

THE TWO GIRLS CYCLE
Written and performed by Gabrielle Maisels

TWO GIRLS



BONGANI



The Two Girls Cycle

The Two Girls Cycle (a trilogy-in-progress) tells the story of the bonds between the Dhlamini and Levitt families during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. Set between 1988 and 2009, the two current plays, *Two Girls* and *Bongani*, explore how the families grapple with the changes in their country and in each other.

Two Girls

Eight characters come to life in one explosive performance.

A friendship blossoms and struggles in the “new” South Africa. Moving in time and place from Mandela’s South Africa to Obama’s America, Lindiwe, Zulu, and Corinne, Jewish, take on the trauma that apartheid left behind.

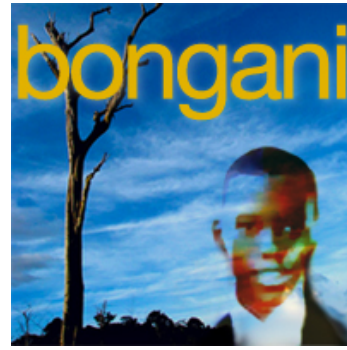
The granddaughter of the advocate who defended Mandela brings a compelling new story of South Africa to the stage. Gabrielle Maisels’ first solo show, *Two Girls*, brings eight characters to life under an African sky. Inspired by her childhood experiences in South Africa, the story engages the audiences in questions of race, justice, and the bonds of friendship. (Running time: 70 mins.)

Bongani

The mesmerizing tale of a love that could never be.

In post-apartheid South Africa, *Bongani* hurtles toward destruction. Corinne, from an activist Jewish family, thinks she can rescue him, and her struggling country. *Bongani* thinks she should rescue herself.

After the success of her first solo show, *Two Girls*, Gabrielle Maisels brings her beloved characters back in this remarkable one-woman show. Inspired by her childhood experiences in South Africa, the story engages audiences in questions of race, justice, love and betrayal. (Running time: 70 mins.)



Reviews

For *Two Girls*

"I was mesmerized... amazing acting.." -- Orient Lodge, Aug. 22, 2010

"Brilliantly written..." -- Brooklyn Eagle, Aug. 2010

"Theatre beyond the empty gloss of Broadway..." -- MetroMix.NewYork.com, Aug. 2010

"Maisels navigates this emotional breakdown with... complete awareness of every emotion in her body, allowing the audience to feel the strife of an entire country." – NYTheatre.com, Aug. 19, 2010

"The playwrights... forge new connections, spark new insights." -- Jewish Weekly, Aug. 2010

For *Bongani*

"It is to Maisels' great credit that this piercingly political play never sacrifices the characters' complexity or agency in exposing the rottenness of the apartheid system...This lovingly detailed yet epic story somehow fits in Maisels' single body." – NYTheatre.com, Aug 2011

"On a virtually bare stage...writer/performer Gabrielle Maisels delivered the best one-person show of the festival. [T]he story will hit you like a hammer to the heart. [O]ne of the finest solo performers I've ever been lucky enough to experience." – HyReviews.com, Aug. 2011

'One-woman shows have been especially impressive this year. Gabrielle Maisels takes us to South Africa in her gripping play about apartheid, "Bongani."' - Martin Denton, ChelseaNow.com, Aug 2011

WATCH VIDEO CLIPS AT:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/GabrielleWritesAPlay>

CONTACT

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Gabrielle Maisels (Performer/Playwright/Teaching Artist) studied Political Theory at Harvard and Columbia, graduated cum laude, authored two books, and has worked as an actor, writer, educator, editor and executive coach.

Gabrielle is the granddaughter of Israel Aaron Maisels, leader of the defense team that secured the acquittal of Nelson Mandela and the 29 others accused of treason by the apartheid government in the "Treason Trial" of 1956-61. Her hit solo shows, *Two Girls* and *Bongani*, are inspired by the summers she spent in South Africa as a child, her family's role in the struggle, and her experience of the transition from apartheid to democracy.

As an actress, Gabrielle has been privileged to work with artists such as Peter Dinklage, Sam Rockwell, Matthew Arkin, Daniel Sunjata, Jake Robards, Steven Rattazzi, Danton Stone and many others. Member of Actors' Equity.

