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THEATRE

Walking tall

Street theatre that will have you looking skyward

ANNETTE BAYNE

EVERY year during the National Arts Festival held in Grahamstown there are shows that, through great reviews and word-of-mouth, become hits, the have-to-sees. Tickets are almost always sold out, with the small theatres packed to the hilt.

Richard Antrobus' *Stilted* directed by Andrew Buckland was one such performance last year (and likely to be so again this year).

It's success can be attributed to the theatrical concept, Antrobus's performance and the physicality of the show; but what you probably most remember is Antrobus's skill on a pair of two-and-half metre stilts (pictured).

There is something quite captivating about a performer on stilts, there is the visual humour – a man whose legs appear pulled and stretched to ridiculous proportions and there is the element of danger, especially when the actor is performing a physically daring feat.

But for Antrobus, in 2009, stilt-walking became more than a way of entertaining, it became a way of making a difference to five unemployed performers from the Grahamstown township community.

Using a small funding grant from the National Arts Festival, Antrobus

Snip

The Phezulu Stiltwalkers are one of the many arts development initiatives at the National Arts Festival. The Festival's *Hands On! Masks Off! Programme* sponsored by Business And Arts South Africa and the National Arts Council will once again present a series of workshops aimed at strengthening the entrepreneurial capacity of the arts community.

set about training Melekile Nthemba, Bongani Hani, Sibongile Hani, Monwabisi Dondashe and Athenkosi Nykilana to become stiltwalkers.

The men already had some drama training, all coming from Applied Theatre expert Alex Sutherland's Art of the Street Project so, according to Antrobus, it was a just a matter of teaching them to walk on stilts.

"They learnt fairly quickly and they could soon walk unaided, go up and down stairs, getting better and better all the time. They were also trained in gumboot dancing, so we started incorporating the gumboot rhythms into their routine."

Following their training, Antrobus and The Phezulu Stiltwalkers got their chance to walk tall at last year's festival, becoming the Eastern Cape's only stiltwalking company.

Since then, Phezulu Stiltwalkers have managed to secure paying performances through the year.

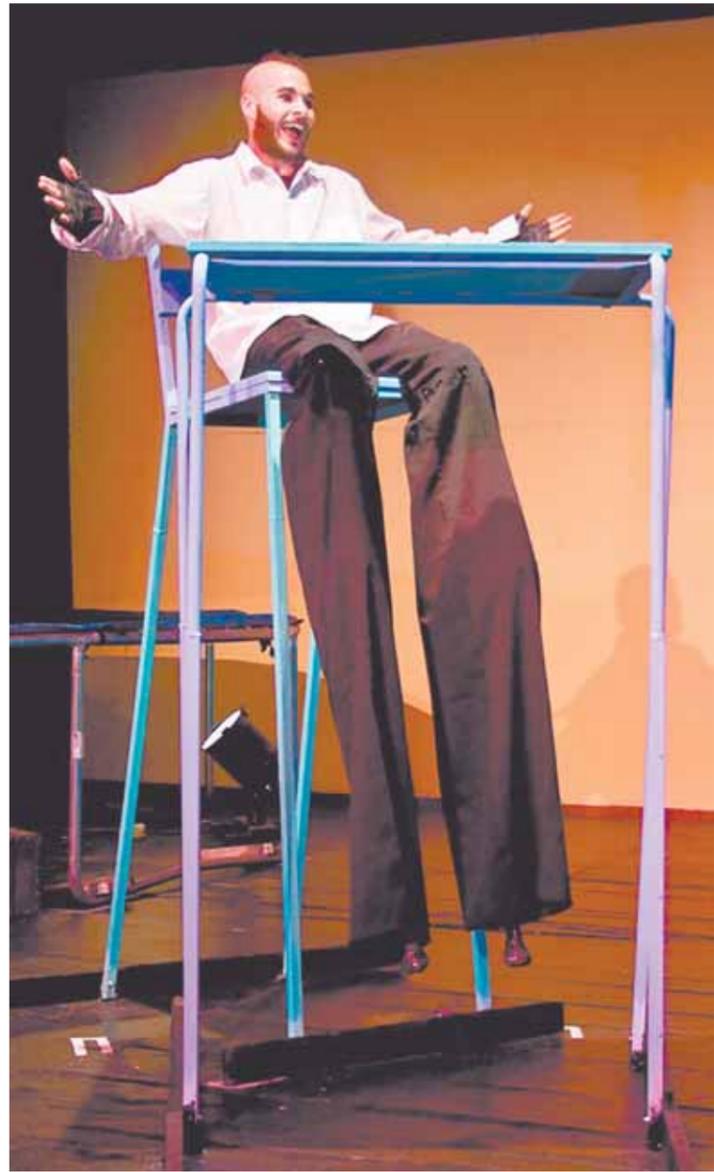
Although it is still not a regular income at this point, the project has given the men a skill and identity that, in time, Antrobus hopes they will become quite an iconic feature of the festival.

And they already have a foot firmly in the door being recently recruited by the Festival organisers to promote the 15 Days Of Amazing at the National Arts Festival.

That meant a two-week tour around SA visiting shopping malls and public spaces, educating, entertaining and learning to manoeuvre a pair of stilts down an escalator.

Once again, they will be a presence at this year's National Arts Festival (June 20 to July 4), with much more confidence and a growing repertoire.

"They will be there street performing, creating a buzz and becoming part of the growing street theatre at the festival," says Antrobus.



TIMEOUT

DAILY BRIDGE CLUB

FRANK STEWART

What's the Question?

