



**South Africa**



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## Ana Isabel Ordonez's THE AYE to Celebrates the 85th Birthday of Monsigneur Desmond Tutu in Cape Town

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<http://www.broadwayworld.com/south-africa/article/BWW-Review-Ana-Isabel-Os-THE-AYE-SHOW-Based-on-her-Internationally-Acclaimed-Book-Celebrates-the-85th-Birthday-of-Monsigneur-DESMOND-TUTU-in-Cape-Town-South-Africa-20161006>



Dr Ana Isabel Ordonez with Desmond Tutu

THE AYE, a stage show adapted from Dr Ana Isabel Ordonez's internationally

acclaimed book, *THE EXTRAORDINARY LOVE STORY OF AYE AYE AND FEDOR*, will be performed to celebrate the 85th birthday of Nobel Peace Laureate Monseigneur Archbishop Desmond Tutu as a part of the Sixth Annual Desmond Tutu International Peace Conference in Cape Town on 7 October.

*THE EXTRAORDINARY LOVE STORY OF AYE AYE AND FEDOR* has been translated into four languages and has graced the shelves of the Beijing and Frankfurt book fairs. The world premiere of the dance theatre adaptation in South Africa will feature a fantastic set, a superb jazz-rock score by Dutch pianist Michiel Braam, inspired choreography by Sifiso Kweyama and mischievous masks handmade in South Africa by La Carla Masks. The magical show will bring together a sparkling fusion of music (in a definitive recording by Braam which includes drummer Dirk-Peter Kölsch, guitarists Pieter Douma and Jorg Lehnardt and harpist Ulrike von Meyer), dance (by Jazzart Dance Theatre) and amusing narration (by singer Dean Bowman).

*THE AYE* is a dance theatre extravaganza that depicts a beautiful love story between two endangered animals: Aye Aye, a lemur, Fedor, and a white lion. Each defines the term "opposites attract" in a fantastic universe called the Musical Forest. While Aye Aye was free to run wild and enjoy the forest, Fedor was stuck in a zoo. The two meet while he is in captivity. They strike up a friendship that helps them both make some important discoveries and launches them on a journey to places they never thought they would go. Inspired by her love for Fedor, Aye Aye helps the animals at the zoo, who have had a difficult time in captivity, to escape and reunite in the Magical Forest where they are finally free, allowed to celebrate who they are. A happy ending is in store for everyone, thanks to the courage and quick thinking of Aye Aye and Fedor.



Ana Isabel Ordonez's cover illustration for her book, THE EXTRAORDINARY LOVE STORY OF AYE AYE AND FEDOR

THE AYE will be performed by Jazzart Dance Theater company dancers Adam Malebo and Tracey September, who will be joined by second-year trainees Abdul-Aaghier Isaacs, Amber Jodie Andrews, Darion Adams, Gabriella Dirkse, Ilze Williams, Keenun Wales, Luyanda Mdingi, Lynette du Plessis, Mandisi Ngcwayi, Paxton-Alice Simons, Siphosethu Gojo, Tanzley Jooste, Thandiwe Mqokeli and Vuyolwethu Nompetseni.

#### **About the Creative Team**

**Director and choreographer Sifiso Kweyama** was born and bred in KwaZulu Natal. He has established himself as one of the most respected teachers and choreographers in the country. Sifiso started training in 1989 at Phenduka Dance Theatre in Durban and, in 1993, joined Jazzart Dance Theatre in Cape Town where he was trained in Contemporary African Dance by Alfred Hinkel and went on to perform in numerous Jazzart's award winning productions. His dance career has seen him travel to countries such as Morocco, America, Germany, Abidjan, Angola and China. He has choreographed numerous works for various companies both locally and abroad, with

companies such as Moving Into Dance, Ballet Theatre Afrikan, Flatfoot Dance Company, Jazzart Dance Theatre, First Physical Theatre, Remix Dance Company and Repertory Dance Company (USA). He is currently the artistic director of Jazzart Dance Theatre, one of South Africa's leading contemporary dance companies, having exerted a powerful influence on the development of dance in South Africa for more than four decades. The company has over the years garnered many awards for innovative choreography and the consistent development of extraordinary performers. The Jazzart methodology ensures that strong technique is matched with a uniquely South African dance philosophy that is rooted in the diversity of the culture and traditions of the country. Its prodigious creative and critical output allows Jazzart to use dance as a transformative tool and to interrogate fully the issues of social awareness and cultural inclusiveness, thus embodying the transformative principles and values of South Africa's Bill of Rights.

