A Man of Good Hope

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House
Feb 15—18 at 7:30pm; Feb 19 at 3pm
Running time: approx. two hours & 5 minutes, including intermission

Based on the book by Jonny Steinberg
Isango Ensemble / Young Vic
Directed by Mark Dornford-May

Music composed by Mandisi Dyantyis with the Ensemble
Movement by Lungelo Ngamlana
Lighting by Mannie Manim

Produced by Young Vic and Isango Ensemble.
Co-produced by Royal Opera, Répons Foundation, BAM and Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg

Brooklyn Academy of Music

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Season Sponsor:
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Support for the Signature Artist Series provided by Howard Gilman Foundation.
Support provided by The Shubert Foundation, Inc.
CAST

Conductor/Jonny Mandisi Dyantyi
Asad as a man Ayanda Tikolo
Asad as a boy/Musharaf Siphosethu Juta,
Phielo Makittle
Asad’s mother Zanele Mbatha
Yindy/Sadicya Pauline Malefane
Asad as a youth Zoleka Mpotsha
Yindy’s mother Sindiswa Sityata
Yindy’s father Ayanda Eleki
Tube Khanya Sakube
Rooda Zamille Gantana
Orange seller Thandokazi Fumba
Asad as a young man Luvo Tamba
Wedding dancer Nontsusa Louw
Wedding dancer Siyanda Ncobo
Foosiya Busisiwe Ngejane
Zena Luvo Rasemani
Kaafi Sonwabo Ntshata
Zulfa Cikizwa Ndamase
Madoda Sifiso Lupuzi
Abdi Thobile Dyasi
English teacher Noluthando Boqwana
Assistant shopkeeper Masakane Sotayisi
Television announcer Tshepo Skosana
Death Zebulon K Mmusi

Music direction by Mandisi Dyantyi and Pauline Malefane
International producer Claire Béjanin
Speech & dialogue Lesley Nott Manim
Production manager John Page
Company stage manager Maris Sharp
Technical stage manager Sandile Gary Mgugunyeka
Assistant stage manager Valencia Mgugunyeka
Chaperones Doreen Nondibano Hintsho & Ntabiseng Makittle

American stage manager: R. Michael Blanco

Isango Ensemble is especially grateful to our good friend Stephen Daldry.
Isango Ensemble thanks Bonita Bennett and the staff of the District Six Museum, Lara Foot and the staff of the Baxter Theatre, Andy Harries, Andrea Wong, Suzanne Mackie, Keith Nichol, David Casey, Rosebank Methodist Church, Jud Cornell, Alice Ellis, Bertha Foundation, and Lara Tabatznik.
Thanks to kind support from the Howard and Sarah Solomon Foundation.
I had little idea that I would write a book about Asad Abdullahi when I met him. I had in mind a very different project, one that would take in many times, people, and places. I imagined that Asad would occupy 10, perhaps 20 pages of the work.

It was at our second meeting, I think, that the book I actually wrote was conceived. Asad and I were walking through the Company’s Garden, one of Cape Town’s oldest and loveliest public spaces, when Asad picked up a twig, snapped it open and smelt it. I will never forget the expression that came over him—the surprise, the wistfulness, the knowledge that what he was experiencing would soon disappear. The fragrance had transported him more than two decades back in time. He was six or seven years old in a madrassa in Mogadishu, Somalia, copying out the Koran line by line. The smell of the twig had reminded him of the narcotic sap of the agaric tree he had used to bind ink; he was reliving a forgotten high.

I felt a whim rising. A man who can break a twig and take me with him to another world, I thought, is a man about whom I ought to write a book.

When I met him, Asad was hustling for a living. He’d leave his shack on the outskirts of Cape Town in the early mornings, hang out in the Somali section of Mitchell’s Plain township and ask the traders and businessmen he met there if they needed a delivery to be made. A man living that sort of life hardly had the time a writer demanded. And so I bought his time. I capitalized the business he wanted to start: selling cigarettes, mobile phone airtime, and frozen chickens from his shack. It cost me less than £400. In exchange, I acquired a subject sufficiently sedentary to interview for weeks and months at a time.

