



The beat dropped, followed by “Freedom is coming tomorrow.” With fists of rage in the air, backed up with vocals in unison and tribal dance steps. ... *Sarafina!* was moving. *Sarafina!* was amazing.

During the weekend of Oct. 8, 2010, the NCCU Department of Theatre started its fall season with the Broadway musical *Sarafina!*

Kanye West says “No one man should have all that power,” but I say it applies to this musical.

*Sarafina!* is a South African musical by Mbongeni Ngema, which tells the story of Soweto student fighting apartheid.

In 1992 the musical, was adapted into a film starring Whoopi Goldberg and Zulu South African actress Leleti Khumalo as Sarafina.

“This play takes us into a world of social consciousness and captures a panoramic view of the complexities of human relationship from mankind’s attempt to reach the ultimate concept of world peace to the intrinsic premise of individual self-worth,” said director Stephanie “Asabi”

Howard, assistant professor of theater.

*Sarafina!* takes place at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto in 1976, when 200,000 black students gathered to protest a government ruling that replaced the town’s dialect with Afrikaans as the new medium of instruction in their classes.

Successful through storytelling and singing, *Sarafina!* follows the happenings of fictional classmates and, in particular, a girl named Sarafina who inspires her colleagues with her commitment to the struggle against apartheid.

Apartheid was the system of legal racial segregation enforced by the National Party government in South Africa between 1948 and 1994. Under this system, the rights of the majority nonwhite dwellers of South Africa were severely restricted under minority white rule.

*Sarafina!* was an impressive production. The stage, crafted by members of the Department of Theatre, placed audience members in the middle of the action. A wire fence, used to hold slumped students jailed

during a schoolhouse raid, created chilling scenes.

In-house designers constructed costumes from scratch. The musical also featured a live band consisting of drums, keyboard, bass and horns. Never missing a beat, the band covered “The Sound of Freedom” soundtrack favorites such as “The Lord’s Prayer,” “Sechaba,” and “Thank You Mama.”

In the leading role of Sarafina, Jessica Jones, performance theatre senior, created a convincing Sowetan accent. “The accent was hard; it’s something that took time and practice,” said Jones. “Most of the cast walked around talking with the accent on a daily basis so we could get that practice.”

The performance even put goose bumps on visitors from France. Among our visitors from Paris was Eleonore Coralie, an actress from the performing arts organization Sessions Kwandies.

“The energy... it never stops!” said Coralie. “So much singing and dancing and acting ... it never stops!”

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*Annie*, set in the 1930s, made its Broadway debut in 1977 and is the story of a girl named Annie who lives in a miserable orphanage run by a tyrannical owner, Miss Hannigan, and her no-good brother Rooster. In the play, little orphan Annie is chosen to spend time with a wealthy man named Oliver Warbucks. During Annie’s stay, Warbucks comes up with a plan for Annie to find her real parents.

NCCU and ANFO Productions, a nonprofit children’s performance company, presented the musical play Dec. 3-5 at the University Theater.

