

KICKSTART THEATRE JACK AND THE BEANSTALK CAPE TOWN, 2025

BIOGRAPHIES

CREATIVE TEAM

STEVEN STEAD - WRITER AND DIRECTOR

Steven Stead, an actor and director with a rich background in drama, is ever-committed to propelling KickstArt's artistic journey forward. Steven's leadership alongside Greg King has seen KickstArt evolve into a well respected South African institution.

Steven holds a Drama Hons degree from UKZN, and initially pursued an acting career, appearing in dozens of plays and musicals, winning awards for acting, in Shakespeare (Hamlet and The Tempest) and comedy (The Mystery of Irma Vep). However, he has spent the greater part of the last twelve years directing.

For eight years he was senior staff director at the English National Opera and directed many operas in London and elsewhere in Europe, before coming back to Durban to work with Greg King and develop KickstArt. Together they have revived the tradition of pantomime in the city, and have created some memorable drama productions: The Play That Goes Wrong, The Ladykillers, Twitch, Venus in Fur, Red, The God of Carnage, Duet for One, Wit, Noises Off, Laughing Wild, Shirley Valentine, Dangerous Liaisons, Boston Marriage, Oleanna, Dracula, Popcorn, Don't Dress for Dinner and The Road to Mecca. In 2007 they produced a musical for the first time, The Wizard of Oz, which won the Durban Mercury Theatre Award for Best Musical, followed by Little Shop of Horrors in 2009, which also won Best Musical, an original musical, Peter Pan which played to capacity audiences in Dec 2009 and also won Best Musical 2010, I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change (which Steven also appeared in), Cabaret in 2011 which won Best Musical for the company and Best Director for Stead, and has toured nationally. He directed the sumptuous KickstArt production of Disney's Beauty and the Beast, which played to capacity houses in 2012. He won the Naledi Theatre Award for Best Director of a Musical for Sweeney Todd in 2016, and was nominated for the same award for Into the Woods in 2019.

Other directing credits include Alcina (Oviedo and Bilbao, Spain) My Fair Lady and Bravo! (Playhouse Company), Rigoletto and La Traviata (Opera Africa), and Valley Song, I Capuleti e i Montecchi, and Così fan tutte (Cape Town Opera).

GREG KING - DESIGNER

Greg King is a Durban-based theatre designer, and founder of Kickstart Theatre Company, which he runs with his husband and creative partner, Steven Stead. Based in KZN, Kickstart has been producing plays, musicals and pantomimes for 25 years. In association with Pieter Toerien Productions, and other producers; Daphne Kuhn at Theatre on the Square, and The Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City, they have produced, designed and directed plays and musicals such as Red, Venus in Fur, Cabaret, Shrek the Musical, Sweeney Todd and Into the Woods, among many others. Most recently Kickstart produced, (and designed and directed) the South African premiere of Stephen Sondheim's Company.

Greg has also designed sets for many other South African production companies; Paul Slabolepszy's plays, Suddenly the Storm (for The Market Theatre) and Fordsburg's Finest (for PTP), both of which won him Fleur du Cap awards for best Set Design. The Beauty Queen of

Leenane for How Now Brown Cow, Neil Coppen and Mpume Mthombeni's Isidlamlilo, for Empatheatre, The Tales of Hoffmann for OperaUCT and A Doll's House part 2 for The Quickening Theatre Company.

Earlier this year, Greg won his third Fleur du Cap award for his design of PTP and Cape Town Opera's celebrated production of My Fair Lady.

NAOLINE QUINZIN - CHOREOGRAPHER

Naoline Quinzin loves correcting people about the spelling and pronunciation of her name. This tyrannical, dictatorial impulse within her is the reason she takes so well to being a choreographer.

She has had a life full of performing, dancing and choreographing, but then realised that she actually needed to make a living for herself. So she traded her cow in at the Luitingh Alexander Musical Theatre Academy (LAMTA) and received many magic beans which she has been growing and nurturing ever since (metaphorically) both as a performer and a choreographer.

Choreographic work that Naoline has done includes but is not restricted to: Pieces in LAMTA dance shows (2022-2025), Allianz event (2024), Cab Festival (2024), Spring Awakening (2023-2024), MTW and MTWA (2023-2024), The Tempest (2025), Amy Caspers dance stars (2024-2025), All Girls Festival '25 (2025).

Naoline is quite impartial in her feelings toward beans and stalks but loves the concept of the fictional synthesis between the two, sprouting her enjoyment for this project. She is indeed thrilled to be a part of bringing this timeless classic to Cape Town audiences.

CHIDO PIE - QLAB OPERATOR

Chido Pie is a scenographer from Gaborone, Botswana. She received her Bachelor's degree in Theatre in Performance from the University of Cape Town. Chido is passionate about design and loves experimenting with different visual mediums like photography and film. She has worked on plays including Closer, directed by Klara Robertson.