I will not say that the book wrote itself. Nor would I be so presumptuous as to think that Asad had a hand in writing it. Nonetheless, something of his grace and his skill were transferred to me, making the writing of the book possible. But under what strange conditions this transference took place. I was a white man in a good car and Asad was convinced that my presence in his shantytown home would attract men with guns. He refused to meet in his shack where he would have no forewarning of an attack. Instead he insisted that we talk in my car; there he had a 360-degree view and could see trouble coming. And so that is where we sat day in and day out for nearly a year.

When the first draft of the manuscript was written I asked him to read it. He refused. The story of his past was simply too sad, he said. I redoubled my efforts to get him to look at it, but he only dug in his heels. He simply would not. I was disconcerted. By the time I was done writing I had retraced most of his steps through the Horn of Africa, had found long-lost relatives of his in various parts of the world, and had discovered something of the lost genealogy of his family. Between my forensic interest in his history and his refusal to read about it was a chasm that made me immensely uneasy.

It took a long while for me to settle upon an explanation. Taking in his past as a narrative unspooling through time was simply unhelpful to him, I believe. More than that, it was destructive. To have this perennially rejected boy, forever kicked around like a stone, installed in his imagination, was to rob himself of the wherewithal to live in the present. Better to see his past in flashes, to keep in his mind particular moments: moments of mystical feeling, of love, of the desire for revenge, moments when he was the one who decided what would happen next. Deep in our culture is the belief that unearthing memory is therapeutic. I think that Asad has taught me otherwise. He gave me the material to assemble a story about his personal history. But the story is not for him; it is for others.
NOLUTHANDO BOQWANA (English teacher)

THOBILE DYASI (Abdi)
Thobile Dyasi was born Pampierstad, Northern Cape, and joined Isango Ensemble in 2011. His theater and opera credits include: *The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo, Carmen*, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Isango Ensemble)*, *L’Elisir d’Amour, The Marriage of Figaro, Il Viaggio a Reims, Adriana Lecouvreur*, and *La Rondine* (University of Cape Town’s performer’s diploma in Opera).

AYANDA ELEKI (Yindy’s father)
Ayanda Eleki was born in Kwamagxaki, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, and joined Isango Ensemble in 2011. His theater and opera credits include: *La Bohème – Abanxaxhi, The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo, Aesop’s Fables, The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists – Izigwili Ezidlakazelayo (Isango Ensemble); and Aida and Princess Magogo (Opera Africa)*. His film credits include: *Unogumbe – Noye’s Fludde and Breathe – Umphefumlo*.

THANDOKAZI FUMBA (orange seller)
Thandokazi Fumba was born in Cape Town and joined Isango Ensemble in 2016. Her theater and opera credits include: *A Man of Good Hope (Isango Ensemble)*.

ZAMILE GANTANA (Rooda)

SIPHOSETHU JUTA (Asad as a boy/Musharaf)
Siphosethu Juta was born in Khayelitsha, Cape Town in 2004. He attends Liwa Primary School and joined the Ensemble in 2016. His theater credits include: *A Man of Good Hope*.

NONTSUSA LOUW (wedding dancer)
Nontsusa Louw was born in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, and joined Isango Ensemble in 2011. Her theater and opera credits include: *The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo, Carmen, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Isango Ensemble)*.

SIFISO LUPUZI (Madoda)
Sifiso Lupuzi was born in Tembisa, Gauteng, and joined Isango Ensemble in 2013. His theater and opera credits include: *The Magic Flute, La Boheme – Abanxhaxi, Carmen, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Isango Ensemble)*. His film credits include: *Breathe – Umphefumlo*.

PHIELO MAKITLE (Asad as a boy/Musharaf)
Phielo Makitle was born in Khayelitsha, Cape Town in 2005. He attends Injongo Primary School and joined the Ensemble in 2016. His theater credits include: *A Man of Good Hope*.

