

DEMAND PR

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MEDIA ALERT FOR THEATRE EDITORS AND REVIEWERS
AND CALENDAR LISTINGS

FURIOUS THEATRE COMPANY
PRESENTS SIX YEARS TO THE VERY DAY,
THE SHOW THAT STARTED IT ALL...

SATURDAY NIGHT ***AT THE PALACE***

Written by Paul Slabolepszy
Directed by Dámaso Rodriguez

**Limited Engagement will open on Saturday, April 26
at the Pasadena Playhouse Carrie Hamilton Theatre!**

From Today's TIME.COM

Racist Video Spurs South Africa Riots

By ALEX PERRY Thu Feb 28, 9:30 AM ET

"The riots that broke out in South Africa in protest of racial abuse on Wednesday, almost 16 years to the day that Nelson Mandela walked free from prison, have revealed just how distant the former president's dream of a Rainbow Nation remains from reality. The protests came in response to a video distributed on the Internet showing four white university students abusing black campus service staff by forcing them to perform a series of degrading acts, including eating food mixed with urine. The video itself appears to have been posted as a twisted protest by racist students against plans to integrate university dorms. It opens with a voiceover in Afrikaans that says: "Once upon a time the Boers lived happily here on Reitz island, until the day the less advantaged discovered the word 'integration' in the dictionary."

2 a.m. The outskirts of Johannesburg. A broken-down motorcycle strands two white men at a lonely roadhouse with a Zulu waiter who only wants to close for the night...

February 28, 2008...Pasadena...Furious Theatre Company is turning six, and in recognition of this anniversary, they are bringing back, six years to the very day, the first show they ever produced in Los Angeles, the South African play, **SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE**, written by Paul Slabolepszy and directed by Dámaso Rodriguez. **SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE** will preview on Wednesday, April 23; Thursday, April 24 and Friday, April 25 at 8 p.m. and will open on Saturday, April 26 at 8 p.m. and run for six weeks through Saturday, May 31 at the home of the Furious Theatre Company, the Pasadena Playhouse Carrie Hamilton Theatre (formerly the Balcony Theatre), 39 S. El Molino Ave. in Pasadena.

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE**Page Two**

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE will be performed by Shawn Lee, Eric Pargac and Sean Blakemore, the same cast that launched the award-winning, critically-acclaimed theatre company.

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE was first produced by South Africa's Market Theatre where it won the Amstel Award for best play. After its London premiere at the legendary Old Vic Theatre, the *London Times* hailed it as, "Electrifying." **SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE** examines the events leading up to a racially motivated crime in the volatile Gauteng Region of South Africa. Set seven years before the official end of apartheid, a broken-down motorcycle strands two white men with a Zulu waiter in the outskirts of Johannesburg.

Although the majority of the play is in English, the characters also speak Afrikaans and Zulu. In addition to working with dialect coach Joel Goldes (*Orson's Shadow*, "Syriana," "Lost"), the company enlisted the aid of native speakers of Zulu and Afrikaans in order to meet this challenge.

ABOUT THE PLAY AND THE REVIVAL

Furious' U.S. premiere marked the first time **SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE** had been professionally produced in the States despite being a classic in South Africa for 20 years. The production received six NAACP Theatre Award Nominations (winning for both Best Director and Best Supporting Actor) and two LA Weekly Award Nominations.

Despite its critical success, the play has only been produced one other time in the U.S., and the Furious' artistic directors felt it was a work that deserved a larger audience. To that end, the company has reassembled the award-winning cast and director along with many of the designers from the original production team to revisit this powerful and still timely play. Only 487 people saw the show in the original Furious space at Armory Northwest, which was an empty warehouse the company converted into a theatre to present the work.

Director Dámaso Rodriguez, recently appointed Pasadena Playhouse Associate Artistic Director, takes the chance to direct this production again and said revisiting an early work can have real value for the company, "We always planned to revive *Saturday Night at the Palace* when our company was in a better position to bring it the attention we feel it deserves. Thanks to the increased exposure and resources provided by our unique relationship with the Pasadena Playhouse and some scheduling luck that has allowed us to re-unite the cast and production team, the timing is right. While the adrenaline of those frantic and sleepless nights leading up to the launch of Furious resulted in a production that made us proud, I look forward to the opportunity to revisit *Saturday Night at the Palace* with the benefit of several years experience and the support of the now stronger and more effective organization that Furious has become."

Furious co-founders Shawn Lee and Eric Pargac are also excited to have the chance to revisit the roles they played in the original production and feel they can bring something new to the parts. “When we first did *Saturday Night at the Palace*, we had a lot more to focus on than just rehearsals,” Pargac said, “There were just a few of us. We were building risers, constructing the set, designing the programs, and Shawn and I were literally screwing in the last seat an hour before our opening night audience was set to arrive. This time around we won’t have all the additional responsibilities or distractions. The fact that the company has grown to allow for that will really provide us with a chance us to focus on the work of being an actor.”

