East African Artist Impact

Sundance Institute East Africa

2002-2015

BY THE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15 Years</th>
<th>6 Countries</th>
<th>4 Labs</th>
<th>100 Artists</th>
<th>25 Projects</th>
<th>1 Festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

ARTIST HIGHLIGHTS

Deborah Asiimwe (Uganda)
2003 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2009 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2010-2014 Sundance Institute Theatre Program East Africa Specialist
2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival

In 2002, Deborah was living and working as a theatre maker in Kampala, Uganda and hoping to make her dream come true. In 2014, she returned to Uganda to lead Sundance Institute East Africa’s transition to African leadership in partnership with the Bayimba Cultural Foundation. Deborah was among the first artists met by the Sundance team in 2002. She subsequently attended CalArts and graduated with an MFA in Playwriting. After serving as Assistant to Philip Himberg at a Theatre Lab, Deborah joined the Sundance Theatre Program as a staff member in 2011 and was the first-ever international recipient of Theatre Communications Group’s New Generations grant. She went on to produce four Labs in East Africa. After returning to Uganda, Deborah co-produced the first edition of the Kampala International Theatre Festival featuring 10 Sundance-supported plays and musicals, which is now accepting submissions for its second edition to take place in November 2015. She continues to write plays and is currently finishing up a six-month residency in Germany. Deborah is recipient of number international playwriting awards.
Mrisho Mpoto (Tanzania)

2008 ETI! East Africa Speaks in New York
2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at The Banff Centre
2011 Visit to New York City
2012 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival

Mrisho Mpoto was born the 12th son of the 12th wife of the Chief in a village in Tanzania. Today, Mrisho is one of Tanzania’s leading performers - a Kiswahili-language spoken word poet, music artist & theatre star. Sundance has been a part of Mrisho’s journey numerous times over the years, including support for this collaborative theatre piece, Africa Kills Her Sun, which will receive its Tanzanian premiere this fall. He was also selected to play the role of Falstaff in a Swahili production of The Merry Wives of Windsor at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in London. Mrisho continues to create new theatre pieces and albums for audiences in Tanzania.

Odile “Kiki” Gakire Katese (Rwanda)

2008 Visit to Uganda
2009 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island

Born in exile in Congo, Kiki returned to Rwanda after the Genocide of the Tutsis in 1994 and began work as a poet, teacher, director and producer. As of 2014, Kiki has been awarded the very first Gilder/Coigney International Award by the League of Professional Theatre Women in NYC; has begun work the United Nations on her Book of Life project; and has been featured in the movie Sweet Dreams that celebrates her all-women drumming corps Ngoma Nshya. Sundance supported Kiki twice with a residencies at the Sundance Resort for Ngwino Ubeho (Come & Be Alive) and on Manda Island in Kenya for The Book of Life.

Sitawa Namwalie (Kenya)

2008 Sundance Institute Workshop in Nairobi
2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival

Sitawa had a career in development and wrote poetry on the side. Now, Sitawa’s unique style of dramatized poetry rocks in successful productions Cut Off My Tongue and Silence is a Woman that take on taboo subjects with fresh wit and honesty. Sitawa wrote and performed Silence is a Woman many times in Nairobi, Kenya, as an exploration of the countless spaces and faces of silence in her life - to examine the many ways in which our silence imprisons us and makes us complicit in our own alienation. The show also performed at the 2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival. Sitawa is at work on a new project, Room of Lost Names. She was recently selected as a featured playwright at PEN World Voices: 2015 International Play Festival at CUNY.
Judith Adong (Uganda)
2008 ETI! East Africa Speaks
2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2011 Visit to New York

Judith built a career as a playwright, television & screenwriter and theatre professor at Makerere University in Kampala. Today, Judith’s plays Silent Voices and Just You, Me and the Silence have broken new ground, touching on the sensitive topics of the war in Northern Uganda and the country’s 2014 anti-gay legislation. Judith’s play Just You, Me & the Silence reached audiences around the world including in Uganda, New York, London and Toronto. She was selected to participate in the Royal Court’s new play development workshops in London. Judith is currently finishing up her degree at Temple University.