**Producer, writer, poet and illustrator Dr Ana Isabel Ordonez** is a renaissance woman who shares her love of the natural world with young readers. An educator, scientist and lecturer, Ordonez has travelled the world, enjoyed varied cultural experiences and met interesting people and animals along the way. Thanks to her extensive education in France and the United Kingdom (with Masters and Ph.D.s in genetics, forestry and animal biology) she has a strong base of knowledge when it comes to various animal species, helping make her books and poetry educational, inspirational and entertaining. Her early poetry was profoundly influenced by the French symbolists, especially Verlaine and Parnassianists like Théophile Gautier.

Ordonez's goal when writing "The Extraordinary Love Story of Aye Aye and Fedor" was to show both the diversity and the similarities between members of the animal kingdom. She also wanted to communicate the idea that like humans, animals want to be happy, respected, safe and free. Aye Aye and Fedor's journey is a great example of friendship and cooperation between friends who on the surface seem to be very different from one another, but who have similar goals and a desire to share their lives together.

With the Aye ballet series the poet wants to bring happiness and awareness to others, to touch the inner being of people she does not know. Ordonez also wants to touch young dancers with a unique love story filled with wisdom and rhythm, surrounding a loving friendship that exists between threatened animals. As both lemurs and white lions are rare and threatened species, so this show speaks to the important issue of appreciating and protecting endangered animals.

The whimsical illustrations in the book and the CD album will appeal to children because they look much like the colourful, bright, humorous drawings that many children enjoy making themselves. As an artist, Ordonez puts an emphasis on playfulness as well as on capturing the nature and spirit of characters. The overall effect is a show that both kids and adults will love.

A very sensitive being, Ana Isabel is passionate about the importance of education, music, poetry and art. Her **Ruby Flower** record label has become an important asset for the arts and music community.

### **About Desmond Tutu**

***"Just call me Arch"--Desmond Tutu***

***Monsieur Desmond Tutu*** was born in the state of Transvaal at Klerksdorp in South

Africa on October 7, 1931. He attended Johannesburg Bantu High School. He dreamed of being a physician but his parents could not afford to send him to medical school. In 1954 the South African government did not extend the rights of citizenship to blacks and The National Party had risen to power on the promise of instituting a system of apartheid. South Africans were legally assigned to official racial groups; each race was restricted to a separate living area. Black people couldn't vote and were only represented in the local governments by tribal homeland representatives. Interracial marriage was forbidden, blacks were legally barred from certain jobs, and prohibited from forming labor unions. They needed passports for travel within the country. Critics of the system could be banned from speaking in public and subjected to house arrest.

Desmond Tutu refused to cooperate when the government ordained an inferior system of education for black students. He subsequently was banned from working as a teacher and on the advice of his bishop he began to study for the Anglican priesthood. In 1960 Tutu was ordained a priest in the Anglican Church.



*Monseigneur Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

Meanwhile the South African government began a program of forced relocation of Black Africans and Asians from newly designated White areas. Millions were deported to the homelands, then permitted to return as guest workers. From 1962 to 1966 Desmond Tutu lived in England, where he earned a master's degree in theology. He taught theology in South Africa for five years, then returned to England to serve as an assistant director of the World Council of Churches in London. In 1975 he was the first Black African to serve as Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg. From 1976 to 1978 he was Bishop of Lesotho. In 1978 he became the first Black General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

As a Bishop Tutu used the national platform to denounce the apartheid system as "evil and unchristian," calling for equal rights for all South Africans and a system of common education. He demanded the repeal of the oppressive passport laws as well as an end to forced relocation, encouraged nonviolent resistance to the apartheid regime, and advocated an economic boycott of the country. Though the government revoked his passport to prevent him from traveling and speaking abroad, his case soon drew the attention of the world and the international public raised an outcry.

Tutu rose to worldwide fame during the 1980s as an opponent of apartheid. In 1984,

Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, "not only as a gesture of support to him and to the South African Council of Churches of which he is leader, but also to all individuals and groups in South Africa who, with their concern for human dignity, fraternity and democracy, incite the admiration of the world." In 1986 he was awarded with the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism. In 1986 he was elected Archbishop of Cape Town, the first Black African to serve in this position. It placed him at the head of the Anglican Church in South Africa and made him defacto Archbishop of Canterbury, spiritual leader of the Church of England. In 1987 Tutu was awarded with the Pacem in Terris Award

International economic pressure and internal dissent forced the South African government to reform and in 1990, Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress was released after almost 27 years imprisoned on Robben Island. In 1991 the South African government at last began the repeal of racially discriminatory laws. In 1994 after the country's first multi-racial elections, President Nelson Mandela appointed Archbishop Tutu to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, investigating the human rights violations of the previous 34 years. Tutu counselled forgiveness and cooperation, rather than revenge for past injustice. In 1996 he retired as Archbishop of Cape Town and was named Archbishop Emeritus. Then he served for two years as Visiting Professor of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Published collections of his speeches, sermons and other writings include *Crying in the Wilderness*, *Hope and Suffering*, and *The Rainbow People of God*.

