

SA premiere of JM Coetzee's *Life & Times of Michael K* to show at The Baxter

The Baxter's most ambitious and exciting production in recent years, *Life & Times of Michael K* - a Düsseldorf Schauspielfest (Germany) and Baxter Theatre co-production - will have its South African premiere, from 28 February to 19 March 2022, at 7pm, with Saturday matinees at 2pm.

Nobel Prize-winning author JM Coetzee's *Life & Times of Michael K*, adapted for the stage by Lara Foot, in collaboration with the Handspring Puppet Company, was postponed last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and stringent lockdown restrictions at the time.



Nolufefe Ntshunshu, Craig Leo, Carlo Daniels, Roshina Ratnam, Andrew Buckland in *Life & Times of Michael K* - image by Fiona McPherson

This highly anticipated co-production between Theater der Welt Festival, Düsseldorf Schauspielfest, Baxter Theatre Centre and Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg, brings together some of South Africa's most revered, multi-award-winning artists.

Written and directed by Foot, it is the largest and most illustrious undertaking by the theatre over the past decade and is the culmination of more than two years of planning. It marks the first time that she will be working with the Tony award-winning Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler from the hit production *War Horse*-fame, along with a formidable cast and creative team.

The impressive South African cast includes theatre legends Sandra Prinsloo, Andrew Buckland, Faniswa Yisa, puppet master Craig Leo, Roshina Ratnam, Carlo Daniels, Marty Kintu, Billy Langa and Nolufefe Ntshuntshe.



Craig Leo, Nolufefe Ntshuntshe, Carlo Daniels, Faniswa Yisa, Billy Langa in *Life & Times of Michael K* - image by Fiona McPherson

The production was invited to debut at the Theater der Welt festival at the Düsseldorf Theatre, Germany, in June 2019, however, the festival was postponed to June 2021 because of the pandemic and travel restrictions. The world premiere was livestreamed from The Baxter to Dusseldorf and in November 2021 the company travelled to Germany to perform live for the first time, to great acclaim.

The German media raved, with Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung describing it as “... a brilliant Coetzee adaptation ...” and “... the lights went out and a spectacular evening of theatre began ...” while report-D said, “It was beguiling. Different. Great.”, and RP Online described it as “Great theatre.”

Epic in scale, *Life & Times of Michael K*, is a multi-layered theatrical staging which combines puppetry, performance, film and evocative music, bringing to life Coetzee’s Booker Prize-winning novel.

A beautiful story

The hauntingly beautiful story follows Michael K, a simple man who embarks on a journey through South Africa, ravaged by civil war, to return his mother to die on the farm, where she was born. He finds strength in his own humanity, his profound connection to the earth and his unique path which, as it unfolds, reveals to him, his reason for living.



Craig Leo, Carlo Daniels in *Life & Times of Michael K* - image by Fiona McPherson

The creative team is made up of Lara Foot (adaptor, writer, director), Handspring Puppet Company (adaptors, puppet directors, design and makers), Patrick Curtis (set design) Kyle Shepherd (original music composition), Joshua Cutts (lighting), Fiona McPherson and Barrett de Kock (directors of photography and film), Yoav Dagan (videography and editing), Kirsti Cumming (projection design), Phyllis Midlane (costumes) and Simon Kohler (sound design).

All COVID-19 protocols are in place as regulated by lockdown restrictions at the time. These include the availability of hand sanitisers, tracking and tracing recorded, wearing of masks and physical distancing. Patrons and audience members are advised to arrive at least an hour before the start of the performance to avoid delays.

Life & Times of Michael K runs at the Baxter Theatre from 28 February to 19 March 2022, at 7pm nightly and Saturday matinees at 2pm on 5, 12 and 19 March.

Booking is through Webtickets online at www.webtickets.co.za or at Pick n Pay Stores. For discounted block or schools' bookings and fundraisers contact Leon van Zyl at .

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