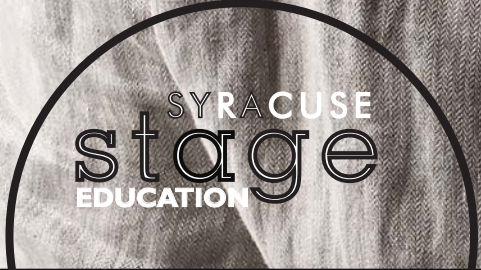




**SIZWE
BANZI
IS DEAD**



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS

Athol Fugard

Harold Athol Lanigan Fugard was born June 11, 1932, in the Karoo village of Middleburg, Cape Province, South Africa. Raised in Port Elizabeth from the age of three, Fugard deems himself the mongrel son of an English-speaking father of Polish/Irish descent, Harold David Lanigan Fugard, and an Afrikaner mother, Elizabeth Magdalena (née Potgieter). Fugard also had a brother, Royal, and sister, Glenda. His father, a jazz pianist, was disabled and couldn't support the family, so his mother ran the family's Jubilee Residential Hotel and the Saint George's Park Tea Room. In an act of rebellion, trying to separate himself from his father's name, "Hally" Fugard bullied, blackmailed and bribed everyone into calling him Athol.

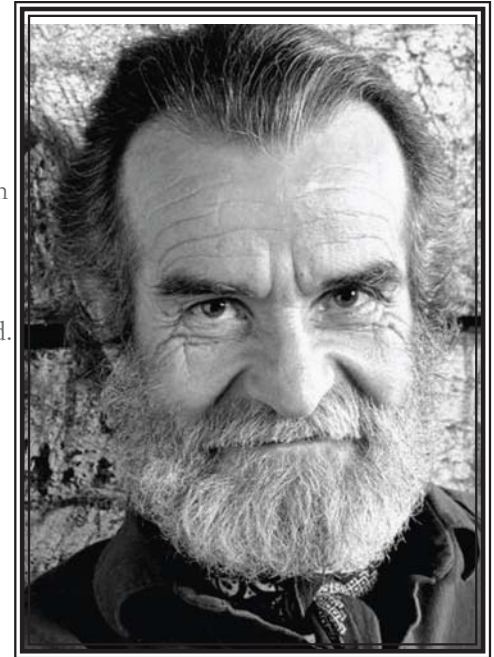
Fugard attended the University of Cape Town for two years, studying philosophy before dropping out to travel across Africa. He then served on the merchant ship the SS Graigaur, and sailed the trade routes of Southeast Asia. Upon returning to Port Elizabeth, he worked as a freelance journalist for the Evening Post. In 1956, he married actress Sheila Meiring (now a novelist and poet), with whom he founded Cape Town's Circle Players, a theater workshop where his first play, *Klaas and The Devil*, premiered. In 1958, Fugard was a clerk in the Native Commissioner's Court in Fordsburg, the "pass law" court (where black Africans were taken when they violated pass laws) where he learned of the injustices of apartheid. Due to the political persecution in Apartheid South Africa, he and his wife moved to London to experience theater free from racial segregation and discrimination. While in London, Fugard penned *The Blood Knot* (1961). Upon returning to South Africa later that year, Fugard found that *The Blood Knot*, because of its interracial content, would not be permitted to play after its first performance at the Dorkay House in Johannesburg. In late 1961, he took the production to un-segregated London.

