

Nanzikambe stages 'Wakutsina Nkhutu...A Flea In The Ear'

By FRANKIE MCHENGA
IT was one of the funniest afternoons for theatre lovers who gathered at French Cultural Centre in Blantyre last Sunday as the latest production from Nanzikambe theatre group 'Wakutsina Khutu...A Flea

In The Ear' left the audience rolling with laughter. Described as a rip-roaring, laugh-a-minute comedy by the group's director Kate Stafford, the 1½ hrs comedy centres its message on suspicions, mistrust and jealousy in love relation-

ships. A cast of 10 characters depicts Victor Chirambo's (Wongani Muntfali) wife Gertrude (Cecilia Yassin) confesses to her friend Lucy (Susan Chowe) that she suspects that her husband is unfaithful.

She therefore convinced Lucy to send an anonymous letter to him so that he could not recognise the handwriting. The letter invited Victor to one of the popular hotels, Tasty Honey Hotel.

Upon receiving the letter, Victor, as a faithful husband, asked his friend Charlie Tambwali (Stanley Kadzuwa) to go on his behalf. He also showed it to his other friend Abele (Samuel Kuseka) who happens to be a husband to Lucy the 'author' of the letter.

Abele, a hot-tempered Nigerian man, recognises his wife's handwriting and threatens to kill everyone involved. He first locked Victor in a cupboard though he alerted him that Charlie had been sent to the hotel instead.

While at the hotel, Gertrude was surprised to see her husband's friend Charlie waiting for her in the room. Charlie took the opportunity to try to get her to be his lover, and while they argue an accidental rotation of the bed brought in the hotel's porter Themuthemu (Wongani Muntfali) who identically resembles Victor-both parts were played by the same actor.

After long hours of mistaken identity while Abele threatened to kill everyone at the hotel with his re-

volver for 'hiding' his wife, all met at Victor's house where the issue was finally resolved.

Abele was convinced that her wife was not trying to cheat on him when he was shown a draft copy of the anonymous letter and Gertrude confessed to Victor that she hatched the plan because she thought he was unfaithful.

"It seems people have

warmly welcomed the play I was impressed with the big turn-out which I didn't expect," said Stafford.

"Malawi has potential in the arts industry. The country has talented artists who only lack exposure, promotion and encouragement. We would like to ask government and the private sector to come forward and assist these artists," she said.

Sunday What's Up!

Kapirintiya launches album

The Kapirintiya duo of the Kwathu Ku Ndirande fame will be launching their new Christmas release, *Taonani M'kholamo* on Sunday at the Polytechnic Main Lecture Theatre in Blantyre. The duo comprises Ndirande-based brothers Shadreck and Code Sangala. All the songs in this 10-track album, which is their second, have been done in Chichewa, with one *Fade Away* being bilingual (Chichewa and English). The show will be curtain raised by Japhet Khungwa and Adams Family and is expected to start at 1:30 PM.

Nanzikambe launches A Flea in Her Ear

The popular theatre production group Nanzikambe will on Sunday showcase its latest theatrical treat *Wakutsina Khutu... A Flea in Her Ear* at the French Cultural Centre in Blantyre. The production has been sponsored by FCC and Bata Shoe Company. Following the launch, there will be four more chances to see the show at Blantyre's newest performance venue, The Warehouse on December 11, 12, 18, and 19 at 1:30 PM.

Soldier performs with Zembani

Lucius Banda aka Soldier will hold a show at Centre Point in Kawale, Lilongwe in the evening. The show will be preceded by one at Tiya-mike Leisure centre starting at 1:00PM.

It was as combination of professionalism and excellence when the un-fouchable and scintillating sounds of Oliver 'Tuku' Mtukudzi stunned the jam-packed French Cultural Centre (FCC) amphitheatre in Blantyre at the weekend.

including technicians, diplomats and business people graced the approximate 80 minute concert, which can best be described as the finest international open-air concert this year.

Dressed in white long-sleeved shirt, black skullcap, black pair of trou-

make the show exciting. "Because it takes you to be wonderful for this show to be excellent," he said before turning to his six member group-the Black Spirits, "Guys we're here to do business, let's unite."

The 'Spirits' indeed jointly stepped on the gas

and thanks to French Cultural Centre for organising this show," said Mtukudzi when he ended his show at exactly 05:20 pm.

If people's response and the showcase of the music were anything to go by, Mtukudzi remains the best.

rganisations.



