Dylan McGarry, Nomkhosi Xulu-Gama. **Actors:** Alison Cassels, Mpume Mthombeni & Rory Booth

Design: Dylan McGarry & Neil Coppen **Costumes:** Dylan McGarry & Diane Badenhorst

Lighting design: Tina La Roux **Stage Manager:** Zenzo Msomi **Sound Design:** Tristan Horton
Score: Guy Buttery & Gary Thomas

LALELA ULWANDLE TOUR & SCHEDULE

The Lalela uLwandle Empatheatre experience will be touring the KZN coast line from as far north in Hluhluwe, down to Scottburgh in October.

Monday 7th October

Port Shepstone Civic Centre

Add Address:

Performance 1: 12h00

Performance 2: 18h00

Tuesday 8th October

Scottburgh High School

Performance 3: 12h00

Performance 4: 18h00

Thursday 10th October

Hluhluwe Environmental Education Centre

Performance 5: 12h00

Performance 6: 18h00

Friday 11th October

Sodwana

Performance 7: 12h00 - **Ezemvelo KZN venue**

Performance 8: 18h00

Saturday 12th October

Richards Bay Zululand Chamber of Commerce

Performance 9: 15h00

Performance 10: 19h00

Durban Performances at the Square space at UKZN Howard College campus

Tuesday 15th October

Performance 1: 12h00

Performance 2: 19h00 (official opening-media/special guests)

Wednesday 16th October

Performance 3: 12h00

Performance 4: 19h00

Thursday 17th October

Bonus Performance 5: 09h00 - uShaka Marine world

Friday 18th October

Performance 6: 19h00

Saturday 19th October - back at Square space UKZN

Performance 7: 12h00

Performance 8: 19h00

For bookings please contact Tamlynn Fleetwood:

TamlynnF@duf.ac.za / cell: 0791864423

ABOUT EMPATHEATRE

Empatheatre is a form of storytelling that capitalizes on the rich potential of the live theatre experience to unpack and demystify the complex inner-workings of the selected issue, in this case Ocean health and governance. Emerging from an extensive practice-led research process (co-created by Mpume Mthombeni, Neil Coppen & Dylan McGarry) the team consisting of different players with varying experience and knowledge/skills sets, begin shaping an engrossing and relevant true-to-life theatrical story-telling experience. As educational sociologist and co-founder of Empatheatre Dr. Dylan McGarry explains: "The performances create new social platforms for the public to engage in relevant public debate and conversation, that can be used to further respond to the issues at hand.." Neil Coppen (co-founder and writer/director of Lalela uLwandle) goes on: "The process is intended as a means to create emotionally rich and factually relevant stories that speak directly and emotively to the realities of the situation and above all honour the informants' narratives which are woven carefully into the messaging fabric of the play." The process of researching the play, and then performing the play, with associated public dialogue is changing the ways in which we create responsive collaborative and accessible research. Mpume Mthombeni reflects: "Empatheatre's primary function is to offer a "therapeutic" (iyalapha) experience for audiences, where we are able to listen, play-back and work through our difficult and complex realities together". Lead researcher and co-facilitator for Lalela uLwandle Dr. Kira Erwin at the Urban Futures Centre (DUT) explains how important Empatheatre spaces are for: "ensuring different and divergent voices remain in conversation with each other, especially considering the pressing issues facing humanity at the moment." The theatre space is therefore acts like a public courtroom, where a group of very diverse audience members can engage with well researched, locally relevant issues and discuss and weigh these issues together in a meaningful and productive way.

The Empatheatre team have been responsible for launching several high-profile and successful social-justice theatre projects over the last decade including [Soil & Ash](#) (focusing on rural communities facing pressure from coal-mining companies), Ulwembu (street-level Drug addiction), [The Last Country](#) (women's migration stories and xenophobia) and now Lalela ulwandle (stories focusing on South African communities' relationships with the ocean). Empatheatre was co-developed by Neil Coppen, Dylan McGarry, and Mpume Mtombeni along with further iterations and developments with the Big Brotherhood theatre company and the Urban Futures Centre, DUT (Kira Erwin and Monique Marks).

See <http://www.uncannyjustness.org/empatheatre.html>



Image 2: "It seems that even the deepest parts...the furthest reaches of our oceans are no longer out of reach... Elbowing our way into these private realms... places where things spark and bounce in the dark. Things we could never imagine. And yet here we are, scurrying on land, desperate to control this living, breathing mystery. A fantasia that, after 40 years of study – not even I understand." Elize Cawood performing a monologue as Faye, a retired and recently widowed KZN marine scientist. Faye will be performed next month by Durban actress Alison Cassels.

END