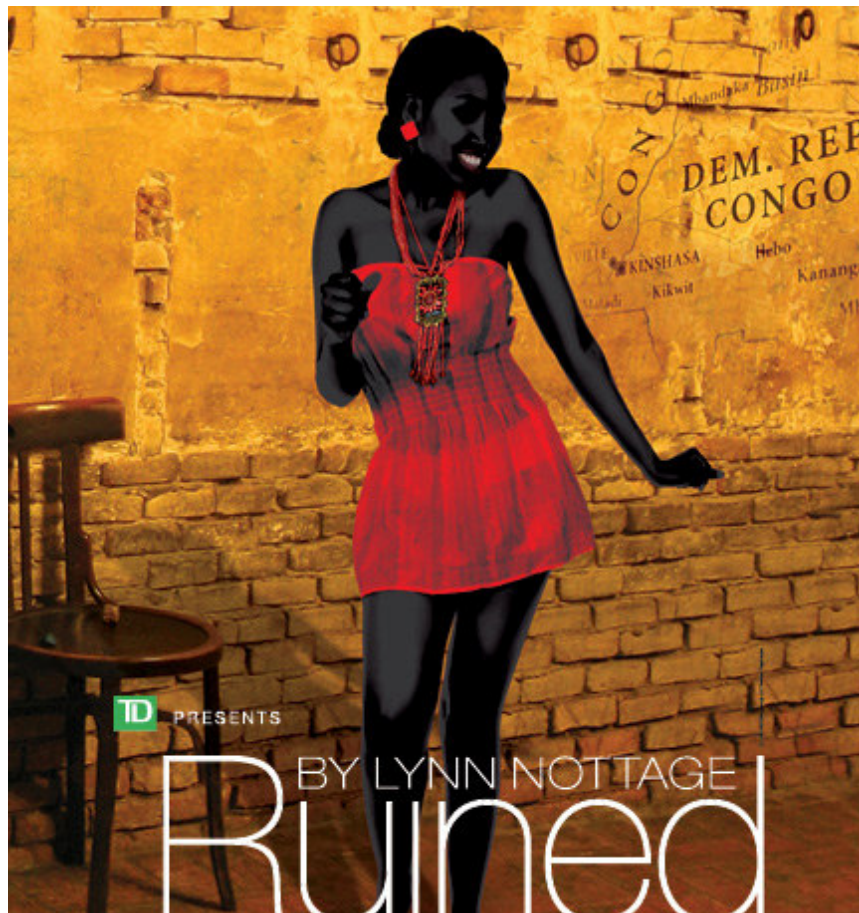


Produced by Obsidian Theatre in association with Nightwood Theatre

MEDIA KIT FOR *RUINED*



Obsidian Theatre Company in association with Nightwood Theatre presents the Toronto premiere of the Pulitzer-Prize-winning play, *RUINED*

“Passionate, courageous and acutely argued, *Ruined* is a remarkable theatrical accomplishment.”
-Chicago Tribune

“Intense and gripping... the kind of new play we desperately need.”
-Time Out New York

RUINED

Written by Lynn Nottage

Directed by Philip Akin

Starring Yanna McIntosh and Sterling Jarvis with Richard Alan Campbell, Marci T House, Daniso Ndhlovu, Muoi Nene, Thomas Olajide, Anthony Palmer, Sabryn Rock, Marc Senior, Andre Sills, Sophia Walker

Set Design by Gillian Gallow, **Lighting Design** by Rebecca Picherack

Costume Design by Nadine Grant **Sound Design** by Chris Stanton

Stage Manager: Michael Sinclair

January 16 to February 12, 2011 at the Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs

Produced by **Obsidian Theatre Company** in association with **Nightwood Theatre**

Toronto, ON... Obsidian Theatre Company in association with Nightwood Theatre is thrilled to present the Toronto premiere of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize award-winning play *Ruined*. Written by Lynn Nottage and starring theatre and film veterans, Yanna McIntosh and Sterling Jarvis, the story is set in a small mining town in the civil war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Ruined* follows a young woman's path to Mama Nadi, a savvy businesswoman who, in the midst of a complex civil war, both protects and profits from the women whose bodies have become battlegrounds. At once heartbreaking and captivating, *Ruined* pays homage to the courageous and resilient women who must piece themselves together after the ruin.

Philip Akin, Obsidian Theatre Company Artistic Director and director of *Ruined*, remarks, “It was in 2008 that I first heard of this play and I have been working to produce it ever since. *Ruined* is a necessity for me. Well perhaps more of an obsession really. This story has hit me deep inside and no matter what, I needed to bring this play to the stage. This is a play of survivors. Not victims. And that is an African story that you do not see very often. The women in this play are the distillation of many women who have survived horrors we can only imagine and yet they are still wrapped in humanity. How could I not want these people to live here for our audience?”

Ruined stars seasoned theatre, film and television veterans, **Yanna McIntosh** and **Sterling Jarvis**. **Akin** has assembled an impressive creative team for this Toronto premiere including set designer **Gillian**

Gallow, Costume Designer **Nadine Grant**, lighting designer **Rebecca Picherack**, Sound Designer **Chris Stanton** and stage manager **Michael Sinclair**.