Kuseka (Centre) in action. Picture Courtesy of French Cultural Centre

Nanzikambe comes with latest play

By FRANKIE MCHENGA
THEATRE lovers stand a chance of sampling a new theatrical play from one of the fast growing theatre outfits Nanzikambe when they premier their latest production *Wakutsina Khutu...A Flea in Her Ear* at French Cultural Centre in Blantyre this Sunday.

Sponsored by French

Cultural Centre and Bata Shoe company, the play, which comes hot on the heels of another exciting play, *Playing With Food*, is expected to take the theatre audience to a different world.

"This is probably one of the funniest plays and promises to be hugely entertaining," said the group's artistic director Kate Stafford.

She said the play was a story of suspicion, jealousy and mistaken identity which result in marriage and relationship break ups.

According to Stafford, the play stars many of Malawi's most popular actors like Wongani Munthali (who showcases his talents in the dual role of the successful businessman Victor

Chirambo), Phyllis Dinala (as the proprietress of the Tasty Honey Hotel) and Samuel Kuseka (jealous husband who wrongly thinks his wife is with another man at the hotel).

Stafford said the play to be curtain-raised by Kasambwe Brothers Band "will make you laugh so hard until you can hardly catch your breath."

Nanzikambe stages 'A flea in her ear' again

BY TIMES REPORTER

GOD works of art are never known to tire even the most lazy and bored 'connoisseur' of art, simply because they are supposed to defy time.

One such exquisite piece of art is Nanzikambe's *A Flea in Her Ear*, a play aptly described as a 'rip-roaring laugh-a-minute comedy'.

The play, which was written in 1907 by a French playwright, Georges Feydeau but was first performed in the country last year, returns to the stage tomorrow at the French Cultural Centre with all the freshness it had about a century ago and the creative adaptation of its local director, Kate Stafford.

The original cast of the play remains largely unchanged except for Stanley Rix Kadzuwa whose character will be played by Brave Mnyayi and the latter's character to be played by Muthi Nhlema.

In a departure from their usual performances, Stafford disclosed that acoustic music outfit Kasambwe Brothers Band will also perform tomorrow.

"Other than that, we'll have a performance from Smith Likongwe as well a dramatisation



PUTTING A SMILE ON THE FACE - Nanzikambe actors, Mariah Kambwiri and Mnyayi, in the action packed play

of Jack Mapanje's 'Skipping without ropes'.

"We've done this because

we noticed that a lot of people like poetry," Stafford said.

Two weeks ago, the group

dramatised Mapanje's poem during a poetry recital organised by Mawu at the Warehouse.

Nanzikambe showcases A Flea in Her Ear

by Edyth Betha

The popular theatre production group Nanzikambe will on Saturday showcase its latest theatrical treat *Wakutsina Khutu... A Flea in Her Ear* at the French Cultural Centre in Blantyre.

This play follows *Playing With Food* which opened last week at The Warehouse, and according to Nanzikambe, it could not be more different in subject matter.

Artistic director for Nanzikambe, Kate Stafford

has directed this comedy which follows the fortunes of a wealthy businessman, his family and household as their lives are thrown into turmoil over the course of an extraordinary day.

Stafford describes the play as a visual extravaganza, with the costumes being colourful. The set design includes an ingenious bed, which revolves to reveal the next room — with predictably comic results.

There is also some foot-tapping lively music which adds to the atmosphere of fun and laughter and has been specially written by the Kasambwe Brothers Band who will raise the curtain for the launch at the FCC.

Wakutsina Khutu... A Flea in Her Ear

stars many of Malawi's most popular actors, among them Wongani Munthali who showcases his extraordinary talents in the dual role of the successful businessman Victor Chirambo and Themuthemu, a drunken hotel porter who happens to be Mr Chirambo's double.

It also stars Phyllis Dinala as the glamorous proprietress of the Tasty Honey Hotel — a hotel with a less than shining reputation — and Samuel Brown Kuseka as the hilarious jealous

husband who wrongly thinks his wife is with another man at the hotel. The confusions, misunderstandings and mishaps will leave you weak with laughter.

The production has been sponsored by FCC and Bata Shoe Company. Following the launch, there will be four more chances to see the show at

Blantyre's newest performance venue, The Warehouse on December 11, 12, 18, and 19 at 1:30 PM.

Nanzikambe is renowned for its quality and unique productions including *African Macbeth* as well as *Hamlet*, which were both released earlier this year.

One of the actresses of the play in action