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

DÁMASO RODRIGUEZ (Director) is the Associate Artistic Director of Pasadena Playhouse. He is also a co-founder and the resident director of Furious Theatre Company, artists in residence at the Pasadena Playhouse Carrie Hamilton Theatre. He directed Pasadena Playhouse's recent hit production of *Orson's Shadow* by Austin Pendleton. His directing credits for Furious Theatre include: *Canned Peaches in Syrup* (World Premiere), *An Impending Rupture of the Belly* (World Premiere, four LA Weekly Theatre Award nominations including Production & Direction), *Grace* (Los Angeles Premiere, three Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards including Production & Direction), *Back of the Throat* (Los Angeles Premiere), *The Fair Maid of the West Parts I & II* (World Premiere Adaptation), *The God Botherers* (West Coast Premiere), *The Shape of Things* (Los Angeles Premiere), *Scenes from the Big Picture* (U.S. Premiere), *Chimps* (U.S. Premiere), *The Playboy of the Western World*, and *Saturday Night at the Palace* (U.S. Premiere, two NAACP Theatre Awards including Best Director). As a co-founder of Furious Theatre, Dámaso received the Pasadena Arts Council's *Gold Crown Award* and the *Debut Award* from Back Stage West.

PAUL SLABOLEPSZY (Actor/Playwright/Screenwriter) Born in Bolton, England, Paul emigrated to South Africa at the age of three and is arguably South Africa's preeminent playwright after Athol Fugard. A prolific writer, he wrote almost a play a year from 1979 to 2005. Slabolepszy was a founder member of The Space, South Africa's first non-racial theatre company, with Athol Fugard, Yvonne Bryceland and John Kani in 1972. He was also a founder-member of the world-renowned The Market Theatre in Johannesburg in 1976. He has won multiple awards over the years, including two Amstel Best Play awards, five Vita Best Play awards, two Fleur du Kap Best Play awards, two Dalro Best Play awards and the Paper Boat Best Play award. In addition to receiving three of these awards, *Saturday Night at the Palace* also played successfully in London's Old Vic Theatre for six weeks. Paul has also found success as an actor, appearing in over 150 roles for film, television and stage and becoming the first actor to win all three of the Vita, Fleur du Cap and DALRO Best Actor awards for his role of Eddie in his play *The Return of Elvis Du Pisanie*.

(more)

ABOUT THE CAST AND THE DESIGN TEAM

The cast of **SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE** will feature its original performers: Shawn Lee (*Canned Peaches in Syrup, An Impending Rupture of the Belly, The Shape of Things*), Eric Pargac (*Canned Peaches in Syrup, An Impending Rupture of the Belly, Grace*) and Sean Blakemore (NAACP Award Winner: Best Supporting Actor for *Saturday Night at the Palace*, “Blackout,” “Motives 1 & 2,” “ER”, “CSI: New York”)

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE has assembled an award-winning design team. The Set Design is by Melissa Teoh (*Canned Peaches in Syrup*, NAACP Award Nomination for *Saturday Night at the Palace*). The Lighting Design is by Christie Wright (NAACP Award Nomination for *Saturday Night at the Palace*). The Sound Design is by Cricket S. Myers (*Back of the Throat, An Impending Rupture of the Belly*). The Costume Design is by Megan Goodchild (*Grace, Canned Peaches in Syrup*). The Fight Choreography is by Brian Danner (*Canned Peaches in Syrup, An Impending Rupture of the Belly*). The Stage Manager is Sudro Brown II (*Canned Peaches in Syrup, Grace*).

SCHEDULE AND PRICING

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE PALACE will preview on Wednesday, April 23; Thursday, April 24 and Friday, April 25 at 8 p.m. and will open on Saturday, April 26 at 8 p.m. and run for six weeks through Saturday, May 31 at the home of Furious Theatre Company, the Pasadena Playhouse Carrie Hamilton Theatre (formerly the Balcony Theatre), 39 S. El Molino Ave. in Pasadena. Performances are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 7:30 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at www.furioustheatre.org or www.tix.com or by calling the 24-hour ticket line at 1-800-595-4849. Single ticket prices are \$25; Students \$10 rush; Previews are \$12.

Should you have any questions or need additional press information, photos or to set up press interviews, please contact David Elzer at 818/508-1754 or by e-mail at ELZERD@aol.com.

The critically-acclaimed Furious Theatre Company are artists in residence at the Pasadena Playhouse committed to edgy, innovative and original works. The company debuted in April 2002 after they were generously granted the use of a 9,000 square foot section of Armory Northwest, a former plastics factory. The company converted the raw warehouse into an alternative performance space. Risers were constructed, the lighting grid hung and stage curtains built, all by the ensemble. In that converted warehouse, they rapidly produced five plays in 12 months. These productions earned 6 NAACP Theatre Award nominations, two LA Weekly Award nominations and numerous critics' picks from the Los Angeles media. The company also received the Pasadena Arts Council's Gold Crown Award and The Debut Award from Back Stage West. In September 2003, the City of Pasadena reclaimed the Armory Northwest and Furious needed to move. After a 13-month search, the Pasadena Playhouse granted Furious a 4-year residency at its Balcony Theatre (recently renamed the Carrie Hamilton Theatre), the Playhouse's 99-seat second stage. Since its 2004 debut at the Playhouse, Furious Theatre Company has produced nine premieres, including the World Premieres of Alex Jones' Canned Peaches in Syrup and Matt Pelfrey's An Impending Rupture of the Belly (4 LA Weekly Award nominations) as well as Los Angeles Premieres of Neil Labute's The Shape of Things, Yussef El Guindi's Back of the Throat (LA Weekly Award Winner: Best Playwright) and Craig Wright's Grace (Los Angeles Drama Critic's Circle

Award Recipient: Best Production, Best Direction, Best Writing). Furious Theatre Company is led by co-founders and Artistic Council members: Sara Hennessy, Shawn Lee, Vonessa Martin, Eric Pargac, Brad Price and Dámaso Rodriguez. For more info visit www.furioustheatre.org.