truth and reconciliation
by debbie tucker green
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION received its world premiere at the Royal Court Theatre in London, England, on September 1, 2011. It was directed by debbie tucker green; the set design was by Lisa Marie Hall; the lighting design was by Mart Haskins; and the sound design was by Gareth Fry. The cast was as follows:

SOUTH AFRICAN MAMA .......................... Pamela Nomvete
SOUTH AFRICAN NANA .......................... Cecilia Noble
SOUTH AFRICAN SON ............................ Fiston Barek
SOUTH AFRICAN DAUGHTER ....................... Vanessa Babirye
SOUTH AFRICAN SISTER .......................... Susan Wokoma
SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICER ......................... Chris Reilly
RWANDAN WIDOW (TUTSI) ....................... Wunmi Mosaku
RWANDAN BROTHER (TUTSI) ...................... Ashley Zhangazha
RWANDAN GRANDDAD (TUTSI) ..................... Louis Mahony
RWANDAN MAN (TUTSI) ............................ Ivano Jeremiah
RWANDAN HUSBAND, MOSES (TUTSI, DEAD) .................. Richie Campbell
SERBIAN MAN 1 ................................. Aliash Tepina
SERBIAN MAN 2 ................................. Aleksander Mikic
BOSNIAN WOMAN ................................. Izabella Urbanowicz
BOSNIAN WOMAN’S FRIEND (FEMALE) ............. Wanda Opalinska
ZIMBABWEAN WIFE .............................. Petra Letang
ZIMBABWEAN HUSBAND .......................... Don Gilét
ZIMBABWEAN WOMAN ............................ Sarah Niles
NORTHERN IRISH WOMAN ....................... Clare Cathcart
NORTHERN IRISH WOMAN A ..................... Joyce Greenaway
NORTHERN IRISH MAN A ......................... Colm Gormley
NORTHERN IRISH MAN B ......................... Ruairi Conaghan
CHARACTERS

SOUTH AFRICA

MAMA
NANA
SON, 15
DAUGHTER, 16
SISTER, 14, dead
OFFICER, white

RWANDA

WIDOW, Stella, Tutsi
BROTHER, older than Widow, Tutsi
GRANDDAD, Tutsi
MAN, Hutu, has a visible scar
HUSBAND, Moses, Tutsi, dead

BOSNIA

SERBIAN MAN 1, ex-soldier
SERBIAN MAN 2, ex-soldier
BOSNIAN WOMAN
BOSNIAN WOMAN’S FRIEND, female
ZIMBABWE

WIFE
HUSBAND
WOMAN

NORTHERN IRELAND

WOMAN
WOMAN A
MAN A, Shane
MAN B

The South African family and Zimbabwean characters are Black. Bosnian, Serb, South African Officer and Irish characters are white.

Places and dates should be shown.

“/” marks where dialogue starts to overlap.

Names appearing without dialogue indicate an active silence between those characters.

Words in (brackets) are intention only and not to be spoken.
truth and reconciliation

SOUTH AFRICA 1998

Three wooden chairs face one solitary wooden chair.

Nana, Mama, Son and Daughter watch the empty seats.

Nana is not impressed.

NANA. ... Not even a cushion.

Nana slowly sits in one of the three.

The kids take the other two seats. The chair opposite remains empty.

Not even a soft to soften the seat.

Not a little something to ease my sitting – leave a seat for your mama –

Daughter stands. Mama doesn't move.

let her come and sit and share the harshness of the – (To Mama.) not even a cushion –

Son stands – looks at his sister.

SON. Mama you can sit / here.

DAUGHTER. She can sit here –

SON. Mama?

Mama stays standing.

NANA. She needs only one seat so one of you stop standing and sit down.

SON. Mama?
NANA. I do not need –
SON. Mama – here – you can sit / here.

*Daughter re-sits.*

NANA. I do not need to sit here on these harsh seats alone.
DAUGHTER. What if it’s a she?