Meaza Berehanu Worku (Ethiopia)
2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2012 Sundance Institute Post-Lab Support Workshop at Baryshnikov Arts Center
2013 Sundance Institute Post-Lab Support Production Grant
2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival

In 2011, Sundance Institute East Africa selected Ethiopian playwright Meaza Worku and her funny and poignant play Desperate to Fight for development; brought Meaza to New York City for a reading of the play in English; and gave Meaza an artist’s grant for production support. In 2014, Meaza, working with leading actors and her husband, theatre director Yohannes Worku, premiere Desperate to Fight in Addis Ababa in Amharic. Meaza’s production of Desperate to Fight premiered in 2014 in Addis Ababa (with a production grant from Sundance Institute), breaking new ground in terms of subject matter, venue and style. The show also performed at the 2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival.

Surafel Wondimu (Ethiopia)
2012 Sundance Institute Directors Workshop in Addis Ababa
2013 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2014 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Zanzibar

In 2012, Ethiopian writer, poet and scholar Surafel Wondimu was accepted to the SIEA Directors Workshop in Addis Ababa. In 2015, Surafel is taking the lead to produce a major international Performance Studies conference and festival in Addis called Crossing Boundaries, incorporating SIEA alumni, including US artists, along with his Amharic adaptation of An Iliad.
Wesley Ruzibiza (Rwanda)
2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2011 Visit to New York
2012 Sundance Institute Directors Workshop in Addis Ababa
2013 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2014 Post-Lab Support to Assist Liesl Tommy at Dallas Theatre Center
2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival

Wesley was born in exile in Congo but returned post-genocide to found Rwanda’s only professional dance company, Amizero. Following two SIEA Directors’ Workshops, Wesley confidently sees himself creating dance-theatre pieces that will travel worldwide. He served as Assistant Director to Liesl Tommy for her acclaimed production of Les Miserables at the Dallas Theatre Center. Wesley subsequently directed Radio Play for a production at the 2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival. He continues to travel between Europe and Africa creating new dance-theatre pieces with numerous international collaborators.

Freddy Sabimbona (Burundi)
2011 Visit to New York
2012 Sundance Institute Directors Workshop in Addis Ababa
2013 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival

Freddy is the Artistic Director of the Bujumbura (Burundi) based theatre Troupe Théâtre Lampyre. A participant in the two SIEA Directors’ Labs, Freddy founded the first-ever Festival Buja Sans Tabu, receiving guests from throughout East Africa and beyond.

Irene Sanga (Tanzania)
2008 ETI! East Africa Speaks
2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at The Banff Centre
2011 Visit to New York
2012 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2014 Sundance Institute Post-Lab Support for Translation
2014 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Zanzibar
2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival

Irene was a well-known singer, writer, actress and director from the renowned Parapanda Theatre Lab in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Today, Irene is one of Tanzania’s leading female playwrights, using the Kiswahili-language and traditional African performance to take on contemporary social challenges, including women’s rights. Irene developed her Kiswahili-language plays Afrika Inaua Mwangaza Wake/Africa Kills Her Sun and Safari Ya Mwandale/Mwandale’s Journey at Sundance Institute. Incorporating traditional African performance song, dance and storytelling, Afrika Inaua Mwangaza Wake/Africa Kills Her Sun is adapted from a short story by Nigerian writer and
activist Ken Saro-Wiwa; Safari Ya Mwandale/Mwandale’s Journey is an original story addressing women’s education, clean water, and the tensions between traditional and modern life.

Margaret Namulyanga (Uganda)
2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda
2013 Post-Lab Support Production Grant

Margaret was a promising young playwright, accepted into Brown University’s playwriting program. Today, Margaret is working internationally with companies like The Royal Court Theatre in London; collaborating with leading U.S. theatre artist Emily Mendelsohn at Vassar College’s Powerhouse Program on a project called The Privileged Life of Cots about queer identity in Uganda, and donating her time as a core-member of Theatre Without Borders, an international network of theatre artists around the world.