ZANELE MBATHA (Asad’s mother)
ZEBULON K MMUSI (Death)

ZOLEKA MPOTSHA (Asad as a youth)

SIYANDA NCOBO (Wedding dancer)
Siyanda Ncobo was born in Willowvale, Eastern Cape and joined Isango Ensemble in 2013. Her theater and opera credits include: The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo, La Bohème, Carmen, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Isango Ensemble) and La Traviata, Fidelio, Carmen, Othello, and Porgy and Bess (Cape Town Opera). Her film credits include: Breathe – Umphefumlo.

CIKIZWA NDAMASE (Zulfa)
Cikizwa Ndamase was born in Umtata, Eastern Cape, and joined Isango Ensemble in 2011. Her theater and opera credits include: The Magic Flute, La Bohème – Abanxaxhi, Carmen, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Isango Ensemble), and Concert for Bryn Terfel (Cape Town Opera). Her film credits include: Breathe – Umphefumlo.

BUSISIWE NGJANE (Foosiya)

SONWABO NTSHATA (Kafi)

LUVO RASEMENI (Zena)

KHANYA SAKUBE (Tube)
Khanya Sakube was born in East London, Eastern Cape, and joined Isango Ensemble in 2016. His theater and opera credits include: A Man of Good Hope (Isango Ensemble).

SINDISWA SITYATA (Yindy’s mother)
Sindiswa Sityata was born in Cape Town, Western Cape, and joined Isango Ensemble in 2016. Her theater and opera credits include: A Man of Good Hope (Isango Ensemble) and African Song Book.

TSHEPO SKOSANA (television announcer)
Tshepo Skosana was born in Springs, Gauteng and joined Isango Ensemble in 2016. His theater and opera credits include: A Man of Good Hope and Così fan Tutte (Isango Ensemble); I Pagliacci (RYT Ensemble); La Bohème (Sempre Opera), La Traviata (Gauteng Opera), and Madiba the African Opera (Columbus Madikizela).
MASAKANE SOTAYISI (assistant shopkeeper)
Masakane Sotayisi was born in Cape Town, Western Cape and joined Isango Ensemble in 2013. His theater and opera credits include: The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo, La Bohème, Venus and Adonis, Carmen, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Isango Ensemble). His film credits include: Breathe – Umphefumlo.

LUVO TAMBA (Asad as a young man)
Luvo Tamba was born in Phillipi, Cape Town and joined Isango Ensemble in 2011. His theater and opera credits include: The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo (Isango Ensemble), Amaza (Artscape), Ingcwaba Lendoda iseca cankwendlale (A Grave of a Man Is Next to the Road) (Grahamstown Arts Festival, Johannesburg and Artscape), The Blind Man’s Judgment, The Last Breath (Baxter Theatre), A Wound of a Healer (Magnet Theatre, Grahamstown Festival), and Strand (Infesting The City Festival).

AYANDA TIKOLO (Asad as a man)
Ayanda Tikolo was born in King William’s Town, Eastern Cape and joined Isango Ensemble in 2013. His theater and opera credits include: The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo, La Bohème, Venus and Adonis, Carmen, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Isango Ensemble), Porgy and Bess, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Beethoven, Opera Extravaganza, and Hoffman. His film credits include: Breath—Umphefumlo.

JONNY STEINBERG (author)
Jonny Steinberg is an award-winning South African author. His books include: Midlands, The Number (both of which won the Sunday Times Alan Paton Award), Three-Letter Plague (Sizwe’s Test in the US, which was named one of Washington Post’s Books of the Year and shortlisted for the Wellcome Trust Book Prize), Thin Blue, Little Liberia: An African Odyssey in New York, and A Man of Good Hope. In 2013, Steinberg was among the inaugural winners of the Windham-Campbell Literature Prizes, awarded by Yale University. He currently teaches African studies at the University of Oxford.