... What if it’s a / she?
SON. It won’t be a / she.
NANA. She needs to sit –
DAUGHTER. it might / be a –
SON. It won’t be a / she.
NANA. She needs to sit down by me – standing will stand for nothing.

DAUGHTER. *(To Son.)* You don’t know if / it’s –
SON. Their women aren’t on the front line –
NANA. standing is not a statement.
DAUGHTER. Theirs might / be.
SON. They don’t let their women on their front / line.
NANA. Tell your mama to sit.

*Daughter gets up again. Mama doesn’t move.*
DAUGHTER. Mama. *(You can) sit here
NANA. by me
DAUGHTER. by Nana …

Here.

*Son re-sits.*

NANA. A mama next to a mama – a mama next to her mama.
SON. What women of theirs do you know that stand and fight?
DAUGHTER. You don’t know about their / women.
SON. Know that their women don’t work
DAUGHTER. you / don’t know –
SON. know that their women don't have to work, that their women live leisurely, know that their women don't do anything they don't have to – know that their women don't fight. That their women don't have to fight. That their women wait for their men to return and give them kisses and hot tea when they are back and ask about their day but don't ask about their day.

DAUGHTER.

SON.

SON. I don't want to talk about their women.

Their women aren't like our women. I don't want to know about them.

NANA. Tell her let us sit together as mamas.

SON. Mama?

Daughter doesn't know whether to stay standing or sit, looks between Nana and Mama, Daughter sits.

DAUGHTER. If it is a woman –

SON. it will be a man.

DAUGHTER. But if it is a woman –

SON. it won't be a / woman.

NANA. As the nana –

DAUGHTER. if it's a / woman –

NANA. as her nana

SON. if it is a woman that would be worse.

NANA. As the mama – as her mama …

DAUGHTER. Mama?

NANA. As your mama we should sit. Side by side. In … solidarity.

Or something. This hard chair –

DAUGHTER. could it / be a woman?

NANA. on this hard chair –

DAUGHTER. could it be a / woman?

NANA. in this hard place. In this hard place they want to tell me
about my granddaughter? Eh? Tell your mama to sit down –
DAUGHTER. Mama –
NANA. give her room …

Daughter stands.

Give her room so she can sit down on this hard chair … by me.
Mama doesn’t move.

RWANDA 2005

Brother at the end of a cigarette smokes. All are standing.

WIDOW. You smoke like you are nervous –
BROTHER. I’m not nervous.

Beat.

WIDOW. You smoke like you / are (nervous.).
BROTHER. I am not nervous
WIDOW. like you are afraid
GRANDDAD. he is not nervous
BROTHER. I have nothing to be afraid of.

Beat.

WIDOW. I would have come on my own –
BROTHER. you can’t drive
GRANDDAD. she can’t drive.
WIDOW. I could have come on my own –
GRANDDAD. you couldn’t
BROTHER. I wouldn’t let you.
WIDOW. You wouldn’t “let” me.
GRANDDAD.  I wouldn’t let you. I wouldn’t let him let you.

BROTHER. … I wouldn’t want you here on your own.

WIDOW.

GRANDDAD. We wanted to come.

BROTHER.

GRANDDAD.

_Brother draws on his cigarette. Widow sees._

WIDOW. I could have come on / my own.

GRANDDAD. I wanted to come – you would deny me coming?

  He wanted to come whatever he says and however hard he
  smokes he wanted to be here.

_Brother has started another cigarette._

WIDOW. You wanted to / come?

_He smokes._

GRANDDAD. He wanted to come.

  He wanted to drive.
  He wanted to drive you.

WIDOW. … You smoke like you are nervous.

BROTHER. You can’t drive.

WIDOW. I needed to / come.

BROTHER. You can’t drive.

GRANDDAD. You are smoking like you are afraid.

BROTHER. I am not afraid.

  There is nothing to be afraid of.
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11M, 11W

“I will not stay standing to have you accuse me. And I will not sit there and be accused.”

From Rwanda to Northern Ireland, Zimbabwe to Bosnia, answers are demanded, reconciliation hard to hear and the truth reluctant to be told.

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Also by debbie tucker green
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