LYNN NOTTAGE, Playwright

Lynn Nottage was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1964. Her parents were a schoolteacher and a child psychologist. Keen on theatre from an early age, she attended New York's High School of Music and Art, before Brown University and Yale School of Drama. Her work often deals with the lives of African Americans and the struggles of women. Apart from *Ruined*, *Intimate Apparel* is probably Nottage's best known play, centered on the story of an African-American woman's journey to independence, with her moving to New York to pursue her dreams and becoming a seamstress. *Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine* could be seen as a thematic sequel to this, and once again involves an African-American woman dealing with change in New York. Undine is a successful publicist living in Manhattan until her husband leaves her taking all her money. She is forced to return to Brooklyn, to her former existence, and to deal with her working-class relatives. Nottage was awarded the Guggenheim Grant for Playwriting in 2005. In 2007 Nottage won the MacArthur Foundation Genius Grant and the National Black Theatre Festival's August Wilson Playwriting Award. *Ruined* itself won several high-profile awards including an Obie for Best New American Play in 2008, the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2009 and most recently, co-winner of the newly established Horton Foote Prizes, awarded on August 30, 2010 named in honour of the late legendary writer. Lynn Nottage is a visiting lecturer at Yale School of Drama and sits on The Dramatists Guild Council, an alumna of new American dramatists.

PHILIP AKIN, Director

Philip Akin is an accomplished actor/director/producer and has been the Artistic Director for the Obsidian Theatre Company since 2006.

Most Recent Directing:

Intimate Apparel by Lynn Nottage (2010) for Obsidian Theatre/ Citadel Theatre and the Canadian Stage Company, Factory Theatre: *Toronto the Good* by Andrew Moodie (2009), Obsidian Theatre Company: *Black Medea* by Wesley Enoch (2008), *Born Ready* by Joseph Jomo Pierre (2008), *Intimate Apparel* by Lynn Nottage (2008), International Playwrights Forum (2008)

Upcoming:

Shaw Festival: *Topdog Underdog* by Suzan-Lori Parks
Ground Zero Productions: *West Indies Diary* by Pat Darbasie

YANNA MCINTOSH, Mama Nadi

Recent credits: Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Mme. Volange in *Dangerous Liaisons*, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Calphurnia in *Julius Caesar*, Helen of Troy in *Trojan Women* (Stratford Festival); Maud/Victoria in *Cloud Nine* (Mirvish Productions); Condoleeza Rice in *Stuff Happens* (Studio 180/Canadian Stage), Karen in the TMN series *The Line* and Deepa Mehta's film *Heaven on Earth*. Other credits: Mary Stuart, *Phedre* (Soulpepper Theatre); Michael Healey's *Generous*; Kyra in the Toronto premiere of David Hare's *Skylight* (Dora award) (Tarragon Theatre); *The Syringa Tree* (Dora Nomination), Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* (Canadian Stage); *The Monument* (Dora Nomination), *The Piano Lesson* (Obsidian Theatre); *Hedda Gabler* (Dora Nomination) (Volcano Theatre), *Lambton Kent* (Volcano/Edinburgh Festival); the title role in Florence Gibson's *Belle* (Dora nomination) (Factory Theatre/NAC); *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Bear* (NAC); Athol Fugard's *Valley Song* (Dora Award)(New Globe Theatre); *Trace*, which she co-wrote and performed; *Tartuffe* (ART), *A Fertile Imagination* (Theatre Passe Muraille), *Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang* (Young People's Theatre) and *The Illusion*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night* (Stratford Festival). Yanna has taught at the National Theatre School and Humber College directing students in productions of *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and *Richard III*. Film and television credits

include *Doomstown* (Gemini Award), *Finn's Girl*, *This is Wonderland*, *The Sentinel*, *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Riverdale*.

STERLING JARVIS, Christian

Born in Digby, Nova Scotia and raised in Toronto, Sterling Jarvis started performing at a young age. Described by the media as “red-hot” and “honey voiced”, this two-time Juno award nominee can be heard singing the television theme songs for *Donkey Kong Country* and *Zaboomafoo*, as well as several television and radio commercials. He was recently seen on the big screen in *The Sentinel* with Michael Douglas, Kiefer Sutherland, Eva Longoria, and Kim Basinger, and has appeared in commercials as a spokesperson for Rogers and Kellogg’s All Bran Bars. Other credits include: *Perfect Strangers* (CBS); *The Eleventh Hour* (CTV); *The West Wing* (NBC); *Felicity* (Warner Bros.); *‘Til Death Do Us Part* (Global/Court TV). On stage, Sterling performed as “Simba” and “Pumba” in the Toronto production of *Disney’s The Lion King*, as well as “Crooks” in the Canadian Stage production, *Of Mice and Men*. He recently appeared as “Duff” in the hit musical by Queen, *We Will Rock You*, a show that’s been described as an unstoppable juggernaut of entertainment and has played to over one million audience members in its two-and-a-half year run. Sterling has lent his voice to various charitable events, including the Easter Seals Telethon, The Actors’ Fund, Run for the Cure, Theatre by the Bay, and is featured on billboards and in public service announcements across the city of Toronto, promoting Toronto Police Services’ and Cybertip’s internet safety campaign, “Every Keystroke Has A Consequence.”