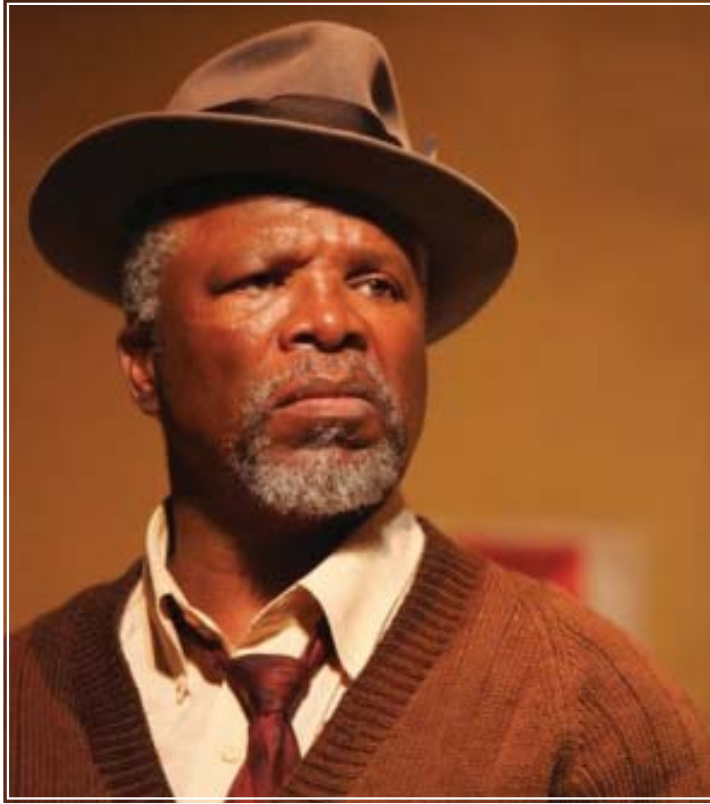
Fugard and his family later returned to South Africa in 1967. When the English television network BBC broadcast *The Blood Knot* that year, the government seized his passport for four years and kept him and his family under state surveillance, which included opening their mail and tapping the phone line. It would not be until 1971 that Fugard was permitted to leave the country. During the 1950s and 1960s in South Africa, when interracial mixing was illegal, Fugard worked as an actor, director and playwright with Cape Town's interracial theater group, The Serpent Players. It was here he met Zakes Mokae, a black musician and actor with whom he would collaborate throughout his career. Through the company, Fugard also met John Kani and Winston Ntshona, actors who helped create some of Fugard's most well-known plays and characters.

There are six play categories to which Fugard's work can be ascribed: the Port Elizabeth plays, the Township plays, Exile plays, Statements, My Africa plays, and Sorrows. The plays set in Port Elizabeth (roughly 1961-1982) depict the familial and personal struggles caused by apartheid. Fugard's Statement plays (1972) directly attack apartheid. These collaborative efforts created through the improvisations of John Kani and Winston Ntshona on inspired events have brought much acclaim to Fugard's works and an awareness of apartheid's effects to the rest of the world. As apartheid was ending in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Fugard's My Africa plays (1989-1996) confront the new challenges that face Post-Apartheid South Africa. Because of the strong hold apartheid had on South Africa's people and culture, Fugard's works weren't produced in the country until 1994, after the end of apartheid. Therefore, many premiered in London and at Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Conn. Fugard's American debut was *The Blood Knot*, produced Off-Broadway in 1964 by Lucille Lortel at the Cricket Theatre. Four of his plays have been produced on Broadway: *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1974), *The Island* (1974), *A Lesson from Aloes* (1980), "Master Harold" ... and the Boys (1982 and the 2003 revival).

Fugard and his works have received numerous nominations and awards, including the Tony, Obie, Lucille Lortel, Evening Standard, Drama Desk and Audie. In 2005, he was honored by the government of South Africa with the Order of Ikhamanga in Silver for his "excellent contribution and achievements in the theater." He has five honorary degrees and is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He is a professor of acting, directing and playwrighting at the University of California, San Diego.