CAST

WILLIAM YOUNG (JACK)

William Young is a versatile actor and an exciting emerging talent in the South African performing arts scene.

Most recently, he has performed as surfer dude Tom Marzipan in KickstArt's Puss in Boots and Jason Dean (JD) in the South African premiere of Heathers: The Musical at Artscape, directed by Paul Griffiths.

In 2024, William showcased his skills as Anthony Hope in Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (Abrahamse & Meyer Productions/Tally Ho! Productions, dir. Fred Abrahamse) and joined the ensemble of Finding The Light (The FTL Foundation, dir. Paul Robinson), a concert featuring musical theatre stars from NYC's Broadway, London's West End, and South Africa, with the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, hosted by Marc Lottering.

His talent garnered critical acclaim in 2023 when he portrayed Curly in Oklahoma! (Abrahamse & Meyer Productions and Waterfront Theatre School, dir. Fred Abrahamse and Marcel Meyer) at Artscape, earning a nomination for the BroadwayWorld Award for Best Performer in a Musical. He also delighted Durban audiences as Jack in Jack and the Beanstalk (KickstArt Productions, dir. Steven Stead, 2022-2023), a full-circle moment for him after growing up on KickstArt's pantos. Other notable roles include Pippin in Pippin and Callum in Our House (both at the Waterfront Theatre School). He was also part of the renowned Kearsney College choir during his five years at the college.

Trained in Drama & Musical Theatre at the prestigious Waterfront Theatre School from 2021 to 2024, William has developed a skill set that allows him to transition seamlessly between dramatic and musical performances. He is proficient in various dance styles and also plays piano and violin.

While theatre has been his primary focus, William is excited to expand his career into film and television. He has recently wrapped filming his first screen role in 'The Ransom of Mackenzie Brown', an indie short film where he played Eddie Bayles. William is eager to bring his stage experience to the screen and tackle diverse roles in these mediums.

When not performing, William enjoys being active and outdoors, often found at the gym or the beach. He is thrilled to be back in KickstArt's Pantoland, where his passion for theatre first started, and so excited for Cape Town audiences to experience the magic.

ROSHANDA LEWIS (PRINCESS JILL)

Roshanda Lewis is A Cape Town born but Durban-based actress and singer who studied at AFDA College Durban as a Music Performance student.

She is one of the lead vocalist for an oval band call InDeep and has played Villager 2 in the South African premiere of The Emperors New Clothes, Kathy in the South African premiere of Company, the role of Cinderella in KickstArt's magical pantomime Cinderella in 2018; Amy in Call me a Fool written by Leah Marie for 2022 CAB fest; played a small role in a short film called Mistakes written and directed by Keamogetswe Mpete; Princess Jill in Jack and the Beanstalk (KickstArt 2022) and does solo gigs at local markets.

Her love for performing started since she was old enough to talk and she fell in love with musical theatre as it has the means to express one's self and communicate through song. Her aim is to do the same with her music to aid in bringing about social change.

BLESSING XABA (DAME FLORA FLATBROKE)

Blessing Xaba is a South African actor, director, journalist and media personality.

By 16 they'd begun working on the successful novel-turned film trilogy, Spud, playing the loveable glutton, Sidney 'Fatty' Scott. They have since taken to smaller screens, starring in Mzansi Magic's The Road (2016).

Returning to Durban's theatre circuit, where they were trained in musical theatre, Blessing has delighted patrons as the effervescent Dame in five successive Pantomimes all with the award winning company Kickstart Theatre Productions.

Most Recent they have joined Think Theatre, touring two full Shakespeare works - Hamlet and Othello, to matric students all around South Africa, wrapping up in Joburg just two weeks ago.

Blessing has also held recent positions as the creative host for, university based organisation, Art For Humanity, as well as manning the newsdesk at Durban Youth Radio.

Today Blessing is an activist and ARTivist with keen interests in the areas of African Art, Queer Rights, Gender and Sex Liberty as well as Decoloniality.

BRYAN HILES (CECIL)

Bryan is one of Durban's most versatile actors and has stretched his skills in a variety of styles since his introduction into theatre in 1996 with the Story Spinning Theatre (Cape Town).

He studied drama at Technikon Natal (now DUT); and paid his way, while studying, through clowning, face painting, juggling and balloon sculpting. He moved to Johannesburg briefly after his studies, worked in educational theatre (AREPP), musical review (Comic Strip) and television

(What's Bothering Marc Lottering); and then returned to Durban where he has remained. In the years since his return, he has garnered many awards for his work on stage.

Bryan has performed in every KickstArt pantomime since their inception, winning awards for his roles in Jack and the Beanstalk, Cinderella and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Other awards include Little Shop of Horrors (Lead Actor 2008 - Seymour), Peter Pan (Lead Actor 2009 - Peter Pan), Beauty and the Beast (Supporting Actor 2012 - Lumiere) and Sweeney Todd (Supporting Actor 2014 - Tobias).