RICHARD ALAN CAMPBELL, Harari

Richard Alan Campbell most recently appeared in Theatre By The Bay’s production of *Taming Of The Shrew*. He is will soon start rehearsals for an October/November remount of, *The Great War*, his fifth show with legendary company, VideoCabaret, for whom he also appeared in *Laurier*, *The Saskatchewan Rebellion*, *Canadian Pacific Scandal*, and *The Red River Rebellion*. Other selected theatre: *It’s A Wonderful Life*, *A Christmas Carol* (Theatre New Brunswick); Duke of Gloucester in *King Lear*, Angelo in *Comedy Of Errors* (Driftwood Theatre); Seven seasons with Shakespeare in the Rough, including the roles, Lucio in *Measure For Measure*, Iago in *Othello*, as well as the title roles in *Titus Andronicus*, *King John*, and *The Merchant of Venice*; Mr. Robinson in *The Graduate* (The Grand Theatre); *Conscientia* (Summerworks); *Waiting For Lefty*; and *Audience Unveiling Protest* (The CO); *Petra* (Theatre Direct), *Sideshow of the Damned* (Eldritch Theatre). Movies and TV include: *Odyssey Five*, *Warehouse 13*, *Charlie Bartlett*, *Five Girls* and *Sue Thomas FB Eye*.

MARCI T HOUSE, Josephine

Marci T House is excited to be making her Toronto stage debut. Her film/tv credits include: *Party of Five*, *The District*, *Arrest & Trial*, *Jake in Progress*, *The L Word*, *Bionic Woman*, *Reaper*, *Smallville*, ‘V’, *Supernatural*, *Taken From Me: The Tiffany Rubin Story*, *Reaper*, *Caprica*, *The Farm*, *Pulling*, *Vampire Diaries*, *Facing Kate*, *Fringe*, *The Playaz Court*, *Final Breakdown*, *Elegy*, *Sheltered Life*, *A Higher Form of Learning*, *X-Files 2: The Movie*, *Playing For Keeps*, *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, *The Boy Who Cried Werewolf*, & *Charlie St. Cloud*. Stage credits include: the original stage production of *Opening Doors* – Elephant Theater, *Los Angeles* (three NAACP Theater Awards nominations), *The Miracle Worker* - Vancouver Playhouse (Jessie Award Winner), *A Streetcar Named Desire* - Blue Bridge Theatre Company (Victoria, BC), and most recently *HAMLET* - Havana Theatre (Vancouver, BC).

DANISO NDHLOVU, Musician

From days of a three stringed home made banjo Daniso's passion for the guitar has never waned. Growing up in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, musical instruments were not easily accessible for budding musicians as they would either be too expensive or just not a priority for an average Zimbabwean family. At age 13, Daniso made his first very own standard 6-string guitar mimicking a standard guitar. He recalls being shown the three most common guitar chords, G-C-D and never looked back from that point. Playing at local events and interacting with veteran musicians like Alois Kumpeu, Handsome Mabhiza, Pastor Clyde Bismark, the late Collen Wyngard and many others,

broadened his musical scope. After moving to Toronto in 2002, Daniso has been featured or has collaborated with artists like: Dianne Clemmons, Natasha Waterman, Londa Larmond, South African Bass Legend Bakithi Kumalo, Johnny Gillard, *Rhema Worship and Praise* and many others. He appears weekly on CTS TV on *Rhema Today* and is ranked among the top 50 finalists in the Taylor Guitars "Test Drive Acoustic 2010". Daniso's debut album "Movin' On" will capture any listener's attention as it covers a wide variety of tastes. The track "Everlasting Love" shot up to number 6 on the Toronto Jazz Charts on its first week of release.

MUOI NENE, Simon

Theatre credits include: Volcano (*The Africa Trilogy - Shine Your Eye; The Africa Trilogy - Glo*); AfriCan Theatre Ensemble/Artword (*Fate of A Cockroach; Market of Tales*); AfriCan Theatre Ensemble (*Esu and The Vagabond Minstrels*). Film and TV include: *Communication Matters*. Muoi was born in Nairobi, Kenya; Toronto was for higher education which has mostly come on stage. He moves in dance as a sign of respect to the human form and heart that is the drum that beats life within it; he plays for it is how we learn. Long live higher education.

THOMAS OLAJIDE, Laurent

Since graduating in 2010 from The National Theatre School, Thomas Olajide has played *Abraham* in *Toronto's Best of Fringe* play "SIA". Born in Vancouver and now makes Toronto his base in order to further his artistic endeavours. After his debut with Obsidian he will continue on to "Six Degrees of Separation" as *Paul* with *Ghost Light Projects Theatre Company*.

ANTHONY PALMER, Kisembe

Since launching his acting career in 2002, Anthony has walked the stage with a number of theatre groups across the GTA. His most recent theatre credits include: Triple Take Productions – *The Aquarium as the horny egocentric knit-wit roommate George*; Etobicoke Theatre – *Samuel French's Anybody for Murder* as the zanny Jamaican crime writer neighbor Edgar Chambers; and Milton Players – *Ray Cooney's Funny Money as Inspector Davenport*. Off stage, Anthony has worked on TV productions such as - CTV & NBC's *The Listener*, Fox Network's - *Breakout Kings*, and the upcoming 2011 TV Series - *XIII*.