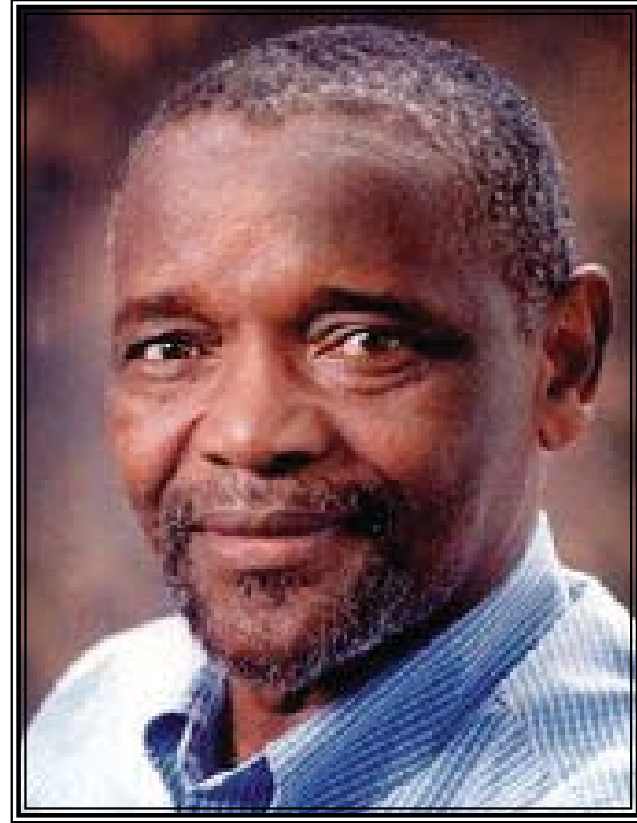
—courtesy of the Court Theatre, Chicago





John Bonisile Kani was born on August 30, 1943 in Port Elizabeth and raised with nine siblings. Kani served as a janitor and an engine assembly line worker at the Ford car plant in South Africa, and a welfare assistant with the Bantu Administration in New Brighton. Kani joined Athol Fugard and the Serpent Players in 1965. He originated roles in the productions of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, *The Island*, “*Master Harold*” ... and the *Boys*, and *My Children! My Africa!*, for which he received an Olivier nomination. Kani has also received the Avanti Hall of Fame Award from the South African film, television and advertising industries, the 2000 Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation Award, a special Obie award in 2003 for his extraordinary contribution to theatre in the United States, he was voted 51st in the Top 100 Great South Africans in 2004, the Olive Schreiner Prize in 2005, and in 2006 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Cape Town. Kani is now the executive trustee of the Market Theatre Foundation, founder and director of the Market Theatre Laboratory, and chairman of the National Arts Council of South Africa.

—courtesy of the Court Theatre, Chicago



Winston Zola Ntshona was born on October 6, 1941 in King William’s Town and then moved with his uncle to a Johannesburg township with his mother and siblings. Later he moved to a larger township house in New Brighton. Ntshona was brought into the Serpent Players in 1971 by John Kani. He originated roles in *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* and *The Island*. Ntshona has notably performed in the 1989 film *A Dry White Season*, the London theatre run of Edward Albee’s *The Death of Bessie Smith* and Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*. Ntshona continues to live in South Africa and works as an actor and chairman of the Eastern Cape Cultural Units Arts Agency. He was honored with a Living Treasures Award from South Africa’s National Arts Council. He is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Kani and Ntshona both received the 1975 Tony Award for Best Actor in a Play for *The Island* and *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*.

—courtesy of the Court Theatre, Chicago

SYNOPSIS

Styles, a photographer, is tell the audience a story about what happened while he was working for the Ford Motor Company. His tale is interrupted when a young man, Swize Banzi , who has come to the city to find a job, arrives at his door. The young man wants his picture taken so he can send it to his wife who back at their home in King William's Town. He dictates a letter to her revealing that his search for work has been fruitless and he has been told by authorities that he must leave the city within three days. Discouraged, he has gone to stay with his friend Buntu, who suggests that he go back home and work in the mines. At a bar, Swize and Buntu come up with a solution to Swize Banzi's problem.

“

” **Good. Let me just take your name down...What is your name?
Your name please! Come on,
my friend.
You must surely have a name.**

- Sizwe Banzi is Dead



Kyle Bass
PHOTO: Jim Scherzi

GLOSSARY

Sizwe Banzi: Sizwe means ‘the nation’, and banz(s)i means ‘large’ or ‘broad’.

New Brighton, Port Elizabeth: the oldest existing township, located outside Port Elizabeth.

Natal: A province of South Africa.

During the 1970s, Ford, Toyota, Chrysler, and General Motors were the car plants in South Africa, providing many job opportunities to both white and non-white workers.

Iscor: South Africa’s largest steel producer.