Other Musical credits include The Wizard of Oz, Into The Woods (KickstArt), Chicago (KickstArt) and Cabaret (KickstArt and Pieter Toerien Productions), for which he received a Naledi Award nomination.

He received an award for Best Solo Performance in 2014 for his one-man show Jakob, which has toured to many centres around the country.

Bryan has also been involved with many of ThinkTheatre's Shakespearean productions, building the set for Hamlet and Othello; performing Rodrigo in Othello and Hamlet in Hamlet. He has also played Cassio in Othello, Horatio in Hamlet and Macbeth in Macbeth for The Actors Co-Operative.

Bryan has a particular interest in Children's Theatre and (for ThinkTheatre) has performed in Marvellous Mixtures (based on Roald Dahl's George's Marvellous Medicine) and Grandpa Grump and the Magical Junkshop; and created shadow puppetry for the highly acclaimed Tin Bucket Drum and Animal Farm. He recently played the lead in KickstArt's The BFG, and, last year, played James in James And The Giant Peach; both based on Roald Dahl's wonderful stories of the same name.

Along with Peter Court (Creative Madness), Bryan created the "visual poem" A Mariner's Tale; which won Best Director, Best Performance and Best Children's Production in 2010. Bryan also works as a voice artist, having voiced many advertisements on East Coast Radio, several on-hold messages for Success On Hold, Teletrack horse racing, safety videos, vocal dubbing for Telemundo, and many more.

BRENT PALMER (CLAUDE)

Brent Palmer is a multiple award-winning actor, playwright, and producer. In 2024 he won the Fleur Du Cap award for Best Actor in a leading role for his role as George Megalos in King George. In 2025, alongside the cast of Metamorphoses, he won the Best Ensemble Fleur Du Cap award. All five of his plays have been nominated for Fleur Du Cap theatre awards. This year he has been nominated for a Naledi award in the Best Leading Actor category. In 2015 he received the SAFTA award for Best Short Film, Picture Perfect Heist.

Palmer has performed in several plays at the Fugard Theatre, Artscape, The Baxter and beyond, including Bench, The Father, A Steady Rain, The Kingmakers, Macbeth, The Room, Dinner with the 42's, King George, Metamorphoses, The Dumb Waiter, The Tempest, Hamlet, and Othello.

Later this year, Brent will perform the role of Ben in Harold Pinter's The Dumb Waiter at The Sandton Theatre on the Square. He has recently returned from Venezuela and Russia where he played Claudius and Polonius in Janni Younge's puppetry production of Hamlet. Later this year will feature in Lara Foot's production of Othello in Abu Dhabi.

In collaboration with Ari Kruger and Sketchbook Studios, Palmer wrote and produced a short film titled King George, officially selected for the Durban International Film Festival (DIFF) He has been featured on many television shows like Tali's Wedding (Showmax), Those Who Can't (SABC 3), Our Girl (BBC) amongst many more. Brent's last film role was in The Shakedown (Amazon).

LIESL COPPIN (LADY BEASTLY)

Liesl is an award winning Durban actress, singer and voice over artist. She has won a handful of Durban Theatre Awards for Best Actress, Best Performer in a musical revue as well as Best Supporting Actress in a Musical. She was recently nominated for Performer of the Decade alongside the likes of John Kani and Andrew Buckland for the Broadway World awards in SA at the end of 2020.

Liesl has had over 30 years in Theatre, Corporate and Industrial Theatre and is a well known voice over artist for Radio and Television. Her theatre credits involve being a member of NAPACs Loft Schools Theatre Company, here she travelled the country performing various theatre productions.

She spent two years touring Richard Loring's production of "Girl Talk" to Jhb, Cape Town, Malaysia, Singapore and Pretoria. She has worked extensively for The Natal Playhouse in productions including "Oliver!", "Othello", "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "The Ballet" and more recently as Baroness Von Schneider in The Natal Playhouse production of "The Sound of Music". She has performed in numerous Barynyard shows around the country as well as opening Neil Coppins play "Abnormal Loads" at the Market Theatre in JHB.

In Durban, Liesl has been seen in many KickstArt Productions, including "The Memory of Water", "Crimes of the Heart", "Noises Off!", "Cabaret", "Beauty and the Beast", "Winnie the Pooh", "Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood", "Jack and the Beanstalk", "Into the Woods", "Chicago", "The Play That Goes Wrong", "Alice in Wonderland" where she played the role of the Queen of Hearts at The Sneddon Theatre. Liesl revived her role of the villain Lady Beastly for Kickstarts 2022 Panto ' "Jack and the Beanstalk".