SABRYN ROCK, Sophie

Sabryn Rock is an actor, singer, improviser and a graduate of the Acting program at the National Theatre School of Canada. Originally from Regina, she has performed all over Saskatchewan and Ontario. Selected theatre credits include *El Numero Uno*, *Dead Ahead* (LKTYP), *Gas* for the Next Stage Festival (jsquared.theatre), *King Lear*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo & Juliet* (Driftwood Theatre Group), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*Shakespeare in Action*), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Persephone Theatre, Saskatoon), *Honk!*, *Just So* (Globe Theatre, Regina), *Late* (Obsidian). Sabryn was also a part of the 2007/08 apprenticeship program through Obsidian where she assistant directed *Intimate Apparel* and *The Wizard of Oz* (LKTYP). Since moving to Toronto, she has primarily focused on play development having assisted on numerous workshops for new plays. Last fall, she traveled back to Regina to shoot a pilot episode for a new comedic web-series titled inSAYSHable. She's currently finishing her first album with rapper Apollo Creed and their soul/hip-hop group Ladyboxx.

MARC SENIOR, Fortune

Marc Senior is an actor, stand-up comedian, live improviser, singer and writer who is passionate about his craft and the overall development of an art form. He is honored to be a part of such a globally relevant and simply beautiful piece in *Ruined*. Selected theatre credits include: *Gas* (Next Stage Festival), *Softown* (Theatre Direct), *Barack to the Future* (Second City – Understudy). Selected stand-up comedy credits include: *Nubian Disciplines of Pryor* (Yuk Yuk's Comedy Club-Toronto), *The Great Canadian Laugh-Off Semi-Finals* (Yuk Yuk's Comedy Club-Toronto), *Altdot Comedy Lounge* (The Rivoli). Marc hopes to raise social-awareness through an artistic vision that is not only unique but also relatable and relevant to an audience worldwide.

ANDRE SILLS, Osembenga

Recent theatre credits include the title role in *Richard III* at Hart House Theatre, *Taming of the Shrew* with Theatre By The Bay, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Shakespeare In Action, *The Nile* at the Toronto Fringe Festival, *The Overwhelming* with Studio 180 and The Canadian Stage Company. André has spent four seasons working at The Stratford Shakespeare Festival acting in the following shows: *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Caesar & Cleopatra*, *Henry IV, Part 1*, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *Pentecost*. (*Caesar & Cleopatra* was also filmed for the Bravo Network.) André is a graduate of the Birmingham Conservatory under David Latham. He made his American theatre debut recently playing the title role in *Othello*, and the lead Harmond Wilks in *Radio Golf* with the St. Louis Black Repertory Company. Other theatre credits include *Much Ado About Nothing* (Canadian Stage), and *Titus Andronicus* (Canopy Theatre). André is a graduate of George Brown Theatre School. Upcoming theatre *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Shakespeare In Action.

SOPHIA WALKER, Salima

Sophia Walker is an award-winning actress with The Stratford Shakespeare Festival. In the last 5 years she has played an array of characters – from a young mother in *Harlem Duet* to Julia, a vaudeville star in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Sophia played Charmian in the Gemini-nominated film Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* and Goddess Juno in *The Tempest* opposite Christopher Plummer. For The Stratford Shakespeare Festival Sophia has worked with many award-winning directors such as: Djanet Sears, Peter Hinton, Des McAnuff to name a few. Playing leading roles at The Stratford Shakespeare Festival earned her The Michael Mawson Award.

Ruined Supporters and Partners:



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Canada Council
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Ruined Details

- DATES:** January 16 to February 12, 2011
MEDIA/VIP: Thursday January 20, 2011
SHOW TIMES: Tuesday to Saturday at 8:00 p.m., Wednesday 12:30 pm
Saturdays and Sundays at 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs, 26 Berkeley Street
Tickets are available by calling (416) 368.3110 or
www.canadianstage.com
SINGLE TICKETS: On Sale **NOW**. Prices range from \$15-\$35
INFORMATION: www.obsidian-theatre.com or www.nightwoodtheatre.net

ABOUT OBSIDIAN THEATRE

Obsidian Theatre – Artistic Director **Philip Akin**, Chair **Bev Salmon**

Obsidian is Canada's leading culturally diverse theatre company. Their threefold mission is to produce plays, to develop playwrights and to train emerging theatre professionals. Obsidian is passionately dedicated to the exploration, development, and production of the Black voice. Obsidian produces plays from a world-wide canon focusing primarily, but not exclusively, on the works of highly acclaimed Black playwrights. Obsidian provides artistic support, promoting the development of work by Black theatre makers and offering training opportunities through mentoring and apprenticeship programs for emerging Black Artists.

ABOUT NIGHTWOOD THEATRE

Nightwood Theatre – Artistic Director **Kelly Thornton**, Producer **Denyse Karn** and Chair **Karon Bales**

As Canada's national women's theatre since 1979, Nightwood has launched the careers of countless leading theatre artists in the country. We have won Canada's highest literary and performing arts awards and more than ever our success proves the need for theatre that gives voice to women and celebrates the diversity of Canadian society. We remain actively engaged in mentoring young women and promoting women's place on the local, national and international stage.

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Press contact:

For further media information and artist interviews please contact **Rebecca Peirson**
at 416-944-1740 x8 or rebecca@nightwoodtheatre.net
www.obsidian-theatre.com www.nightwoodtheatre.net

Interview with Director Philip Aikin

Why did you decide to direct *Ruined*?

I love Lynn Nottage's plays. From the first time I heard about *Ruined* I was intrigued by what she would do with it and so I followed the development of play and finally saw it in New York. I was so taken with the fact that it was an African story. One that was not told via a Western character and that it speaks with hope. The characters and their stories spoke to me in a profound way and I just knew that I needed to bring this play to Toronto

What attracts you to the Berkeley Theatre? What appeals to you about the space?