In 1999 he was awarded with the Sydney Peace Prize. In 2007, Desmond Tutu joined former South African President Mandela, former President Jimmy Carter, retired U.N Secretary General Kofi Annan, and former Irish President Mary Robinson to form The Elders, a private initiative mobilizing the experience of senior world leaders outside of the conventional diplomatic process. Tutu was named chair of the group. Carter and Tutu have traveled together to Darfur, Gaza and Cyprus in an effort to resolve long-standing conflicts. That same year he was awarded the Ghandi Peace Prize. Desmond Tutu's historic accomplishments and his continuing efforts to promote peace in the world were recognized by the United States in 2009 when Barack Obama gave him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 1955 Desmond Tutu married Nomalizo Leah Shenxane, they have four children and have been happily married for six decades. His house on Vilakazi Street in Soweto, Johannesburg, is registered as part of Johannesburg's historical heritage.

In 1986 Jazz wizard Miles Davis dedicated his album Tutu to Desmond Tutu. He contacted Virgin Radio on 15 October 2007 in the "Who's Calling Christian" phone-in where famous people call in order to raise a substantial amount of money for charity. He has donated some of his own cells to the ongoing effort to research the diversity of the human genome.

In 2009 Tutu joined the project "Soldiers of Peace," a movie against all wars and for global peace. He is one of the patrons of The Forgiveness Project and delivered the charity's inaugural annual lecture in 2010.

In 2014 the Mayor of Cape Town Patricia De Lille allocated the Granary Building to Mama Leah and Tata Tutu to build a museum and preserve his legacy.



Dalai Lama with Desmond Tutu

Tutu's followers know him as a great man who, since the demise of apartheid, has been active in the defense of human rights and uses his high profile to campaign for the oppressed. He has campaigned to fight HIV/AIDS, poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia. Tutu supports assisted dying and believes in assisted death.

On October 2nd Monseigneur Tutu launched *The Book of Joy* with his holiness Dalai Lama, a project to spread joy and understanding among human beings all over our planet. For six years he's been the chair of the Annual Peace Conference in Cape Town.

## **MICHIEL BRAAM, COMPOSER**

Michiel Braam is a Dutch pianist and educator, Director of the Jazz Pop Music and Dance Department in Niemejen, Netherlands. An absolute maverick on the piano and in his compositions, he's frequently seen in jazz festivals and jazz clubs around the world. The Aye album features the group eBraam performing Braam's own jazz-rock compositions written specially for the ballet: "Introduction," "Aye Aye At Work," "Small Meets Big," "Prison vs. DreAmy Freedom," "Restful Peaceful," "Bad Weather," "Enclosure To Enclosure," "Escape," "Happy March," and "Love". Braam manages to inject his infectious skill and enthusiasm into the sequences to make every track fresh and cheerful. Each one is given a nice tempo treatment in a breezy ride from start to finish. Bowman adds his share of the soothsayer's touch to the whole endeavour, and his work is surely a highlight of it all.

## **Dean Bowman Narrator**

Dean Bowman is a singer known and praised worldwide for his angelic voice. He began singing in church and has appeared on many releases and on stage, working in

both gospel and jazz styles. The New York native regularly performs all around the world.

Ordonez's tale and ballet captures the veteran vocalist Bowman in an intimate performance that showcases his smooth, honey voice and winning delivery. His narration of Ordonez's love tale/poetry never sounds phony or forced and the tale itself exemplifies directly such an authenticity.

### **LA CARLA, Mask Designer**

Carla Engelbrecht is a South African female, born in Johannesburg and raised in Durban. She tells us, "As a child I have always been exposed to art and creating beautiful environments."

Her father dabbled in oil painting and her mother always encouraged her to experiment with arts and crafts. She had a very successful Floral Art School in Durban and did a lot of flower arrangements for functions, weddings and events as well as gave courses where she also organized job placements for students at the completion of the course. Carla always helped out and all through her school years learned the trade of floral art. Understandably, this has helped her tremendously with the masks.

***The Sixth Annual Desmond Tutu International Peace Lecture will take place at the Artscape Theatre Centre in Cape Town, South Africa on 7 October 2016. Registration is from 17:00 - 18:30, with the doors closing at 18:50. The event is sold out.***