

Curro Create National Youth
Theatre Festival 2025

Finals

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**CURRO
CREATE**
National
Youth
Theatre
Festival
2025



Welcome!

Dear Parents, Guardians, Teachers and Young Creatives

It is with great joy that we welcome you to this year's Curro Create National Youth Theatre Festival – a celebration of talent, collaboration, courage and creativity.

We are especially thrilled to welcome Penny Youngleson to our leadership team. Penny is a seasoned Curro Create collaborator and has joined us as Creative Head. Her academic background, her wide-ranging creative skill set and, most importantly, her deep humanity make her the perfect part of a team that asks only one question: What is good for the creative learner?

At Curro, we believe that question is worth answering – every single day. Every child matters to us, and we are proud to be the only schools group in southern Africa that actively invests in serving our creative learners. And Curro Create is the only platform of its kind in the world: a vibrant, professional, multi-disciplinary space where young creatives can explore their potential. Not as an extra. Not as an afterthought. But as part and parcel of the full Curro offering.

Now in its seventh year, Curro Create continues to grow in impact and excellence. From coding to television presenting, filmmaking, writing, and – as we see tonight – playmaking, we are astounded by how our learners continue, year on year, to hone and polish their creative skills with insight, discipline and flair.

We are proud of every learner who dares to imagine and to share. And we are deeply grateful to the teachers who support them – teachers who understand the tremendous gifts that lie in the hands of theatre: the ability to think critically, to work collaboratively, and to stand up and speak with courage and clarity.

Tonight, we gather in celebration – of quality theatre, of personal growth and of community. Thank you for being part of this journey.

With appreciation

Marí Lategan

Deputy CEO, Curro Holdings



We are back again!

Dear Young Storytellers, Teachers, Parents, Guardians and Friends

Welcome to our second ever Theatre Week – a celebration of stories, sparks and seriously talented young people!

This year's Top 15 productions are even sharper, bolder and more sophisticated than last year. And tonight, the Top 5 will show us just how varied and vibrant school theatre can be – physical theatre, drama, comedy, musical theatre and satire all taking the stage.

Different voices, different styles, one shared heartbeat.

And that's the magic of theatre, right? That we get to connect. With one another. With an idea. With something bigger than ourselves. It teaches us to be present, to listen, to take risks, to tell the truth. It gives our messy, beautiful lives meaning. And for many young people, it's where they find their people. Their group. Their voice.

To the teachers who give up weekends and sleep and sanity to pull off these miracles, we see you. We thank you.

To the executive heads and school leadership who continue to champion Drama as a subject and an experience, thank you for understanding the long game.

To the parents and guardians, thank you for driving and fetching and making sandwiches and sitting through line runs.

And to the actors: thank you for showing up. Thank you for being brave. Thank you for stepping into the light and saying: 'This is who I am.'

Let this week be a celebration, not just of finalists and trophies, but of what it means to make something together, on purpose, with love.

Break a leg!

With admiration, pride and popcorn

Hennie van Greunen, Pedro Kruger and Penny Youngleson

Curro Create



The process, mentors and adjudicators

Our Curro Create National Youth Theatre Festival for 2025 was built around three core commitments: nurturing emerging talent, elevating artistic skills and delivering outstanding performances. To embody these principles, we structured our process as follows:

Phase 1: Applications

Thirty-three schools from across South Africa and Namibia entered for this year's festival.

Phase 2: Play packs

Each entrant had to send us a play pack consisting of their script, cast list, rehearsal schedule, set design ideas and a director's vision for the production.

Phase 3: Top 15

We then shortlisted 15 standout productions chosen for their compelling scripts and production-readiness, and embarked on an intensive development phase, supported every step of the way by our dedicated regional mentors.

Regional-round mentors

Each of our top 15 productions was offered mentorship by a professional artist to support and guide the director and the actors in their excavation of the script, and their rehearsal process. Including **Ira Blanckenberg** who has rejoined us for Theatre Week and **Buhle Ngaba** who returns as an adjudicator, these mentors were:

Iman Isaacs

Iman is a performer, theatre maker, director and educator. She has worked in theatre with Brett Bailey, Jayne Batzofin and Quanita Adams, among others, and directed her own works at the Market and Baxter theatres. In 2016 she won the Distell Jong Ster award at Suidoosterfees for *Nat*. Co-direction of *Klippië van die Grond* earned her Fleur de Cap and KANNA nominations. A gifted mime, puppeteer and physical theatre performer, Iman is well known for her detailed and thoughtful pieces about the minutiae of everyday life in South Africa. She lectures at UCT and teaches Voice at Magnet Theatre.