MARK DORNFORD-MAY (director)

MANDISI DYANTYIS (music director and conductor/Jonny)
Mandisi is associate director and co-music director of Isango Ensemble and has been with the company since 2006. His theater credits include: The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo, A Christmas Carol – iKrismas Kherol, Venus and Adonis, The Mysteries – Yiimimangaliso, Aesop’s Fables, Carmen, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists – Izigwili Ezidlakazelayo; His film credits include: Unogumbe – Noye’s Fludde and Breathe – Umphefumlo.

PAULINE MALEFANE (music director and Yindy/Sadicya)
Pauline Malefane is co-founder and co-music director of Isango Ensemble. She has worked with members of the company since 2000. Her theater and opera credits include: Carmen, Venus and Adonis, La Bohême, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Mysteries – Yiimimangaliso – The Snow Queen, The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists – The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo, A Christmas Carol – iKrismas Kherol, Aesop’s Fables, Carmen, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists – Izigwili Ezidlakazelayo; His film credits include: uCarmen ekhayelitsha (which won the 2005 Golden Bear Award at the Berlin International Film Festival), Son of Man (for which she was awarded Best Actress Award at the South African Film & Television Awards), and Unogumbe – Noye’s Fludde and Breathe – Umphefumlo.

LUNGELO NGAMLANA (movement)
Lungelo Ngamlana is an associate artist of Isango Ensemble. He joined the company in 2007 and has been the choreographer for all subsequent Isango Ensemble productions. His theater credits include: The Magic Flute

**MANNIE MANIM** (lighting)
Mannie Manim is co-founder of the Market Theatre, and has been director of performing arts administration at the University of the Witwatersrand and director of the Baxter Theatre Centre. His career in theater lighting and producing spans over 40 years and he has worked with Isango Ensemble, Ngamlana worked as teacher, performer, and choreographer with many dance and theater groups, both at home in South Africa and internationally.

**LESLEY NOTT MANIM** (speech and dialogue)
Lesley Nott Manim has worked in professional theater, film, and television since 1975 as a performer and director, and vocal, acting, dialogue, text interpretation, and accent coach, for both South African and international productions. Manim has taught text interpretation at the Market Theatre Laboratory, voice classes and tutorials at the University of Witwatersrand, and text interpretation, accent, and performance skills at AFDA Cape Town. She has worked with Isango Ensemble since 2007 as speech, dialogue, and text interpretation coach.

**R. MICHAEL BLANCO** (American stage manager) has been the stage manager at BAM for Karole Armitage’s The Predator’s Ball; Jonathan Miller’s St. Matthew Passion and Così fan tutte; Playing Shakespeare USA with John Barton; Sydney Theatre Company’s White Devil and Hedda Gabler; Donmar Warehouse’s Uncle Vanya/Twelfth Night; the RSC’s Don Carlos, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and Hecuba; Watermill/Propeller’s Merchant of Venice; and Vesturport Theatre’s Metamorphosis; Faust: A Love Story, The Young Vic’s A Doll’s House; Fugard Theatre’s A Human Being Died That Night, Chichester Festival Theatre’s The Judas Kiss, Odéon-Théâtre de l’Europe’s Phaedra(s), Théâtre de la Ville’s Battlefield, Cheek by Jowl’s The Winter’s Tale, and The Royal Court Theatre’s Escaped Alone. At the Metropolitan Opera: Kirov Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, and Robert Wilson’s Le Martyre de Saint Sebastian.

