

## MEDIA RELEASE

### LAMENTO

**What has happened in the past can shape the future; sometimes, forgiveness is a radical act.**

Now, in an innovative new production, LAMENTO at the Market Theatre, music written almost four centuries ago about these themes becomes burningly relevant.

Umculo's Opera Incubator, in association with the Market Theatre and Windybrow Theatre, proudly presents LAMENTO, created by German-based South African tenor and director Kobie van Rensburg, at the Market Theatre, Newtown from 3 – 6 November, 2016. There will be two advance performances at the Etienne Rousseau Theatre in Sasolburg on 26 and 27 October at 7pm.

Music by Claudio Monteverdi merges with contemporary multi-media presentation in a production that brings together singers, instrumentalists, lighting, video, computer animation and blue-screen to tell a story that is passionate and political. Images and narratives from South Africa's present and past, inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, form the core of LAMENTO. Animated projected texts in English, Zulu and Afrikaans come alive and move through the sets, along with the singers.

This will be the first time blue-screen technology has been used in a music theatre performance in South Africa and it is also the first time that some of Monteverdi's music, including the 1624 "Battle of Tancredi and Clorinda", has ever been performed in this country.

Monteverdi's work talked about love and hatred, violence and forgiveness; it was also biting political satire. Van Rensburg adroitly brings 17th-century Italy and recent South Africa history into the here and now with a bold new work that is dark, funny, provocative and profound.

*"Kobie's work as a director has been winning awards and filling houses in Europe," says Shirley Apthorp, director of Umculo. "Umculo is very proud to be able to present LAMENTO at the Market Theatre. It's multi-layered and incredibly engaging, and somehow both precise and intensely lyrical. You can see why his shows are selling out in Germany, but at the same time what he has created here is uniquely South African. This is a love song to a country that is being torn apart by conflict, and a testimony to its capacity for healing."*

Five of South Africa's most promising young classical singers (SSTTB): sopranos Elsabé Richter and Nombuso Ndlandla, tenor Nick de Jager, and bass Ronald Paseka, with Bongani Mthombeni and Sibusiso Simelane alternating in the role of high tenor, will take the audience on a rollercoaster ride of emotions in search of truth and reconciliation in seven scenes where TRC hearings are addressed through the medium of opera.



*“In fact”, says Apthorp, “to call it opera is a bit misleading. This is something new, made with gut-wrenchingly gorgeous music, to talk about things that matter today.”*

The LAMENTO ensemble is made up of six instrumentalists on harpsichord/organ, chitarrone/baroque guitar, cello, viola and two violins.

What drives us to hate and hurt each other? What hope is there when our leaders are corrupt? What is the point where victim and perpetrator meet? How do we deal with past wrongs? Can we truly forgive? Does love still have meaning?

These are among the questions posed by LAMENTO, an exploration of Desmond Tutu’s declaration: “I am a prisoner of hope.”

Season: Thursday 3 November – Sunday 6 November 2016

Press night: Thursday 3 November

Venue: The John Kani Theatre

Performance times: Thursday to Saturday at 8pm and Sundays at 3pm

Tickets: R95.00

Bookings: Computicket – 0861 915 8000 / for block bookings please contact Anthony Ezeoke 011 832 1641 ext.121 and Ncebakazi Thintsila 011 832 1641 ext.135.

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### **Notes for Editors**

**Umculo** is a Xhosa word which means both art music and reconciliation. Founded in 2010, Umculo is an international institution dedicated to supporting social development through music theatre in South Africa. Umculo’s “Comfort Ye” production won the prestigious RESEO/YAMA Award for Best Music Theatre Production for young audiences globally in 2015. In 2016, Umculo launched its Opera Incubator programme, headed by Kobie van Rensburg, to provide a growth platform for an operatic art form that is relevant to contemporary South African communities and institutions. By combining the aims of artistic excellence and innovation with educational and training programmes, the Opera Incubator explores the full potential of opera as a means of social development.

Umculo is offering EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS for Lamento to interested high schools and community groups (choirs given priority). The workshops are 90 minutes long. Through an interactive, creative process, participants are brought into contact with the content and form of “Lamento”. Please contact Phiwe Makaula on 078 092 2739 to arrange a workshop.

### **Production information**

**Director, Video, Stage & Set Design** - Kobie van Rensburg

**Sopranos** - Elsabé Richter & Nombuso Ndlandla

**Tenors** - Nick de Jager & Bongani Mthombeni / Sibusiso Simelane

**Bass** - Ronald Paseka

Accompanied by the LAMENTO ENSEMBLE

**Project Manager** - Shirley Apthorp

**Assistant Director** - Tinus Spies

**Co-ordinator: Education Initiative** - Lebona Sello