The Downstairs space at the Berkeley has both a breadth of space and an intimacy that will allow the play to sit deep in the audience. It allows one to wrap the action around the audience and pull them in.

Why do you think *Ruined* is relevant to audiences now?

Ruined is relevant now because it lives in the ongoing now. The survivors in this play are based on real survivors. Their stories are continuing to this day and in fact new stories of war and its devastation of women continue to be written even as you read this. But it is also relevant because it shows people who continue with their lives. People who can find hope and friendship even in the most horrific of circumstances.

What research do you do before rehearsals start?

I have done more research on this play than on any other that I have been involved in. Part of it is online at <http://ruined-obsidian.blogspot.com/>. Of course I have read as much about the ongoing war, mining issues, music, dance, road conditions and accents etc. All help to frame the stakes for each character and give a rich texture to every word. It is also imperative that to keep in mind that while the research leads to some pretty dark places that darkness needs to have light to fully exist.

How did you go about understanding what life is like for women in the play?

By listening. It's funny because when I talked to Lynn after seeing the NY production I asked her why it wasn't as bleak as I had expected. She said, "Because it was directed by a woman." I figured that there was a lot of merit in why she said that and so I have tried to listen and fully understand how those differing sensibilities could manifest themselves.

None of the characters is entirely virtuous or malicious. Why do you think that is?

Kate Whoriskey who directed the premier production wrote the introduction to the published version of the play. She speaks of a conversation that Lynn had with a survivor of the Rwandan genocide and asked him about life after the genocide. He said, "We must fight to sustain the complexity." That phrase became the guiding spirit to their production and I have taken it on for this one. Thus no one is entirely one thing or the other and that makes them universally human. It is that complexity of character that Lynn creates so well and

thereby brings to life people we can understand and relate to. Without that deep human involvement what we would get are ciphers or mouthpieces for propaganda. Instead we have people we are viscerally affected by.

Interview with Director cont'd

How is directing a new play different to working on other, older texts?

I have never worked on older texts where the playwright is not alive so this is really what I am used to. I like having that direct connection with the playwright and have built several long lasting friendships because we work together to reveal the playwright's message.

What does this play mean to you personally? What's your inspiration?

It was in 2008 that I first heard of this play and I have been working to produce it ever since. *Ruined* is a necessity for me. Well perhaps more of an obsession really. This story has hit me deep inside and no matter what I needed to bring this play to the stage.

This is a play of survivors. Not victims. And that is an African story that you do not see very often. The women in this play are the distillation of many women who have survived horrors we can only imagine and yet they are still wrapped in humanity. How could I not want these people to live here for our audience?

LYNN NOTTAGE ON *RUINED*

Lynn Nottage writes here about the journey she went on in search of *Ruined*.

Six years ago, I travelled to East Africa to interview Congolese women fleeing the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I was fuelled by my desire to tell the story of war, but through the eyes of women, who as we know rarely start conflicts, but inevitably find themselves right smack in the middle of them. I was interested in giving voice and audience to African women living in the shadows of war.

The circumstances in the DRC are complicated; there is a slow simmering armed conflict that continues to be fought on several fronts, even though the war officially ended in 2002. You have one war being fought for natural resources between militias funded by the government and industry, you have the remnants of an ethnic war, which is the residue of the genocide in Rwanda that spilled over the border into Congo, and then you have the war that I examine in my play *Ruined*, which is the war being waged against women. To throw some statistics at you, according to International Rescue Committee, nearly 5.4 million people have died in that country since that conflict began; every month, 45,000 Congolese people die from hunger, preventable disease and violence related to war. The fact is the war in Congo is the deadliest conflict since World War II. It is sometimes called World War III, because of the international interests that fuel the conflict in order to exploit the land, which is rich in minerals such as gold, coltan, copper and diamonds.

In 2004 I went to East Africa to collect the narratives of Congolese women, because I knew their stories weren't being heard. I had no idea what play I would find in that war-torn landscape, but I travelled to the region, because I wanted to paint a three dimensional portrait of the women caught in the middle of armed conflicts; I wanted to understand who they were beyond their status as victims.

I was surprised by the number of women who readily wanted to share their stories. One by one, through tears and in voices just above a whisper, they recounted raw, revealing stories of sexual abuse and torture at the hands of both rebel soldiers and government militias. The word rape was a painful refrain, repeated so often it made me

LYNN NOTTAGE ON *RUINED* con't

physically sick. By the end of the interviews I realised that a war was being fought over the bodies of women. Rape was being used as a weapon to punish and destroy communities. In listening to their narratives I came to terms with the extent to which their bodies had become battlefields.

I remember the strong visceral response that I had to the very first Congolese woman who shared her story. Her name was Salima, and she related her story in such graphic detail that I remember wanting to cry out for her to stop, but I knew that she had a need to be heard. She'd walked miles from her refugee camp to share her story with a willing listener. Salima described being dragged from her home, arrested and wrongfully imprisoned by men seeking to arrest her husband. In prison she was beaten and raped by five soldiers. She finally bribed her way out of prison, only to discover that her husband and two of her four children were abducted. At the time of the interview she still had not learned the whereabouts of her husband and two children. I found my play *Ruined* in the painful narratives of Salima and the other Congolese women, in their gentle cadences and the monumental space between their gasps and sighs. I also found my play in the way they occasionally accessed their smiles, as if glimpsing beyond their wounds into the future.