Lebohang Motaung

Lebohang is an actor, producer, writer, director and facilitator with over two decades of experience. As a screenwriter, he co-wrote *Ndaba Zabantu* and *Ilangatye* and wrote *Zimbili* for Mzansi Magic Movies. His acting spans Showmax's *So-Life* and *Outlaws*, *The Republic*, *Vutha* and international series *Slave Market*. Film roles include *Loving Thokoza* and *Brother's Keeper*. On stage, he earned a 2024 Naledi nomination for nationally acclaimed *Khongolose Khommanding Khommissars* and he mentors emerging artists via the Inside Story Acting Programme.

Pierre-Andre Viviers

Prof. Pierre-André Viviers is a multifaceted academic at NWU's School of Tourism Management, as well as an accomplished screenwriter and playwright. Writing and directing since his own student days, he is known as the king of youth theatre! He has penned, produced and staged numerous award-winning productions, earning honours for his scripts, direction and the emerging young actors he mentors.

Phase 4: Selection

Hennie van Greunen (Curro Create Head) and Penelope Youngleson (Curro Create Creative Head), travelled to each school to watch a full energy run of each play. The office team dubbed it 'The Blazing Pace Tour' because it was a whiplash whistlestop from Polokwane to Johannesburg, Mossel Bay to Windhoek and, finally, back to Cape Town. They boarded seven flights in six days ... and it was worth every moment of airport coffee and frantic gate changes. Because what they found was this: the standard of youth theatre in Curro schools is rising.

Dramatically.

They also found time to spend with each director and cast to work on mentoring them and fixing notes on the plays so that learners and teachers could grow as a company and as creatives no matter the outcome of their session. The top 5 plays that progressed to Theatre Week were chosen once the tour was complete and rubric scores had been compared.



Phase 5: Theatre Week

Five outstanding productions were invited to Theatre Week (5 to 11 July 2025), each paired with an experienced mentor. These mentors supported their companies through final run-throughs, detailed notes sessions and the technical get-in on our main stage. Beyond rehearsals, we all shared open-mic evenings, theatre games and improvisation throwdowns and even a facilitated drumming circle – moments that built kinship and camaraderie among all of our drama family members. Additionally, every mentor led a dedicated workshop on a key aspect of acting or stagecraft, ensuring that each company attended high-quality masterclasses to enrich their theatrical skillset.

Our Theatre Week mentors were as follows:

Theatre Week mentors



Dean Balie
#TeamHeuwelkruin

Dean is a South African actor, musician and composer known for his extensive theatre work. He debuted in Maynardville's *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Die Kortstondige raklewe van Anastasia W*, directed by Mathinus Basson. His portrayal of young Kat Diamond in *Kat and the Kings* earned him the Fleur du Cap Award for Best Actor in a Musical. He has collaborated on *Blood Brothers*, *Orpheus in Africa*, *Ver innie wêreld Kittie*, and toured internationally with *The Tragedy of Hamlet*. Further credits include *Sweet Bird of Youth*, *Shakespeare in Love*, and *!Khagan, die Bidsprinkaan*. In 2021 he received the prestigious Fiësta Sinjatuur Award.



Faniswa Yisa
#TeamNorthernAcademy

Faniswa is an award-winning actress, physical theatre performer and arts activist with over two decades of professional experience. A UCT graduate, she was a resident performer at Magnet Theatre for seven years and has toured internationally with acclaimed productions like *Every Year, Every Day, I Am Walking*. Her screen credits include *Blood and Water*, *Nêrens*, *Noord-Kaap*, *Knuckle City*, and *Black Sails*. Faniswa continues to break new ground in socially conscious performance, with standout roles in *What Remains* and *19 Born 76 Rebels*. Her work reflects bold artistry, technical mastery and deep cultural resonance.



Ira Blanckenberg
#TeamDurbanville

Ira is a celebrated screen and stage actress known for standout roles in *Egoli*, *Binnelanders*, and *7de Laan*. Her TV credits include *Die Byl*, *Fynskrif*, and *Mooiwee en Warm*, for which she earned a 2023 Silwerskerm nomination for Best Actress. Ira starred in the award-winning *Griekwastad* film and was SAFTA-nominated in 2022 for her role in *Toorbos* – South Africa's official Oscar submission that year. In 2025, she returns to the screen in *Nuusmakers* and Season 2 of *Recipes for Love and Murder*. Ira also owns and runs the Stage Right Acting school.



Jaques De Silva
#TeamAurora

Jaques is an award-winning South African actor, teacher and theatre maker, known for his embodied performances on stage. His television credits include *7de Laan* and *Scandal!*, and he earned widespread recognition in John Barker's *The Umbrella Men: Escape from Robben Island*. He currently stars as 'Striker' in *Empini*. Jaques has been honoured with a Naledi Theatre Award nomination for *Evil* and a kykNET Fiësta nomination for Supporting Actor in *Queenie-hulle*. A gifted physical theatre performer and mime artist, his practice draws heavily on the mind-body connections of performers.