One thing I've learned in 40 years of bridge: Nobody has a golden key to success. Anyway, sometimes it's better to know some of the questions than most of the answers.

At 3NT South won the third heart (West appeared to have held five), and dummy threw a spade. South next tried the club finesse. If it won, he would be sure of nine tricks.

East took the king and led a spade, and South wondered whether to finesse with the queen for his ninth trick or take the ace and rely on a 3-3 diamond break. If South put up the ace, he could succeed by leading toward the queen later if East held K 9 8 5 4, K 9 4, 10 6, K 5 4, but finally South finessed. Down two.

FINESSE

South makes 3NT if he asks himself this question: What if the club finesse loses and East leads a spade?

South gets an answer if he first cashes the queen, ace and king of diamonds. When diamonds break 3-3, South is safe even when the club finesse loses. If diamonds broke 4-2, South would know he needed the spade finesse.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ A Q 2 ♥ A 10 3 ♦ A K 4 ♣ Q 10 8 6. The dealer, at your right, opens three hearts. You

double, and your partner bids three spades. What do you say?

ANSWER: Your opponent's pre-empt has been a nuisance. It has cut away your bidding space and forces you to guess. You may not make it, but bid 3NT. To avoid missing an easy game, you must assume your partner has a few values. If he has a shapely hand, he can insist on a suit contract.

South dealer
Both sides vulnerable

NORTH
♠ 10 7 3
♥ 7 5
♦ Q 5 3 2
♣ A J 9 3

WEST
♠ K 6
♥ Q J 8 6 2
♦ J 9 7
♣ 7 5 2

EAST
♠ J 9 8 5 4
♥ K 9 4
♦ 10 8 6
♣ K 4

SOUTH
♠ A Q 2
♥ A 10 3
♦ A K 4
♣ Q 10 8 6

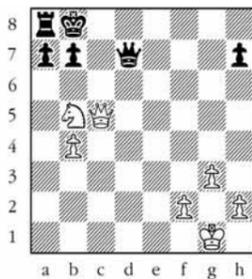
South 1 ♣ Pass 2 ♣ Pass
3 NT All Pass

Opening lead – ♥ 6

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CHESS QUIZ

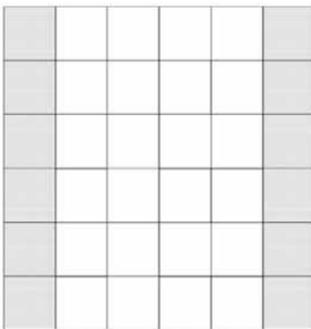
SHELBY LYMAN



WHITE TO PLAY
Hint: Force checkmate.

Solution: 1. Qf8ch Qc8 2. Qd6ch (or 2. Qf4ch) Qc7 3. Qxc7 mate [from Kramnik-Carlson '09].

WORD MAGIC



Unscramble the six anagrams and enter the answer in the grid according to its number. When completed the letters in the shaded squares reading down, will form the names of two parts of a ship.

- STEP 1: GEN LOB
- STEP 2: ART NIE
- STEP 3: SIT LIN
- STEP 4: SAM LED
- STEP 5: TAG EOE
- STEP 6: YEN GRE

WEEKLY STARS

Aries (Mar 20 - Apr 1)

Superficial relationships are unlikely to interest you and ulterior motives coincide with emotional disappointment. Trusting your commitments is the first step toward dissolving barriers.

Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20)

Other people play a central role in your life and you change many of your ideas, as your career takes a quantum leap forward. Dramatic events sum up your love life in a few weeks time. Until then, introspective analysis and toning your system prepares you for an upbeat romantic period.

Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20)

Your feeling side continues to develop and you begin to see why certain relationships work better than others. As life becomes richer and more rewarding, leisure activities, childcare or music and other art forms may hold a special allure.

Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22)

A bond between your inner purpose and the opportunities in the outside world reflect your true calling. Find your way by staying in touch with your own deepest levels. Cultivating an attitude of gratitude helps, too.

Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22)

Discussions with neighbours or close relatives enable you to iron out problems you encounter in routine activities. Your concerns about money will come to an end as your cash flow improves.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22)

Exciting news about money puts you in a spending mood. Keep your body in shape. A busy schedule may take its toll on your health. Information that has been kept under wraps may be revealed to you.

Libra (Sep 23 - Oct 22)

You are ready to try out new ideas and move in more profitable directions, but

watch for deception. The demanding work and personal stress of the last few years are over. Intriguing developments in your love life will result in unexpected and memorable experiences.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

You may become more alert, competitive and conscious of how you come across to others. Yet, you crave privacy mostly, especially if future commitments need preparation.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

This is a good time to get out there and make a noise if you need to put a message across. Involvement in community or club affairs promises untold benefits. You may receive a token of appreciation or an unexpected reward if past career efforts were good.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 20)

Love of a place or person inspires passion and social scenarios become more varied. A change for the better is on its way. Luck and chances to get ahead arrive mostly through friends, but keep expectations modest. A cash boost leads to a pleasant shopping experience and fun.

Aquarius (Jan 21 - Feb 18)

Your ideas are likely to capture the imagination of others, although your own ability to change may be called into question. Check official or legal matters to avoid future delays. The urge to broaden your horizons should bring a new romance, worldly success and greater independence.

Pisces (Feb 19 - Mar 19)

Because your desire for intimacy was intense, you might have been attracted to an unsuitable person. You see clearly now, although issues around attachment are highlighted for several months. Adjustments that satisfy the demands of others may be necessary. Be free of worry.