

Nanzikambe premieres *An African Dream*

BY MAURICE NKAWIHE

ENCHANTING spirits and throbbing drums coupled with back-to-back laughter are what people should expect should they plan to go to the French Cultural Centre tomorrow to watch Nanzikambe latest play, *An African Dream*, an adaptation of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Adapted by the group's director, Kate Stafford, the magical musical comedy is set to enthral the Blantyre theatre enthusiasts.

The play expresses Kate's dream to tackle issues of magic, jealousy and love that are part and parcel of the African set up.

"I've always wanted to direct

A Midsummer Night's Dream so it was the perfect choice for my final show here.

"I've had a wonderful time setting up Nanzikambe, but it's time I went back home to London," she said.

Written by the Bard of Avon over four centuries ago, *An African Dream* casts local theatre gurus in the likes of Baba Twaya Sanudi, Emmanuel Maliro, Brevo Munyayi, among other notable faces in the theatre arena.

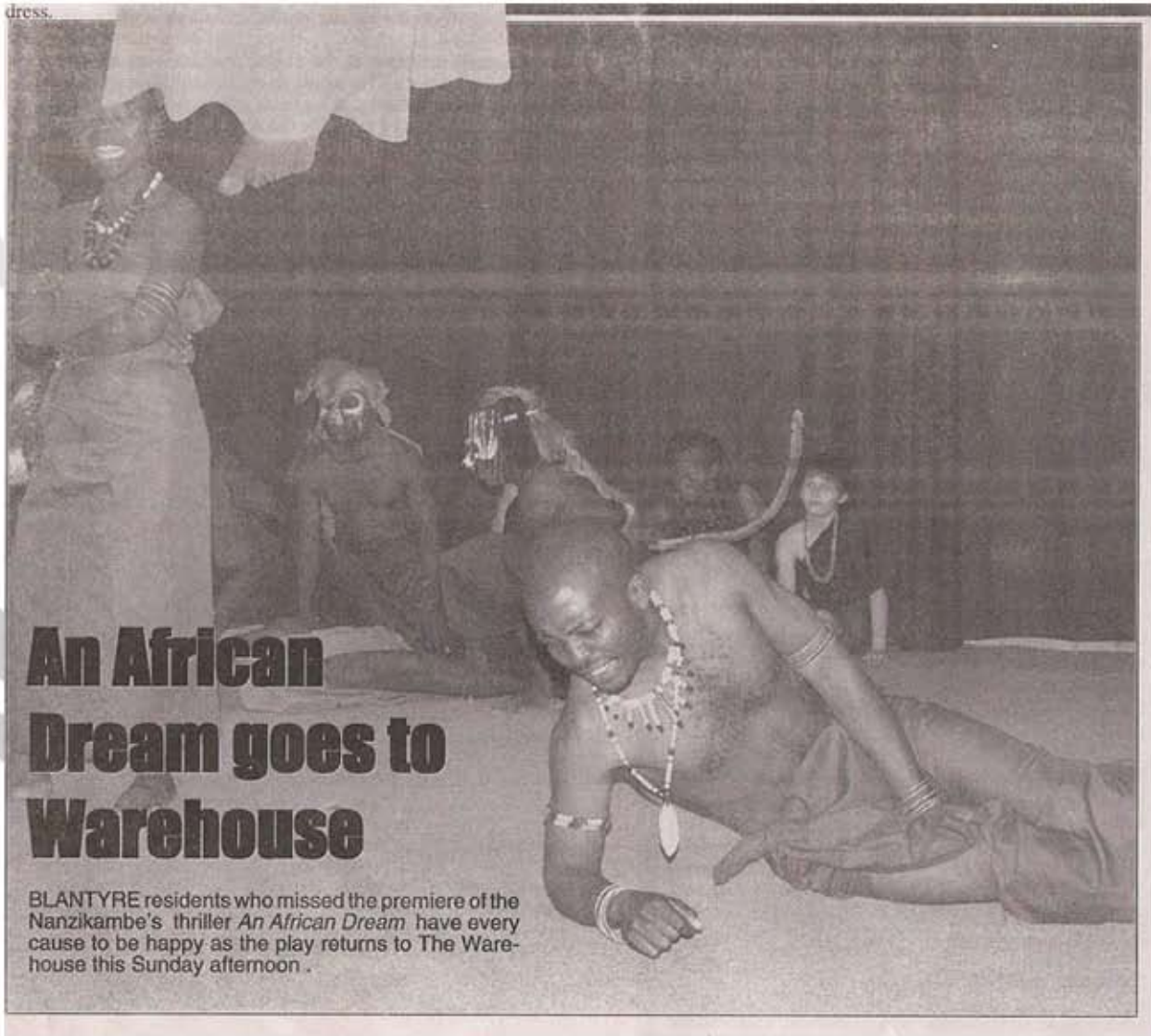
The shows will be graced by the Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Henry Chimunthu Banda.

Alfred Msadala (to recite some poems) and Upilire Drama Group (to stage a sketch) will curtain raise the



***An African Dream* launched**

Last Saturday, Nanzikambe premiered their latest play, *An African Dream*, which is an adaptation of William Shakespeare's play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the scene captured above, a girl is brought before a king by her indignant father because she has refused to marry a suitor who was imposed on her.—Picture by Robert Lazarous.



An African Dream goes to Warehouse

BLANTYRE residents who missed the premiere of the Nanzikambe's thriller *An African Dream* have every cause to be happy as the play returns to The Warehouse this Sunday afternoon.

The Nanzikambe wonder

Fun-packed 'An African Dream' puzzles patrons



Stories by **Wendell Kamukama**

WHEN I first saw the play, I was struck by the fact that the actors were not just performing, they were living the play. It was a powerful experience that stayed with me long after the curtain had fallen.