During the months of Covid she was fortunate to perform in Kickstarts production of "Sylvia" with long time friends and colleagues Greg King, and Peter Court directing the comedy drama at The Seabrooke's Theatre as well as Hilton College.

Liesl directed the successful production of "Grease" at DHS last year and is about to embark on their upcoming musical. She has appeared in many musical revues at The Heritage Theatre including "Burlesque", "Glitter Girls", "Shaken not Stirred", "How to catch a Cougar" and "Bookclub".

Liesl is a member of the award winning trio "The Glitter Girls" alongside Lisa Bobbert and Marion Loudon.

Her theatrical highlights include sharing a stage with Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Nina Simone among others for Nelson Mandela's 80th birthday as well as sharing a stage with her daughter Leah when they both appeared in "The Sound of Music" together in the production staged at The Playhouse.

LYLE BUXTON (BLUNDERBORE)

Lyle is an award-winning actor and singer whose first musical theatre role was in Guys Dolls in 2007.

His first role with KickstArt Theatre Productions was in Peter Pan in 2009. He has also featured in many musical revues including Let's Hear it for the Boys, Twist and Shout, Juliet & the Romeos, How to Catch a Cougar, Shaken Not Stirred, and Country Roads. Since then he has performed in many more KickstArt productions including Robin Hood, Snow White, Cabaret, Beauty and the Beast (as Gaston), The Ladykillers, Jack and the Beanstalk, Annie, Sweeney Todd, Shrek The Musical (as Shrek), Puss in Boots, Into the Woods, Sleeping Beauty, James and the Giant Peach, Sinbad the Sailor, Camelot (as Lancelot), The BFG, Cinderella, Charlotte's Web, Winnie the Pooh Alice in Wonderland (as The Mad Hatter), Company, and The Emperor's New Clothes.

He has won Durban Theatre Awards for Best Supporting Actor for The Ladykillers, and Best Actor in a Musical for Shrek The Musical.

SAMANTHA LANDERS (GLISSANDA)

Samantha Landers is a vocal coach and performer living in Cape Town, South Africa. An industry professional for the past fourteen years, she has coached singers of all ages, from amateur to professional level, working across all commercial contemporary styles. She is a respected vocalist in her own right, performing in theatre shows, corporate events, and extravaganzas across the country. Samantha formed part of the female country singing sensation, MitzyGeorge, with two hit singles Tearing The Man Outta You and I Am Home. She has just released her debut single Dreamers - available everywhere. Samantha is resident vocal coach for South Africa's number one talent programme as well as consultant to Sing It Vocal Studio in Calgary. She is an MC, producer, public speaker and Production Manager for Cape Town's hit monthly event, Musical Mondays. She runs her private studio Luminous, is a contributor to the acclaimed WR Vocal Syllabus and she is currently based at the esteemed Waterfront Theatre School.

CARL OOSTHUIZEN (BUTTERCUP/SPIDER)

Carl Oosthuizen grew up watching the KickstArt pantomimes, and trained from a young age as an actor, singer, dancer and theatre technician. He made his professional debut in Jack and the Beanstalk (2022) for KickstArt Productions, and has since performed in Cinderella (2024) for Cape Town Opera in association with Abrahamse and Meyer Productions, and Sweeney Todd (2024) for Abrahamse and Meyer Productions in association with Tally Ho! Productions. He is currently studying a Bachelor of Education at STADIO Higher Education. Carl has a passion for the performing arts, and enjoys sharing his love of the stage with audiences.

MILLI MANGATE (DANCER/HEN)

Milli Mangate is a graduate of the Waterfront Theatre School with advanced training in ballet, contemporary, modern, and tap. During college, Milli performed in Oklahoma and took part in various dance showcases and choreography competitions. She also appeared in the operas Cinderella and La Traviata, exploring dance in classical storytelling. Most recently, she completed a tour of My Fair Lady, continuing to grow her passion for musical theatre and live performance.

GABRIELLA KNIGHT (DANCER/HARP)

Gabriella Knight, a proud graduate of the Luitingh Alexander Musical Theatre Academy (LAMTA), was born and raised in Cape Town and is delighted to be joining the fabulous cast of Jack and the Beanstalk. During her time at LAMTA, Gabriella discovered a passion for accents and writing, showcasing her talents in various Academy productions, including Being Steve, Spring Awakening, and Hollywood. Earlier this year, she concluded her professional debut in Pieter Toerien's My Fair Lady, bringing with her the experience of performing in beloved professional productions as a child, such as Annie (2017), The Sound of Music (2014), and Tiger Bay (2017). Alongside numerous corporate engagements, she has also enjoyed performing annually as a featured soloist in the Carols by Candlelight concert at Kirstenbosch. Recently graduated, Gabriella is eagerly immersing herself in the world of theatre whilst also exploring other creative mediums beyond the stage.