Eric Wainaina (Kenya)
2008 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2012 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival

Eric, one of Kenya’s star musicians and performers, attended the Berklee College of Music in 2002 and soon began a journey to bring his musical talents to the stage in a musical theatre piece Mo Faya that was ecstatically received in Nairobi and enthusiastically welcomed to the 2009 New York Musical Theatre Festival. Eric reached out to Sundance to help him bring his work to an international audience and with Sundance, Eric has developed Kwa Maji Rise, a musical theatre piece that uses the mythic traditional African story of Lwanda Magere as a framework to tell the contemporary story of Kwa Maji - a fictional version of one of Nairobi’s legendary slum communities - as the inhabitants struggle to confront the internal and external ravages of ethnic violence.

Philip Luswata (Uganda)
2004 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island
2012 Visit to New York
2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival

Actor, director and playwright Philip Luswata co-founded the wildly successful Kampala-based comedy group Theatre Factory. Joining the Sundance Lab on Manda Island as a member of the acting company led to an SIEA exchange and exposure trip to New York City where Philip performed in a reading of Ethiopian playwright Meaza Worku’s hilarious look at contemporary marriage, Desperate to Fight, at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, and inspiring Philip to finish his own comic-tragic look at life in a Kenyan refugee camp. Philip performed at the 2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival. Philip’s play Crazy Storms, featuring its
Kenyan cast, was presented at the Centre x Centre festival in Kigali, Rwanda and is now being considered for production at theatres internationally.

**Aida Mbowa** (Kenya)
*2012 Sundance Institute Directors Workshop in Addis Ababa*
*2013 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab*
*2014 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Zanzibar*
*2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival*

Performer, director and scholar Aida Mbowa, born in Kenya and raised in Uganda, received a dual PhD in Drama and Humanities at Stanford University, with her thesis entitled: “Dialogic Constructions of a New Black Aesthetic: East Africa and African America, 1952-1979.” Since attending two SIEA Directors’ Workshops, Aida went back to Uganda to co-produce the 2013 Kendu Hearth conference, along with Deborah Asiimwe where she remains currently. She directed the Ugandan premiere of Meaza Worku’s *Desperate to Fight* at the 2014 Kampala International Theatre Festival.

**Andia Kisia** (Kenya)
*2014 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Zanzibar*
*2014 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab*

A young woman of great accomplishment, Andia is a playwright and winner of the BBC African Performance Playwriting Competition twice for her plays *K Street* and *The Homecoming*, fellow at the Royal Court Theatre in London and graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. As a Fellow at the 2013 Theatre Lab on Zanzibar to work on her play *the Butcher of Crawford* and playwright-in-residence at the 2014 Theatre Lab in Utah to work on her play *St. James*, Andia has embraced new connections and new approaches to enrich and deepen her writing.

**Eliday Msangi** (Tanzania)
*2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island*
*2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island*
*2011 Visit to New York*
*2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at The Banff Centre*
*2012 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab*

Eliday, a star of the Tanzanian musical scene, is a musician, composer, choir director, teacher and former musical director at PARAPANDA Theatre Lab in Dar es Salaam, as well as a graduate of Stavanger University College (Norway) and the Bagamoyo College of Arts (Tanzania). After Eliday came to SIEA Labs on Manda Island, at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada, and the Theatre Program Lab in Utah to work on the development of works by his collaborative partners Irene Sanga and Mrisho Mpoto (Afrika Inaua Mwangaza Wake/Africa Kills Her Sun and Safari Ya Mwandale/Mwandale’s Journey), Eliday became the musical director for the tv production of *Tanzanian Idol* and went on to produce his own solo album.
Mũmbi Kaigwa (Kenya)
2007 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab
2008 ETI! East Africa Speaks
2008 Sundance Institute Workshop in Nairobi
2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island

Mũmbi Kaigwa is one of Nairobi’s leading actresses on stage and film; her film work can be seen in *The Constant Gardener*, *The First Grader*, *The Knife Grinder’s Tale* and more; she’s seen on Kenyan TV and has produced major events in Nairobi such as *The Vagina Monologues*; she has inspired generations of young artists through her work with The Theatre Company. Mũmbi joined the Theatre Lab on Manda to share her skills as an actress in Meaza Worku’s *Desperate to Fight* and returned to Nairobi refreshed to produce the 2013 revival of *for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf*… and to start her own production company the Arts Canvas (Turubi za Fani).