The play is a masterpiece of African theatre, capturing the essence of the struggle for freedom and justice in Malawi. The performances are so convincing that you feel like you are part of the story.

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Nanzikambe actors fight for supremacy

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Lofta pledges more support for arts

LOFTA Investment Bank, who sponsored production of Nanzikambe's *An African Dream*, said it will continue supporting art in the country, speaking during the play's premiere, the bank's managing director Jacques de Jager, said he bank would continue supporting art in the country.

"We are dedicated to supporting art in the country," he said.

Taking from Nanzikambe's *Handicrafts*, "To be real is to be there in the moment," de Jager said. "Supporting art is in Malawi, that is the great to be and that is not the question," he said.

Local Government Minister George Chigondo, who spoke on behalf of Minister of Sports and Culture Henry Chikwanda, said culture is essential to the development of any nation.

"Nanzikambe has provided employment to some of our youths in addition to training them in theatre which is very commendable," he said.

Chigondo called upon other companies to support the company by Nanzikambe and Lofta Investment Bank.





A scene from *An African Dream*.—Pic: Courtesy of Nanzikambe.

African Dream at The Warehouse Sunday

by Our Reporter

Nanzikambe's heavily acclaimed play *An African Dream* comes to The Warehouse Sunday afternoon, the last event for the theatre group's artistic director Kate Stafford.

According to Stafford, the show is breaking new ground in

Malawian drama, having professionally designed a set that uses lighting effects to create a magical atmosphere.

An African Dream is sponsored by Loita Investment Bank and was launched last month. However, lack of funds has limited performances to Blantyre, said the executive advisor Smith Likongwe.

"Of course, if a sponsor came forward with a view of taking the play further, we would be delighted. We would be very much like the people of the Northern and Central Regions to have the opportunity of seeing this famous Shakespeare comedy but at the moment, the only chance to see it is this Sunday—I am sure people will not want to miss out by missing this show and will travel to Blantyre for this event," he said.

On this end, Stafford, who leaves for the UK in two weeks, said she would enter into a fund-raising drive once she gets back to the UK.

"This will be my very last show in Malawi, so it's great that *An African Dream* has been so successful. I am going to do my level best to raise more funds for Nan-

who knows, perhaps I will be able to bring Malawian drama to a wider audience. *An African Dream* has it all—laughs, music, great acting and slick professionalism, so it will definitely be selling in the UK," she said.

Nanzikambe's company manager Muthi Nhlema is proud of the group's achievements.

"We have created a backdrop which uses light to change from a blue sky to a mountain scene—it was painted by Masa Lemu and looks really marvellous. I don't believe we have ever had anything like it in Malawi. I saw some similar effects when I visited a theatre festival in Norway but never thought we could pull it off here. But we have done it and it's worthwhile to come and see the show for that



An African Dream rehearsal

Nanzikambe premieres 'An African Dream'

BY MCDONALD BAMUSI

ONE of Malawi's renowned theatre groups, Nanzikambe, this afternoon launches their latest adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* titled *An African Dream* at the French Cultural Centre in Blantyre.

The play promises to be another of the groundbreaking performances after *Playing With Food*, *The African Macbeth*, *A Flea in the Ear* and *An African Hamlet*.

An African Dream has pooled together 20 of the country's finest theatre icons in the likes of Baba Twaya Sasudi,

Angella Ching'anba and Thupelgo Chisira.

Director of *An African Dream*, Kate Stafford, said she tried as much as possible to be faithful to the original Shakespearean play.

"Of course, we had to cut some pieces to create room for music and in some places we had to show action instead of just narrating," she said.

Stafford, who has produced her last play in Malawi before she returns to England, said she was happy with the current trends in Malawian theatre.

"When I first came to Malawi the situation was more pathetic. There was no

lighting on stage where there was just a table and a chair, but the situation is now slowly improving," said Stafford.

Meanwhile, Muthi Nhlema, one of the directors at Nanzikambe, and Smith Likongwe of The Story Workshop have just returned from a training of trainers workshop in Zambia on using theatre to solicit action from people.

The workshop, which started on May 8 and finished on May 20, drew 50 participants from Zambia and 2 participants from Malawi. The Malawi Bridge Project funded the workshop.

Nanzikambe shot in the arm

BY MCDONALD BAMUSI

RENOWNED theatre outfit, Nanzikambe, has received a donation of K300,000 from Loita Investment Bank towards the production of their latest release, *An African Dream*.

The play is the African version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is Nanzikambe's latest Shakespeare adaptation following on from *The African Hamlet* and *African Macbeth*.

An African Dream will be launched at the French Cultural Centre in Blantyre on May 28 2005.

Among the dignitaries

who will come for the launch are the British High Commissioner to Malawi, David Pearey and Youth, Sports and Culture minister, Henry Chimunthu Banda.

Managing Director for Loita Investment Bank, Jacques de Jager, said the bank is proud to be associated with the arts in Malawi.

"We at Loita understand that empowering the development of high quality arts is of crucial importance to the national cultural development.

"We are proud to be associated with the development of performing and visual arts in Malawi," said de Jager.

The director of *An African*

Dream, Kate Stafford, said Loita's donation was a timely gesture.

"We are extremely grateful to Loita for funding our production.

"With so little money available for the performing arts, the interest from Malawi's commercial sector is particularly welcomed.

"We are hoping that this is the first step towards a longstanding commercial relationship with Loita," she said.

Meanwhile, Nanzikambe has organised a press launch for *An African Dream* that is taking place this morning at the French Cultural Centre.



FRATERNISING WITH THE ARTISTS—De Jager with cast members of *An African Dream*