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by Tapiwa Zivira

Drama highlights child abuse

A new play highlighting the horror of child trafficking is set to feature at this year's Harare International Festival of Arts scheduled for the first week of May. "When Angels Weep" is presented by the award-winning team that staged *Burn Mukwerekwere Burn* at last year's HIFA.



Developing Artists project *Burn Mukwerekwere Burn*.

The play is an initiative of charity organisation Developing Artists. It brings together local producer Blessing Hungwe and UK-based director Giles Ramsay, actor Michael Kudakwashe, actress Priviledge Mutendera and the musical talents of Patrick Tembo, Brezhnev Guvheya and Rumbidzai Karize.

The charity supports performing arts in sub-Saharan Africa and in Zimbabwe; it will work with Hungwe's Harare-based Ndiripo Kana Muripo (I Am Well If You Are Well) Theatre Collective on a series of grassroots drama productions in Zimbabwe.

"In 2011 Hungwe's play *Burn Mukwerekwere Burn* dealt head on with the unacknowledged issue of black-on-black xenophobia. This year he has lost none of his courage and directly stares down one of Africa's greatest taboos," said Ramsay.

The play exposes the reality of 'lost youth, greed and family betrayal' as Zimbabwe battles the scourge of child abuse through trafficking and child labour.

Playing a central role in the play is 13-year-old Sarita who is sold into sexual bondage by her uncle bringing her childhood to an abrupt end.

Seventeen years later she, and others, are forced to face a past she buried to survive when they return to the village.

After its initial run at the festival, the production is expected to be performed around the country for local communities and schools.