Waldemar Schultz
#TeamKlerksdorp

Waldemar 'Waldi' is a South African actor, director and mentor with more than 30 years of experience in performance. He first gained notice in *7de Laan* and has since become a familiar face in *Proesstraat*, *Die Byl* and *Unseen*. He earned a 2024 Silwerskerm nomination for Best Actor for *Die Byl* and was part of the Oscar-nominated short *The Last Ranger*. Recent film credits include *Tickets*, *Die Bloedhonde*, *Al Wat Ek Weet* and *Drunks Have Whiter Teeth*. Mentoring young performers keeps him optimistic about the industry's future.



Phase 6: Final adjudication

Our adjudicators



Bianca Flanders

Bianca is a Cape Town-based actress, voice artist, producer and director celebrated for her dynamic stage work. She's brought to life characters in *Krotoa: Eva van de Kaap*, *District 6*, *The Demon Bride*, *Happy New Year* and *Auntie Merle: The Musical*. Her versatility shines in *Orpheus in Africa*, *In Ongenade*, *Kristalvlakte* and *Niqabi Ninja* but it was her portrayal in *Annie+Helen* by our very own Hennie van Greunen that won her a KANNA Award this year. Cinema-goers also know her from *Troukoors*, *Barakat*, *A Christmas Chorus*, *The Riviera* and *Our Girl*. Beyond performing, Bianca produces, writes and directs, creating new opportunities for theatre artists across South Africa; and is well-beloved for her children's book series. The latest story *Pumpkin and the Hidden Heroes* has just been released.

Buhle Ngaba

Buhle is a multi-award-winning theatre maker, writer and researcher. As a Brett Goldin Bursary recipient, she completed a Royal Shakespeare Company residency in Stratford where she wrote *Swan Song* - which went on to win her two Kanna Awards. She garnered Fleur du Cap and Naledi nominations for her break-out role in John Kani's *Missing* and was also a Fleur du Cap nominee for Best Leading Actress in *What Remains*. She then went on to create a Charlotte Maxeke-inspired puppetry piece at UWC's Centre for Humanities Research. Currently, she leads curation of the Southern Region Women's Archive and, as 2024 Market Theatre Barney Simon Resident, developed *BLING!*, which premiered at the Vienna Festival and toured Europe extensively. Buhle has just returned from 2025 NAF where she performed in Nadia David's *Bridling* (an adaptation of David's Caine-Prize award winning story of the same name), directed by Jay Pather and supported by dancer Shaun Oelf.



Nico Scheepers

Nico is a multi-award-winning screenwriter, director and playwright whose work spans TV and theatre. He created the family saga *Nêrens*, *Noord-Kaap* and crime thriller *Donkerbos*. *Donkerbos* screened in the Berlinale Series Select, earned seven SAFTA nominations and won him the 2023 SAFTA for Best TV Drama Director. His fantasy short *Die Maan Val Bewusteloos* won Best Director at the 2017 Silwerskerm Festival. As a playwright, his work has been published and performed at Cape Town's Fugard Theatre (Homecoming Centre), Johannesburg's Market Theatre and Amsterdam's Aan De Brak Teater. He has received five Fiesta Theatre Awards and the 2018 Fleur du Cap for Best New Director. Equally comfortable in his first love, live performance, or behind a lens: his work blends authenticity with striking visual storytelling.



Awards

2025

Best Production
Best Director
Best Actress
Best Actor
Most Promising Actress
Most Promising Actor
Adjudicators' Award
Best Ensemble
Best Technical Achievement
Theatre Wings for Excellence

Credits

For Curro Create

Marguerite Dippenaar
Andolene Buys
Carla Macleod

Theatre Week Team

Jak Brits: Venue and Programme Coordinator
Yvette Hanekom: Stage Manager
Phumeza Damane: Logistics Coordinator

For Pro AV Team Theatre Technical Team

Leon Fourie
Reinier du Toit: Lighting
Ryan Nicholson: Sound

Awards

Artist: John Skotnes

Thank you ...

Kenneth Checkley and Alice Dehwa from HeronBridge College and The Retreat for all your assistance and for hosting the CCNYTF 2025 Theatre Week.

Lizay Mostert and the Curro Design Lab for all design elements, including the programme design.

All Curro management teams, executive heads, heads of school, teachers, learners, parents and guardians who support and nurture the theatre arts.

Marí Lategan for making all of this possible.

FROM SOPHIA WITH LOVE!



Curro Heuvelkruin

Curro Heuvelkruin High School *From Sophia with Love!*

A white, Jewish woman moves into 65 Gerty Street after responding to an ad in the paper. Her friends and neighbors can't understand why she'd choose to live in Sophiatown at the height of apartheid – but who can ever guess where our hearts will lead us?

