

# NZINGABETH!

OR

## When Ana Met Virginia



NZINGABETH! portrays a fictitious, musical meeting between Elizabeth I of England and the proud African Queen Ana Nzinga. It poses crucial questions on race, gender and politics, but is also designed as a treat for the senses; expect wig-swapping, sumptuous costumes and a dynamic fusion of African and Tudor music.

Elizabeth is an historical figure needing little introduction in this country, but Ana Nzinga is less well known. She was a wily and assertive character who successfully played European colonial powers off against each other, and, much like the 'Mother of Dragons' in TV's Game of Thrones, led an army of freed slaves.

[www.nzingabeth.com](http://www.nzingabeth.com)

## THE TEAM

**Gloria Lawrence**, whose company **Storytree** has taken her into schools across the south-west as a singer and story-teller, is playing Nzinga.

*"As a British-born black woman," says Gloria, "growing up I never knew black history existed! With this play, I can redress the balance. I want to show there are many black role models through history: not only as slaves and victims in chains, but as strong, intelligent leaders."*

**Sasha Herriman** from **The Bluebirds** is producing the show, and also plays Elizabeth I. She devised the idea for NZINGABETH! from an Elizabethan Cabaret show. She explains:

*"I was doing Tudor cabaret when I discovered the story of Nzinga. I instantly knew I wanted to put her and Elizabeth together. I was fascinated by the fact that in both Europe and Africa, women were able to take the reins of power against all odds."*

Sasha has devised a number of workshops for schools as a music teacher and performer. With **The Bluebirds** she has developed school projects with previous shows including Berlin Cabaret and the Arts Council supported Mrs Noah and The Flood.

The director of the production is **Philip Kingslan John**, co-founder of Exeter-based **Four of Swords**, which specialises in multimedia adaptations of classical stories.

*"I was excited by the chance to write and direct something entirely original, and also incredibly relevant to today. NZINGABETH! is all about the kind of conflicts we are feeling in this post-BREXIT time of elevated tensions."*

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TWO DYNAMIC WOMEN, A MIRROR AND A WRINKLE IN TIME.

A fictitious, musical meeting between two royal women in a dressing room where worlds collide.

NZINGABETH! is a provocative, funny and thoughtful new play from Taunton-based arts and education initiatives Storytree and The Bluebirds, and Exeter-based Four of Swords.

[www.nzingabeth.com](http://www.nzingabeth.com)



## SCHOOL WORKSHOPS AND SHOW

In schools and colleges we run a workshop of approximately one hour which can be subdivided. The pre-show workshop covers elements of Music, English and History. There is then a break followed by the show which lasts approximately 40 minutes.

The project introduces children to Queen Ana and Queen Elizabeth by bringing their characters to life. As a piece of drama it *supports* and *broadens* the national curriculum core subjects of History, English and Music as it presents key information about both monarchs. The workshops use poetry and music to develop the subject material with the children.

NZINGABETH! is supported by funding from Arts Council England. It is being performed at a range of venues across the South West. For more information see the website [www.nzingabeth.com](http://www.nzingabeth.com).

For full details of the school workshop and show package please contact Sasha Herriman on 07770 933681  
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### MUSIC

Our team is made up of our Director, two singer-performers (the two Queens) and two additional musicians, one performing African music, one performing English Tudor music. Our workshops will introduce African and Tudor music to the students, teaching them a song from each tradition and then fusing the two songs together. The students will perform the song in the workshop and in the show.

### ENGLISH

We will perform a short battle speech from the show. This is based on Queen Elizabeth's famous battle speech from Tilbury at the time of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Students will be invited to create their own battle speech.

### HISTORY

During the workshops the story will be put in an historical context. Students will be briefly invited to share what they know about the history of the period. We will explain and contextualise where the two Queens were from geographically (England and modern day Angola) and about the difficulties they faced as women ruling at that time. We will help the students discuss the similarities and differences between the two Queens, encouraging them to speak about race and gender in a positive context.