King William’s Town: a town in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa along the banks of the Buffalo River.

Kabega Park: a township southwest of Port Elizabeth.

Bantu Affairs Commissioner: assigned to promote and facilitate government-to-government relations with South African people.

Native Commissioner: A position within the South African Native Affairs Commission charged with solving the “native problem” in South Africa. A 1905 report from this office proposed territorial

separation of black and white landownership, systematic urban segregation by the creation of black “locations,” and the removal of black “squatters” from white farms.

Pretoria: a city located in the northern part of Gauteng Province, South Africa; one of the country’s three capital cities, serving as the executive (administrative) and de facto national capital. Located in the northeast part of South Africa.

Ciskeian Independence: Ciskei is a region of South Africa. Under apartheid it was made a home-land, a sort of self-governing area for Xhosa blacks, but in practice it was an impoverished area and “self-government” had no meaning. Later Ciskei was given pseudo-independence in an attempt to present apartheid as fair. It meant the inhabitants lost their rights and South African nationality.

Tsotsis: Young black men in urban townships who participate in criminal activity and gangs.

Flying Squad: An emergency response unit.

N.I. #: Native Identification Number.

Kaffir: A derogatory term for a black person, commonly a South African slur.

Blourokkie next time: blourokkie means blue clothing; phrase means “next time it’s prison, with blue prison clothes”.

—courtesy of the Court Theatre, Chicago

THE PASS

Pass laws in South Africa were designed to segregate the population and were one of the dominant features of the country's apartheid system. The Native Urban Areas Act 1923 deemed urban areas in South Africa as "white" and forced all black African men in cities and towns to carry permits called "passes" at all times. Anyone found without a pass would be arrested immediately and sent to a rural area. The Pass Laws Act 1952 made it compulsory for all black South Africans over the age of 16 to carry a "pass book" at all times. The law stipulated where, when, and for how long a person could remain. This pass was also known as adompas. The term Blacks is often used in the West to denote race for persons whose progenitors, usually in predominant part, were indigenous to Sub-Saharan Africa. The document was similar to a passport, containing details on the bearer such as their fingerprints, photograph, the name of his/her employer, his/her address, how long the bearer had been employed, as well as other identification information. Employers often entered a behavioral evaluation, on the conduct of the pass holder. An employer was defined under the law and could be only a white person. The pass also documented permission requested and denied or granted to be in a certain region and the reason for seeking such permission. Under the terms of the law any governmental employee could strike out such entries, basically canceling the permission to remain in the area. A pass book without a valid entry then allowed officials to arrest and imprison the bearer of the pass. These passes became the most despised symbols of apartheid. The resistance to the Pass Law led to many thousands of arrests and was the spark that ignited the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960, and led to the arrest of Robert Sobukwe on that same date.

<http://www.statemaster.com/encyclopedia/Pass-Law>



JOANNE RATHE/GLOBE STAFF

Four Racial Groups

- The Africans/Blacks:** comprised of nine distinct nations (Zulu, Xhosa, Venda, Tsonga, Pedi, Tswana, Swazi, Ndebele, and Sotho);
- The Coloureds:** mixed black, Malayan, and white descent;
- The Asians:** Indian in ancestry;
- The Whites:** Dutch (Afrikaner/Boer) and British Isles (Anglo) descent.

Apartheid Terms

- Apartheid:** Afrikaaner for separateness, apartness; a system of legal racial segregation enforced by the National Party government in South Africa between 1948 and 1994.
- Afrikaans:** Germanic language originating from the Dutch spoken by settlers in Africa in the seventeenth century, mainly spoken in South Africa and Namibia, with smaller populations of speakers living in Australia, Botswana, Canada, Lesotho, Malawi, New Zealand, Swaziland, the United States, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

- Afrikaners:** Including distinct 'Boer' subgroup, Afrikaans-speaking ethnic group in South Africa, mainly of northwestern European descent.
- Petty Apartheid:** Everyday racial discrimination such as marriage restrictions, segregated facilities (including park benches and beaches), jobs, elevators, cinemas, restaurants, housing, and education.
- Grand Apartheid:** Political and racial discrimination.