Playwright
Malcolm Purkey

Director
Muzi Nkala

Assistants to the Director and Chaperones
Maroli Horn | Joan Cloete

Cast

Marize Rabe
Ofentse Mathosa
Lesego Mokobane
Ramaru Mafala
Oratilwe Mufamadi
Oluhle Simelane
Mukundi Matibe
Hlogi Thantsha
Libonge Matole
Joy Ntjie
Liyabona Thompson
Thingashayi Muvhali
Kayla Magabe
Nnete Tshoma

Ruth Golden
Jakes
Mingus
Fahfee
Lulu
Princess
Mamarithi
Charlie
Main singer and movement
Main singer and movement
Dance and movement
Dance and movement
Dance and movement
Dance and movement

Technical crew

Lethabo Puka
Nkosazana Makhubela
Nicole Potgieter

Crew
Crew
Crew



Curro Durbanville High School
Onthou

When hundreds of people were sent to the camps in World War II and we learned about the atrocities that took place: families ripped apart and communities broken beyond repair, we all swore we would never allow such a tragedy to happen again. And yet ... and yet?

Playwright
Cecilia Wesson

Director
Cecilia Wesson

Assistant to the Director and Chaperone
Hanlie Meyer

Cast

Mia-Cecilia Kriel
Ngcali Dantile
Risa Burger
Christina Marx
Lucy Morillion
Leonie Zimmermann
Mia Stroebel
Kaylee Wallace
Lynda Smith

Edith
Magda
Hannah
Cibi
Lidia
Livi
Anne
Mala
Rachel

Technical crew
William Inggs

Lighting technician



Curro Durbanville High School



**Curro Klerksdorp High School
Curtain Call**

Five actors. Endless rejection letters. One spotlight. What's it going to take to get a foot in the door?

Playwright

Pierre-André Viviers

Director

Collette Stander

Assistant to the Director and Chaperone

Calvin Louw

Cast

n'Khensani Sibutsi
Bat-El Gebrehiwot
Neo Kgomari
Jared Meyer
Marcus Mpofu

Jenna
Alexis
Bruce
Simon
Innocent

Technical crew

Ethan Kungu
Karabo Gaboutloeloe
Botshelo Motsisi
Bophelo Moumakwa
Reneilwe Sithole

Stage manager
Sound
Lighting
Projector operator
Stagehand



A FRACTURE IS NOT A BREAK

Curro Aurora

Curro Aurora High School *A Fracture is not a Break*

How do you remember what came before when you were born into a country demanding you survive by forgetting? What can you remember when you have to scrape your soul's edges together just to keep your own skin from fraying?

Playwright

Grace Barnes and Cast

Director

Grace Barnes

Assistant to the Director and Chaperone

Regan Napier

Cast

Kopano Kutama

Jenna Barends

Karla Lotz

Sivatho Koyana

Khayaletu Dladla

The Spark

The Outsider

The Gentle Warrior

The Chameleon

The Shadow

Technical crew

Adrian Troskie

Ewan Liechti

Yisrael Harber

Lighting

Sound

Sound and Stage Assistant



RETURN OF THE ANCESTORS



Northern Academy High School

Northern Academy High School *Return of the Ancestors*

Legendary struggle icons Steve Biko and Helen Joseph are mysteriously summoned to South Africa twenty years after the first democratic elections (and long after their own deaths) to discover if the ultimate sacrifices of their generation truly changed the nation. But will they be invited to the (fire)pool party at Nkandla?

Playwright: Mike Van Graan

Director: Nomfezeko Sussie Mjwara

Choreographer and Chaperone: CeeJay Shilubana

Assistant to the Director and Chaperone: Kim Greyling

Cast

Mathabatha Shadung

Karabo Mokomane

Rixongile Shibambo

Busisiwe Mutayi

Mmamoloko Ngoetjana

Naledi Tshangwane

Rethabile Rapudi

Lionel Mogale

Thato Ramoadi

Thatego Madinyane

Kelly Sekhaolelo

Kgwerano Morwaswi

Makale Maputla

Leago Mphahlele

Tetelo Manale

Steve Biko

Helen Joseph

Mama and Interpreter

Sunshine

Gravestone

Preacher and Nana

Dog

Security

Control

Spy

Freedom

Liberation

Community member

Community member

Community member

Technical crew

Reabetswe Sebake

Tshegofatso Malope

Kamogelo Mashigo

Tokelo Marobe

Stage management

Stage management

Stage management

Assistant Director and sound technician



National Winner of the Youth Theatre Festival 2024:
The Children, Curro Heuwelkruijn

'You can't answer violence with counter violence. The answer is love. The best sabotage is love ... Love is the only energy I've ever used as a writer.'

Athol Fugard