In *Ruined* Mama Nadi gives three young woman refuge and an unsavoury means of survival. As such, the women do a fragile dance between hope and disillusionment in an attempt to navigate life on the edge of an unforgiving conflict. My play is not about victims, but survivors. *Ruined* is also the story of the Congo. A country blessed with an abundance of natural beauty and resources, which has been its blessing and its curse.

Lynn Nottage, April 2010

DRC: THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a vast country in central Africa, one rich in economic resources; and yet the country is one of the worlds poorest, with a long history of rife corruption and civil war.

The first European known to have visited the region was Portuguese navigator Diogo Cao in 1482 who established ties with the then King of Kongo. During the 16th and 17th centuries, British, Dutch, Portuguese and French merchants engaged in the slave trade. In 1884 European powers recognised King Leopold II's claim and he announced himself head of the 'Congo Free State'. King Leopold expanded and consolidated his control and exploitation of the region at the cost of millions of deaths of Congolese people.

Known as Zaire until 1997, the DRC has faced constant civil unrest, with government corruption widespread and militia groups forming and fragmenting and re-forming almost constantly over the last century. The region is made up of several peoples, notably the Hutus and Tutsis. As the power structures oscillated between the various interest groups, often reinforced by the control or influence of residual colonial powers, so communities of exiled and refugee populations were established throughout the region, many of whom formed armed groups and rebel factions within and across country borders. Other countries in the region and further afield also fuelled conflict through the profitable arms trade and the exploitation and control of the region's rich mineral deposits. The country was a Belgian colony until 1960, whereupon independence brought the country immediately into an army mutiny and a bold attempt at secession by the province of Katanga, an area hugely rich in natural mineral wealth. In 1961, the then prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, was seized and killed by troops loyal to army chief Joseph

Mobutu. Mobutu himself seized power in 1965, when he renamed the country Zaire and himself Mobutu Sese Seko. He turned the country into a centre for campaigns against the Soviet-backed Angola and in doing so guaranteed US backing. But he simultaneously made Zaire synonymous with corruption.

Following the Cold War, the US lost interest in Zaire and the country's internal corruption intensified. In 1997 neighbouring Rwanda invaded the country to flush out extremist Hutu militias. This gave a sharp boost to the anti-Mobutu rebels, who quickly captured the capital, Kinshasa, overthrew Mobutu's government, installing Laurent Kabila as president and renaming the country the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Despite the new government, political unrest continued apace. A new rebellion was provoked by a surging rift between Mr Kabila and his former allies, the latter backed by Rwanda and Uganda. Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe in turn took Kabila's side, and the whole country effectively became a battleground of continental proportions. This conflict, known as the Second Congo War, raged between 1998 and 2003, and has been termed Africa's world war. The five-year war pitted government forces, supported by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, against rebel militia backed by Uganda and Rwanda. The war was one of the worst emergencies in Africa in recent decades and claimed approximately three million lives, in a combination of war violence or its by-products of disease and malnutrition.

Despite a peace deal and the formation of a transitional government in 2003, civil unrest has never entirely ceased. In 2008 an escalation of coup attempts and localised violence caused renewed fighting in the eastern part of the country. Thousands of civilians were displaced when Rwandan Hutu militias clashed with government forces. Another rebel militia group led by General Laurent Nkunda had signed a peace deal with the government, but clashes broke out just months later. Gen Nkunda's forces advanced the provincial capital Goma in the autumn, attacking government bases and causing civilians and troops to flee. UN peacekeepers desperately tried to hold the line alongside the remaining government forces. In January 2009 the government attempted to bring the situation under control by inviting in troops from neighbouring Rwanda to engage in a joint campaign against the rebel Hutu militias active in the east of the DRC. General Nkunda was arrested by Rwanda, who had until then seen him as a key ally. At present eastern areas remain beset by widespread localised violence. This unending conflict may be in no small part due to the war's economic as well as political motivations. The country's vast mineral wealth is often at the centre of points of conflict, fuelling fighting by rival factions and splinter militia groups taking advantage of the continuing anarchy to make personal gain. The West's persistent reliance on technology manufacture demanding the Congo's mineral ores brings a sustained fan to the fire of a war turned in on itself.

CONGO FACTFILE

Full name: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Population: 66 million (UN, 2009)

Capital: Kinshasa

Area: 2.34 million sq km (905,354 sq miles)

Major languages: French, Lingala, Kiswahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba

Major religions: Christianity, Islam

Life expectancy: 46 years (men), 49 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 Congolese franc = 100 centimes

Main exports: Diamonds, copper, coffee, cobalt, crude oil

GNI per capita: US \$150 (World Bank, 2008)

WOMEN AND THE CONFLICT

Article from Amnesty International

We have been campaigning to Stop Violence Against Women against the legal background of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. One of our concerns has been the impact of conflict on women – most commonly reported as rape, though war and conflict affect women in many different ways. *Ruined* is about the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) but the effects of conflict on women are similar everywhere, be it in Northern Ireland, Israel/Occupied Territories, Balkans or Afghanistan.