**RÉPONS FOUNDATION**
Alain Coblence (president) and Claire Béjanin (executive producer) created the Répons Foundation in 2015. If the 20th century was the century of specialization, the 21st century is the century of integration, a new renaissance in which lines between disciplines, fields, and aesthetic frames dissolve. Among Répons’ first productions are A Man of Good Hope adapted by Isango Ensemble, Luigi Nono’s masterpiece Prometeo, and a production based on neuroscientist Antonio Damasio’s Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain. The marriage of music, science, literature, musical theater, societal issues, and new technologies have opened a new perspective on the creation of the performing arts. These exchanges constitute the raison d’être of the Répons Foundation. repsons.org
ISANGO ENSEMBLE
Isango Ensemble is based in Cape Town. The core of the company was formed by director Mark Dornford-May and music director and singer Pauline Malefane in 2000, drawing performers from across the townships surrounding the city, embracing artists at all stages of their creative development. Its work to date has focused on reimagining classics from the Western theater canon, finding a new context for these stories within a South African or township setting, and on creating new work relevant to the heritage of the nation. It is the mixture and clash of its cultures, races, and experience that enables it to create work of the highest caliber.

In 2001 two of the Ensemble’s first stage productions toured from the Spier Festival in Cape Town to Wilton’s Music Hall in London. From there The Mysteries Yiimimangaliso transferred to the West End and uCarmen was performed at many of the world’s major arts festivals. Other stage work includes co-productions with the Young Vic of The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo featuring Mozart’s score transposed for an orchestra of marimbas, and A Christmas Carol – Ikrismas Kherol. These won several awards including The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo winning an Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival and the Globes de Cristal for Best Opera Production following a sold-out season at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. The Magic Flute – Impempe Yomlingo played a season in London’s West End. In 2009, a second West End season featured The Mysteries – Yiimimangaliso. In the summer of 2012, La Bohème – Abanxaxhi—a unique partnership with the Global Fund to Fight Aids Tuberculosis and Malaria—played for five weeks at Hackney Empire in London. Also in 2012, the company created a new stage version of Shakespeare’s Venus & Adonis in partnership with Shakespeare’s Globe.

Isango has toured Ireland, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Singapore, Turkey, Japan, Netherlands, Australia, and the US. Films created by Mark Dornford-May and the ensemble include uCarmen eKhayelitsha, Son of Man, Unogumbe – Noye’s Fludde, and Breathe – Umphefumlo. The films have met popular and critical acclaim playing at festivals including the Berlin International Film Festival, LA Pan African Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, and others in Australia, the US, the UK, Europe, and Africa. They have won the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Festival as well as several Best Feature awards. For details on the films visit the Isango Ensemble website: www.isangoensemble.org.za/.

ISANGO INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
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OUR SHOWS
We present the widest variety of classics, new plays, forgotten works, and music theater. We tour and co-produce extensively within the UK and internationally.

OUR ARTISTS
Our shows are created by some of the world’s great theater people alongside the most adventurous of the younger generation. This fusion makes the Young Vic one of the most exciting theaters in the world.

OUR AUDIENCE
Our audience is famously the youngest and most diverse in London. We encourage those who don’t think theater is for them to make it part of their lives. We give 10% of our tickets to schools and neighbors irrespective of box office demand, and keep prices low.

OUR PARTNERS NEAR AT HAND
Each year we engage with 10,000 local people—individuals and groups of all kinds including schools and colleges—by exploring theater on and off stage. From time to time we invite our neighbors to appear on our stage alongside professionals.

OUR PARTNERS FURTHER AWAY
By co-producing with leading theater, opera, and dance companies from London and around the world we create shows neither partner could achieve alone.

Artistic Director David Lan
Executive Director Lucy Woollatt
Director of Development & Future Partnerships Livvy Brinson
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Producer Ben Cooper
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The Young Vic is where theatre magic happens” —Time Out London
“The best theatre in London” —The Telegraph
“London’s most essential theatre” —The Guardian
“Young Vic is London’s most lovable theatre. The building welcomes; the programming dares. It offers danger in a safe place” —The Observer
“One of our favourite theatres, as bustling and unorthodox as ever” —The Sunday Times
“The YV smashed it with a series of bold, vital productions. Ambitious, powerful theatre” —The Independent on Sunday
“The work has been sensational. Some of the best international directors, great performers with the chance to play their dream roles” —The Independent