In 1948 the new race policy, Apartheid, institutionalized and enforced the already racially segregated South Africa. By the end of apartheid in 1994, hundreds of thousands of South Africans would be detained, tortured, or murdered in the name of white domination.

Arriving in South Africa in 1652, the Dutch settlers established the Cape of Good Hope and utilized the Dutch East India Company to import slaves from Malaysia, Madagascar, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, and East Africa. In 1795 when gold was discovered on tribal lands, British forces seized control of the Cape colony. Soon, many citizens of the English Isles were immigrating to South Africa, leaving the Dutch settlers, now renamed Afrikaners, struggling to retain and regain power over their territories, resulting in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Through a peace treaty, the Boers (an Afrikaner subgroup) lost their independence, Britain retained domination, and the British abolished slavery. The British, who had negotiated with the Boer generals, created the South African Native Affairs Commission, proposing racial segregation in the areas of land, labor, education, and politics.

In 1910, South Africa gained dominion status within the British Empire and over the next ten years the Union government passed proposals in to law which insti-

tuted several Acts that would keep South Africa's blacks away from its whites.

One Act in particular, the Native Areas Act (passed in both 1913 and 1936), forced native Africans (non-white) to live on less than fourteen percent of the land, even though they made-up roughly eighty-five percent of the country's population. By the 1930s the increasingly strong National Party (an all-white party) segregated African natives and used them as a means of cheap labor. Their efforts proved fruitful as the 1940s brought World War II and a boom in urban industrial companies. With the Second World War in full effect, and South Africa joining the Allied forces, jobs, wages, and trade unions were on the rise for both whites and blacks. Consequently, with all South Africans moving toward the cities for work, the rural areas became impoverished; farms and farmers suffered.

To retain their income, Afrikaner farmers unified as the Afrikaner Nationalist Alliance, demanding more political control over black South Africans. In 1948, the Afrikaner farmers would get what they wanted. When the National Party and Daniel F. Malan won the 1948 election (ousting predecessor General Jan Smuts who "undermined" racial segregation), Apartheid's "total segregation" was enacted. This first period of apartheid, known as baaskap, Afrikaner for mastery and

white supremacy, resulted in an all-white South Africa where blacks, coloreds, and Asians were sent out of major cities to ethnic "homelands" and lost all citizenship rights in the "white" areas of South Africa. Once the non-whites were far removed, white miners, farmers, and industries realized that their cheap labor came from those whom they had recently exiled.

Greedy for their businesses to continue operations, the white businesses "allowed" the non white territory, four significant Acts were passed into law: **The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages** (an amendment to the Immorality Act (1949)), **The Population Registration Act** (1950), **The Group Areas Act** (1950), which would forcibly relocate 3.5 million by the late 1980's, and **The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act** (1953).

When Hendrick Verwoerd, Apartheid's chief architect, became South Africa's Prime minister in 1958, he rephrased Apartheid from the crass baaskap to the more sophisticated "separate development." Through "separate development" non-whites could lead socially, economically, and politically free lives within assigned "homeland," but this systemized segregation also made every part of a South by race. Africans, Coloreds, and Asians still could not vote, own land, move freely from one country to another, or choose their employment. Those who

were able to live on "white" land as a result of work had to do so with a permit and without their family, thus breaking down the "races" strength. **Passbooks or "Books of Life" were mandatory for all non-whites to carry, and consisted of marriage and driver's licences, birth certificates, and work permits.** To be caught without one's passbook was punishable by imprisonment and in extreme cases torture and beatings.

The 1950s also saw anti-Apartheid growth. **The African National Congress (ANC), an organization whose members included Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and 1961 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Albert Luthuli, focused on the political and social community and staged the peaceful Defiance Campaign of Unjust Laws.** During this campaign, the ANC adopted the Congress of the People's Freedom Charter (notable for its opening which demanded full civil rights and equality for all South Africans. In addition to the Defiance Campaign, more than one hundred activists were arrested and charged with high treason the "Treason Trial" of 1961; all of the accused were acquitted. The newly formed Pan Africanist Congress (PAC; known for its African nationalism, socialism, and continental unity) soon began its anti-Pass Laws campaign against Apartheid. (Continued)

THE HISTORY OF APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

Their first attack resulted in March 1960's Sharpeville Massacre, where sixty-nine people were shot after responding to a PAC call to turn in passes and submit to arrest.