During and after a conflict, civilians try to go about their normal daily lives – feeding their family, earning a living, seeking education, keeping healthy and maintaining a semblance of dignity and family life. All civilians, men, women and children, face great hurdles in trying to keep things together. But the particular challenges faced by women are often poorly understood. In peace negotiations and reconstruction efforts, the policies, solutions and resources proposed often fail to target the root problems and traditionally focus on men, the returning soldiers. Women are usually completely absent from the decision-making process and their needs, and the key role they can play, are not highlighted in reconstruction programmes. UN Security Council Resolution 1325, passed in 2000, is very clear that we cannot expect to achieve a lasting, sustainable peace and economic regeneration unless the whole society, including the at least 50% who are women, are able to play a full economic and political role in designing, delivering and implementing the peace. However, these are fine words which often fall short in practice. A recent example was in Liberia, where there were many women ex-combatants. Some had chosen to join armed groups, others were abducted; almost all suffered mass rape, were often forced to act as ‘army wives’ and bore many children. In the first attempted peace initiatives, the UN programme of disarmament and re-integration, conceived by men, failed to factor in the experiences of these women ex-combatants. Some well-intentioned reintegration initiatives offered access to education and training, and to small funds to start income-generating schemes. To benefit from these schemes, ex-combatants had to come forward, hand in their weapon and declare themselves ex-combatants. In many cases, however, the women had either not been given weapons or male commanders had taken them away. As a result it was almost exclusively men who benefited from the programmes. The training and education schemes, with no childcare, were set up in locations and at times making it difficult or unsafe for women to attend. Women were deterred from declaring themselves ex-combatants as they faced being stigmatised and ostracised in their communities – either because they might have committed violent acts, or because they had been raped. The UN initiatives did not take account of the reality and severity of stigma against such women, or offer any measures to tackle it.

Encouragingly, many local women are taking the initiative and developing schemes to help women rebuild their lives and those of their children, to the advantage of the local community and economy. The most successful of these precisely address the need to create safe women-only spaces to tackle stigma. They also always include income-generating schemes to give women some independence, as they are often rejected by the men on whom they have traditionally depended.

Such schemes not only benefit the women themselves but also strengthen the long-term

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economic stability of their communities. Their income generation is usually reinvested in local businesses and their community, which raises the general standard of living, creates employment and stimulates trade and stability. According to the World Bank Gender Action Plan: 'A host of studies suggest that putting earnings in women's hands is the intelligent thing to do to speed up development and the process of overcoming poverty. Women usually reinvest a much higher portion in their families and communities than men, spreading wealth beyond themselves. This could be one reason why countries with greater gender equality tend to have lower poverty rates.'

NUMBERS: IN THE KIVU PROVINCES

About 1600 women are raped every week, mainly by armed men.

More than 8000 cases of rape were reported in 2009.

At least 1,350,000 people are displaced; around 1,000,000 of these were displaced in 2009.

Source: UN Office of Humanitarian Affairs, 9 February 2010

RAPE: A WEAPON OF WAR

Heather Harvey, a Stop Violence Against Women campaigner from Amnesty International speaks of Rape: A Weapon of War

There is a tendency to assume that rape is a natural fallout of war, or a few bad apples running wild. In fact, during wars, attacks on civilians have always been termed War Crimes but it was never taken that seriously. The use of rape as a systematic tactic of warfare though only began to be really widely recognised in the Balkans conflict.

The Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Tribunal of (the former) Yugoslavia 1998 was unusual in being drafted with input of women's groups following that conflict. As a result it included the most extensive definition of rape of any country, even today. The ICT of Rwanda and Yugoslavia have reaffirmed that rape – even just one rape – is a war crime, but that rape on a mass and widespread scale as a tactic or weapon of war is a crime against humanity and can be a constitutive element of genocide.

'Rape as a weapon of war' refers to the deliberate, strategic and widespread use of rape as a tactic to achieve military goals. The aim of war is generally to gain control of a territory and its resources. To do this you have to exterminate, subjugate, win over or cause to flee the enemy or target population; you also aim to minimise the cost, outlay and loss of your own soldiers' lives, and ensure that the enemy is not able to regroup or form any viable opposition or resistance. Rape is a cheap and easy means to achieve this. It requires no major financial outlay, weapons, ammunition, or transport systems. It spreads terror and causes populations to flee the land you want to take over. It is so utterly destructive that people cannot look each other in the eyes let alone form a working resistance. In many cases the rapes take place in front of family and community, men and boys may be forced to rape their own relatives. And of course men and boys themselves may be raped. Mass rape is not a 'fair' way to fight: this is precisely why it is prohibited in the laws of war.

The problem is that as long as mass rape as a strategy goes unchallenged it will continue to be a preferred weapon or tactic. Women who are victims of rape in conflict will often be pregnant from the rape with little or no access to choices or services on how to deal with this. There are of course severe risks of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV aids. Many of the women will be subjected to horrific injuries and mutilations. In many cases they

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will have severe long-term internal vaginal and anal injuries. These are often life-threatening but can also result in problems in childbirth and fertility for the future and can often result in severe tearing and laceration that can cause hemorrhaging, fistula and severe infections. Women who bear such disabling illnesses and injuries or who have been victims of rape, particularly in the context of the DRC, are 'ruined'. They will be rejected and ostracised by their husband, family and community. This will mean that in societies where few women have been given access to education or to the labour market and where a woman's status and access to income is dependent on her role as a wife and mother then she will also be unmarriageable, undesirable and destitute having to turn to anything at all as a survival strategy.

War crimes have been committed by all those involved in fighting in the DRC. The UN has also clearly identified that if you do not prosecute and provide redress for war crimes such as rape and other human rights violations committed in a conflict then the conflict will be reignited, prolonged and deepened (UN resolution 1820). Amnesty is calling for better implementation of both Resolution 1325 involving women in post conflict decision making and Resolution 1820 challenging impunity for war crimes notably rape in conflict.