Gabrielle's solo shows, *Two Girls* and *Bongani*, give her the opportunity to work in schools and universities as a teaching artist, accompanying her performances with a variety of workshops that offer students the opportunity to explore their own creativity, their own political awareness and the junction of the two.

As a long-time educator, Gabrielle has taught academic subjects and written educational materials for The Princeton Review since 1993, in addition to leading acclaimed interactive workshops for educators.

COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS AUDIENCE/WORKSHOP MEMBERS:

- "You refused to simplify the issues or the characters...and still somehow it ended up hopeful." - **Jackie Kraemer**
- "...To me the beauty of telling this story as a one woman show is its illustration that we all share the same inner spark . . . in a sense we *are* all just one person..." - **Tammie Nelson**
- "...Beautifully written, acted, so specific, funny, sweet, touching, heartbreaking, all that good stuff that we want from theater. Looking forward to a longer run, everybody needs to see this." - **Eric Deskin**

Production History: TWO GIRLS

Festivals:

- New York International Fringe Festival (August 2010)
- Midtown International Theater Festival, New York, NY (July – August, 2009)
- Capital Fringe Festival, Washington, DC (July, 2009)
- Artistic New Directions, Works-in-Progress Series, New York, NY (June, 2009)
- Nuyorican Poets Café, Acoustic Theater Series, New York, NY (April, 2009)
- Artistic New Directions, Solo Works Festival, New York, NY (December, 2008)

Schools:

- Phoenix Country Day School, Phoenix, AZ (January 2011)
- University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (April 2010)
- The Children's School, PS 372, Brooklyn (June 2010)
- Packer Collegiate High School, New York, NY (December 2009)
- Hunter College (CUNY), New York, NY (October 2009)

Production History: BONGANI

New York International Fringe Festival Encore Series (September 2011)

New York International Fringe Festival (August 2011)

Developed with Artistic New Directions (2010-2011)

For *Two Girls*:

JOEY BRENNEMAN (Director) is a director, actor, writer and producer. She has worked off-off Broadway, in regional theater, commercials, voice-overs and numerous educational films & videos. Joey has written and produced her own film and theater work in New York City, and is the co-founder of Above the Bridge, a playground for writers. She works as a teaching artist in and around NYC. Joey has two daughters and is married to actor Craig Waletzko.

AUDREY ROSENBERG (Dramaturg, Producing consultant), an actor, producer and dramaturg in theatre and film, is an Executive Producer on the documentary *By The People: The Election of Barack Obama*, Edward Norton's Class 5 Films, premiered HBO November 2009. Co-founder of the theater company The Art Party with Alan Cumming and Nick Philippou, served as Executive Director, and producer of inaugural production, Genet's *Elle*. Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director of THE FIRE DEPT Theater Company, productions include *SpeakEasy* at Joes' Pub at The Public Theater, *At War: American Playwrights Respond to Iraq* at The Bleecker Street Theatre, featuring David Strathairn, Bebe Neuwirth, and a salon production of Anna Ziegler's *The Minotaur* with Campbell Scott, Jill Clayburgh, Mario Cantone.

For *Bongani*:

Kate Holland (Director) trained in London as an actor and director at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art (now part of Central School of Speech and Drama). She has performed in New York, regional theatre and international arts festivals. In addition to her study of directing at Webber Douglas, Kate has trained with Karen Kohlhass of the Atlantic Theatre Company. Directing credits include, *Little Wing* at the Kraine Theatre as part of a Field Artist Residency, *Cloud 9* at the Drayton Theatre in London, *Henry VI Part One* at the Fall Festival of Shakespeare in Lenox, Ma and *A Bright Room Called Day* at The Episcopal Actor's Guild.

Artistic New Directions (Producer) Artistic New Directions is a not-for-profit company that supports writers, actors and directors with their creative projects from inspiration through production. Based in techniques of improvisation, AND supports the artist on his/her journey from the germ of an idea of a work to its opening night. Our programs are a reflection of this artistic journey and include weekly labs, Works and Plays-in-Progress, classes, workshops, annual retreats, rehearsals, and production support. www.artisticnewdirections.org