



Press release
Thursday 9 April 2021

HERE, THERE, NOW INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROJECT TO UNITE YOUNG BLACK WOMEN FROM LONDON AND ZIMBABWE

- Lyric Hammersmith Theatre in partnership with Nhimbe Trust supported by the British Council announce *Here, There, Now*, a new international digital storytelling project for young Black women from London and Zimbabwe exploring themes of identity
- Led by UK-based theatre director and writer Monique Touko and Zimbabwe-based artist Lady Tshawe, online workshops will take place simultaneously in both countries for participants to create, direct and perform new work
- Applications for participants are open now to young Black women, aged 18 – 25, based in West London and can be applied for at www.lyric.co.uk

The **Lyric Hammersmith Theatre** in partnership with [Nhimbe Trust Zimbabwe](#) and supported by the **British Council** today announce *Here, There, Now*, a new digital storytelling collaboration that will bring together young Black women, aged 18 – 25, from West London and Bulawayo, Zimbabwe to create work exploring themes of womanhood, identity and race. UK-based theatre director and writer **Monique Touko** and Zimbabwe based award-winning actor, creative, poet and director **Lady Tshawe** will lead a series of workshops throughout May 2021.

In response to Black Lives Matter and events of 2020 including the ongoing effects of the pandemic, the online collaboration will provide young women the agency, power and platform to share their voice and stories with others who are experiencing the same issues from the other side of the globe. Online workshops will run simultaneously from London and Bulawayo as participants come together to create monologues inspired by their individual experiences yet which will be performed by their counterpart overseas. The monologues created through the workshops will be filmed and shared online and available to watch in July.

Monique Touko said: *"Here, There, Now provides a great opportunity for young Black women to not only develop skills in playwriting, creative writing and performance but also to explore their identity in their home country and empathise with those based in their partner nation. I hope they will feel emboldened through this exchange of ideas and feel a strengthened sense of community. Personally too, Bulawayo is the birthplace of my Mother and a place I hold dear to my heart. The opportunity to make and create cross-culturally particularly at this time is beyond exciting. In addition, being a Black woman is beautiful and complex and exploring it in this way in the shadows of Black Lives Matter feels right and highly nourishing. I'm looking forward to seeing what we create."*

Lady Tshawe said: *"I am excited and honoured to be given this opportunity to be a part of this project. I am particularly looking forward to seeing how the young ladies interact with the topics*

and with each other using the 'new normal' format of work being done online. This exchange, I believe, will not only foster working relationships but will inspire the participants to explore and challenge themselves creatively."

Rob Lehmann, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, Director of Young Lyric, said: "*Here, There, Now* is a new and exciting opportunity within the Young Lyric offer that connects young people from West London internationally with their peers to acquire a local, national and international perspective on the world through the use of theatre and creativity. We are delighted to be working with both local and international collaborators and look forward to developing a partnership with Nhimbe Trust who have a track record of artistic excellence with young people."

Here, There, Now will bring together 20 young women from both countries. There are 10 spaces now available for applicants in the UK who must be aged between 18-25, identify as Black and live within one of the 10 West London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond upon Thames, Westminster or Wandsworth. Applications can be made via www.lyric.co.uk and close on Friday 23 April at 6pm. All participants will also receive payment for any in-person engagement required as part of the collaboration. Nhimbe Trust will be handling applications for the 10 Zimbabwean participants. This project is led in partnership by the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Nhimbe Trust and is kindly funded by British Council as part of their Digital Collaboration and Storytelling Grants scheme.

Monique Touko is a London based director and multidisciplinary artist working in theatre, radio and film. Her assisting credits include *Rosmersholm* (West End), *Lorca's Blood Wedding*, *Yellowman* (Young Vic), *Richard II* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Wishlist* (Royal Exchange Manchester and Royal Court), *Kanye The First* (HighTide UK Tour), *On the Exhale* (Traverse Theatre), *Cock* (Chichester Festival Theatre). Recent directing credits include *BLANK* at Rose Bruford and *This Might Not Be It* reading at Bush Theatre. Monique is also part of The Ubunifu Space - a definitive guide to music and culture from the youth of Africa and the diaspora. Monique is Partnership Manager and Assistant Producer for Ubunifu Radio as well as a regular member of the UK reaction team on the YouTube channel which has a global following of 270K+ subscribers and over 40 million views.

Lady Tshawe is an award-winning actress and a multi-talented artist hailing from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Her artistic style, expression and image embody her abilities, aspirations and achievements as a musician, poet, writer, dancer, actress, curator and creative thinker. She received the 2018 Roil Bulawayo Arts Awards for Outstanding Theatre Actress. Acting credits include *Zambezi Express*, *Tellers: The Musical*, *BloodTongue: The Musical* South Africa tour. Other performances include the Kwaguqa International Festival 2017, the opening ceremony of Sanganai/Hlanganani Tourism expo and the NAMA awards ceremony. Writer and director credits include *6.55*, a theatre production produced by Nhimbe, Bulawayo. Writer credits include *Unified Women* (Young Vic). TV includes ZBC dramas *Mr Perfect* and *Ezacomkhakha*. Film includes *Qiniso* and *The Lost Letter*.

- ENDS -

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Notes to Editors

IMAGES available to download [here](#)

Listings

Here, There, Now

Workshop schedule:

01, 02, 08, 09, 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30 May: 12pm-2pm online via Zoom

22 May: 10am-5pm in person at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre

Lyric Square, King Street, London, W6 0QL

Box office: 020 8741 6850

www.lyric.co.uk

Twitter: [@LyricHammer](https://twitter.com/LyricHammer)

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British Council Zimbabwe

Twitter: [@zwbritish](https://twitter.com/@zwbritish) | [@SouthernAfrArts](https://twitter.com/@SouthernAfrArts)

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British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, and through broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. www.britishcouncil.org

Nhimbe Trust

Nhimbe Trust, based in the city of Bulawayo Zimbabwe, is a Pan African creative civil society organisation working in three core areas; creative education, development cooperation, and cultural policy. The mission of the organisation is to advocate for Pan African culture-sensitive political and socio-economic development policies, in countries at risk of conflict, in conflict, engaged in post-conflict reconstruction, and affected by natural disasters.

Nhimbe plays an active role in global cultural governance and Fairtrade for culture through involvement with the African Union Pan African Cultural Congress, 2005 UNESCO Convention Civil Society Forum, Global CSO Coordination, Africa Tech, and Creative Group, and UNCTAD Ad Hoc Expert Meetings on Creative Economy. Nhimbe's global work is profiled on the Cultural Economy Outlook online portal. All Nhimbe's programming revolves around the 2003 UNESCO Convention and 2005 UNESCO Convention

Young Lyric

Young Lyric is the home for all young people at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre. It encompasses all of our projects and activities, including classes, performance opportunities, apprenticeships,

work experience, supporting emerging artists, schools activity and targeted work supporting vulnerable young people. We work with artists and young people to create innovative and exceptional performances and projects. Over the past decade the Lyric has established a national and international reputation for its work with children and young people. We are committed to giving young people from all backgrounds access to the arts to develop their creative, social, personal and economic potential. We recognise the power of bringing young people into the Lyric to create work in a professional theatre alongside professional artists.