Amnesty International welcomes this brave play as an illustration of many of the horrors of the conflict in DRC and conflicts around the world. We hope you will join us in our struggle for human rights.

CONFLICT MINERALS IN THE DRC

Sexual violence in Congo is often fuelled by militias and armies warring over "conflict minerals," the ores that produce tin, tungsten, and tantalum – the '3 Ts' – as well as gold.

Armed groups from Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda finance themselves through the illicit conflict mineral trade and fight over control of mines and taxation points inside Congo. The story does not end there. Internal and international business interests move these conflict minerals from Central Africa around the world to countries in East Asia, where they are processed into valuable metals, and then onward into a wide range of electronics products. Consumers in the United States, Europe, and Asia are the ultimate end-users of these conflict minerals, as we inadvertently fuel the war through our purchases of these electronics products. This trail has been well documented by the United Nations and others.

The principal conflict minerals are:

TIN (produced from cassiterite)

Used inside your mobile phone and all electronic products as a solder on circuit boards. The biggest use of tin worldwide is in electronic products. Congolese armed groups earn approximately \$85 million per year from trade in tin.

TANTALUM (produced from coltan)

Used to store electricity in capacitors in iPods, digital cameras, and mobile phones. 65 to 80 percent of the world's tantalum is used in electronic products. Congolese armed groups earn an estimated \$8 million per year from trading in tantalum.

TUNGSTEN (produced from wolframite)

Used to make your mobile phone or Blackberry vibrate. Tungsten is a growing source of income for armed groups in Congo, with armed groups currently earning approximately \$2 million annually.

GOLD

Used in jewellery and as a component in electronics. Extremely valuable and easy to smuggle, Congolese armed groups are earning between \$44 million to \$88 million per year from gold.

ITURI CONFLICT

***Ruined* is set in the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This page outlines the specific conflict that has plagued the North Eastern part of the country.**

The official dates of the conflict are 1999-2003, however there was 'low-level' violence, requiring an EU peace keeping force until 2008. The conflict in the North Eastern Region is between the agriculturist Lendu tribe and the pastoralist Hema tribe. The Nationalist and Inegrationalist Front (FNI) represent the Lendu and the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) fight for the Hema. Increased violence as a result of 'borrowing' ethnic ideology from the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. Human Rights Watch reported that the Lendu began thinking of themselves as kin to the Hutu, whilst the Hema began to identify themselves with the Tutsi.

Background: The Belgain colonists favoured the Hema, resulting in them being wealthier and better educated than the Lendu. This divergence continued into modern times. However, the two peoples have largely lived together peacefully, practicing extensive intermarriage. Northern Hema people speak Lendu, southern Hema people speak Hema.

Longstanding grievances about land issues erupted on at least 3 previous occasions 1972, 1985, 1996. A lot of the animosity revolves around the 1973 'land use law', which allows people to buy land which they do not inhabit and then force residents to leave two years later when ownership can no longer be legally contested. Some Hema were allegedly using this tactic in 1999. The 1994 Rwandan genocide made people even more aware of their tribal and linguistic affiliation. Influx of Hutu refugees into the region, which led to the 1st Congo war served as further emphasis. However, when the 2nd Congo War began in 1998, the situation between the Hema and Lendu tribes reached the level of regional conflict. The area was occupied by the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) and the Ugandan backed Kinsangani faction of the rebel Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD-K) under the leadership of Ernest Wamba dia Wamba.

The Ituri province was created out of the eastern Orientale province in June 1999 by James Kazini, commander of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF). He ignored the protests of the Rcd-K leadership and appointed a Hema to be the new governor. This convinced the Lendu that Uganda and the RCD-K backed the Hema over them and violence erupted between the 2 groups. Reports indicate that Lendu trainees refused to join the RCD-K and instead set up ethnically-based militias. Fighting began to slow in late 1999 when the RCD-K named a neutral replacement to head the provincial government. However in 2001, it flared up again after the UPDF replaced the government with a Hema appointee. The RCD-K appointee was moved to Kampala and held by the Ugandan government without explanation. Wamba dia Wamba's (RCD-K) military base collapsed shortly after as it was now without Ugandan support, largely because it was perceived to have a pro Lendu stance.

Although the official conflict ended in 2003, the low level conflict that continued has killed tens of thousands more people. The continued Ituri conflict has been blamed both on the lack of any real authority in the region, which has become a patchwork of areas claimed by armed militia, and the competition among various armed groups for the control of natural resources in the area. 50% of militia members are under 18 and some are as young as 8.

What critics are saying about *RUINED*

"Passionate, courageous and acutely argued, "Ruined" is a remarkable theatrical accomplishment."
-Chicago Tribune

"Intense and gripping... the kind of new play we desperately need." -Time Out New York

Photography

Please find high resolution, downloadable images for RUINED at:
<http://www.nightwoodtheatre.net/index.php/media/category/2010-2011>

Media for RUINED

THE TORONTO STAR

<http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/theatre/article/919850--african-genocide-haunts-our-stages>

THE TORONTO STAR

<http://www.thestar.com/living/article/920178--zekas-silk-mini-dress-rocks-ruined-co-stars>

NOW Magazine

<http://www.nowtoronto.com/stage/story.cfm?content=178771>

eye weekly

<http://www.eyeweekly.com/print/article/109752>

afrotoronto.com

http://www.afrotoronto.com/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=392&Itemid=162