By 1963, the African National Congress had formed its military, Umkhonto We Sizwe or "Spear of the Nation," Nelson Mandela and other activists had been imprisoned or exiled and anti-Apartheid resistance was outlawed under the Unlawful Organizations Act. South Africans in defiance of Apartheid's laws were now kept in custody without trial or assassinated. As protests grew, so did the world's interest in Apartheid. In response to South Africa's call for emergency help to the rest of the world, many countries began challenging South Africa's regime. As a result, Prime Minister, Balthazar Johannes Verwoerd withdrew South Africa from the United Nations in 1961, let the British Commonwealth, and South Africa was banned from the Olympic Games. In 1966, Verwoerd was assassinated and succeeded by John Vorster who relaxed some of Apartheid's petty laws; this did not stop protest violence or brutality during the 1970s.

With Peiter Willem Botha's 1978 election to prime minister, Apartheid laws relaxed even more, granting Asians and Coloureds limited political rights and abolishing the long-standing pass

system. While these restrictions were lessened, Botha continued to condemn any opposition to the government and wanted white power to remain dominant in South Africa. By 1983, six hundred South African organizations had come together to create the United Democratic Front, an alliance of trade unions and organizations endorsing the Freedom Charter and eliminate "homelands." As anti-Apartheid activities increased, in 1986 Botha declared a state of emergency and deployed five thousand soldiers to ban, arrest, and detain tens of thousands of South Africans, many of whom were tortured and murdered. Foreign countries began pulling their business transactions, trades, and investments with South Africa by the end of the 1980s, leaving the country in a state of economic depression.

In 1989, National Party leader Fréderik Willem de Klerk became prime minister and released many of Apartheid's black political prisoners. He declared to Parliament that Apartheid had failed and all bans on political parties would be immediately lifted. But race relations continued to retain tension until 1993, and more than ten thousand South Africans were killed due to political violence. Criminal activity like murders, beatings, and explosions were on the rise. In February 1990, anti-Apartheid organizations were un-banned, political prisoners were freed (including Nelson Mandela), and resolution was

in the air. **Apartheid officially ended in 1994 with the democratic election, abolition of "homelands," and new interim (1994) and final constitutions (1996).** All Apartheid laws were repealed and South Africa laid its foundations for a multiracial and multiparty transitional government, and Nelson Mandela became the first freely elected, majority president, setting into action equality for all South Africans and the reclamation of native lands by its once native inhabitants.

- From Sizwe Banzi is Dead Actor's Guide by Kelli Marino, Production Dramaturg; Court Theatre 2010

THE HISTORY OF APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA (CONTINUED)

Questions FOR Discussion

Discussion and Follow-Up Questions

1. Athol Fugard was quoted as saying, “I have been asked many times [...]: ‘How could you as a white presume to write about the black experience?’ The answer to both is the same: there is one truly winged aspect of our natures that allows us to escape the confines and limits of our own personal experience and penetrate others that we never have—the human imagination. My own personal interpretation of the Prometheus legend is that imagination is the real fire he stole for us from the gods.” What do you think this means?
2. What do you think makes a piece of art ‘authentic’? Does a play need to be authentic in order to make a statement? Why or why not?
3. Is this play ultimately optimistic or pessimistic? Why?
4. Names play a huge role in the action of the play. What statement does Fugard make about names and existence? Does one necessitate the other?
5. Discuss the importance of gender roles in the play. Do men and women represent different things? If so, what?
6. Discuss the role of family in the play. Is it important? Why or Why not?
7. What does the use of photography as a symbol convey about the themes of the play?
8. Actors address the audience directly at various points during the production. What statement does this action make about the relationship between art and audience?

—courtesy of the Court Theatre, Chicago

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Two short videos:

an interview with John Kani

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Athol Fugard discusses South Africa and the theater:

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