



*"Tri blong handred plis"*  
*A theatre play created by women living  
 in Port Vila*

Featuring the poetry of Mildred M.L. Sope  
 And the music of Alcina Charlie  
 Dedicated to our families  
 In honour of the  
 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence  
 April 29, 30 and May 1 Club Vanuatu  
 May 6, 7 and 8 Vanuatu Amateur Theatrical Society



This play focuses on the themes of women's empowerment as well as their disempowerment through violence and inequality. It is pertinent that it has come about in 2010 which is the 15th anniversary of Vanuatu's ratification of the international Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW highlights the fact that without an end to discrimination against women and girls, all people will not be able to realize their rights as human beings and the world will continue to be a poorer place, culturally, economically and socially.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) It has been present in Vanuatu since 2008 and sees projects such as this as vital for the achievement of the aims laid out in conventions such as CEDAW. Therefore UNIFEM has agreed to sponsor the refreshments given at the post-show talk back on Friday 30th April.

UNIFEM works towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, collaborating with NGO and government partners to achieve these aims with programmes that aim to strengthen gender equality in political governance in order to enable Vanuatu to have more representational and democratic decision-making bodies. As well as working with local government bodies to achieve more accountable and better governed market places so that the women who work in them can attain their economic security and rights. UNIFEM is also a strong advocate against violence against women, seeing it as both a symptom and a cause of gender inequality and works with its various partners to advocate against it in all its forms.



### A Word from the Director and Producer

The creation of the show 'Ol Woman Naoia' has been a collaboration from start to finish.

For the month of March, we met regularly in the VANGO office and USP during lunch and after work hours where I facilitated creative writing workshops. By April we had the full cohesive script and story. After a quick casting of roles, rehearsals began at VANGO and VATS.

Every word uttered in the show has been written by one of the playwrights listed. The story itself was conceived organically, in open-forum ongoing discussions. We have been keen to tackle issues relevant to women who live in Vila today.

My initial hunch was that the difficulties faced and joys experienced by women here would strike a universal chord ... I can honestly say that after our creative process, this hunch has proven correct. We have more in common than not – across countries, hemispheres and languages.

Given that we have been a project created by women I would like to clarify the philosophy behind that decision. Our intention is not to exclude men, but rather to give women an opportunity to be heard. Women are often marginalized, even in the art world. Our writing workshops and rehearsals have created a safe space to discuss difficult issues which are present in the play. We have received much support from men and are extremely grateful for their help, patience and understanding.

We indeed intend for our project to stand on its own as a work of art. Yet in addition to our short-run in the South Pacific, we have an ambitious hope. We will give the proceeds of our production to VANGO with the idea that they would create an annual event dedicated to creative writing and dramatic performance.

This entire effort has been not-for-profit and every artist has participated on a volunteer basis. The budget for the show was generated by anony-

... contributions from the women involved.

In my personal opinion, good art is honest – and that is what we have endeavored to be. Our theatre play depicts what concerns us, as women inhabiting this city in 2010 – on the eve of Vanuatu's Independence Anniversary of 30 years.

I would like to close this piece with a quotation from an international theatre artist I greatly admire.

"In the beginning the theater was the dithrambic song: free people, singing in open air. The carnival. The feast.  
Later, the ruling classes took possession of the theater and built their dividing walls. First, they divided the people, separating actors from spectators: people who act and people who watch – the party is over! Secondly, among the actors, they separated protagonists from the mass. The coercive indoctrination began.  
Now the oppressed people are liberated themselves and, once more, are making theatre their own. The walls must be torn down."

Augusto Boal, Brazilian theatre artist and acclaimed

We hope you enjoy our show.

Tank yu tumas long evriwan long Port Vila blong welcoming mi long ples ia.

Cristina Adriana Bejan

## Creative Team

Ada Kettner ('Mamma 1' and 'Kava server') and Shanalyn Nimoho ('Waitress', 'Facilitator' and 'Friend') are two out of five best friends at Malapoa College, who dedicate their effort to these amazing girls. Keep looking bright into the future, we are still young.

Anna Naupa (Playwright and Box office)

Anthea Toka (Playwright)

Alcina Charlie: (Singer) Singer/song writer and mum of 2. Vanuatu Tourism Office website officer.

Alison Donley ('Dawn' and Playwright) doesn't kill spiders. Her favorite sinu is nalalas and believes 'Peace begins with me.'

Brigitte Olul ('Ana' and Playwright) loves working with children; cannot live without her food and is a very down-to-earth person.

Charlotte Pitts (Playwright) a refugee from crime and the corporate rat race in South Africa ... A citizen of the world...

Cristina Adriana Bejan (Director, Producer and Playwright) I came to Vila to join my love. My fatherland, Romania, celebrated her 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of freedom this past Christmas. I dedicate my contribution to this show to man blong mi and to the memory of Stephen Tyrone Johns. Numai bine.

Ellenson Taurakoto ('Martha' and Playwright) loves her chocolate and is proud to be wan lo 'OI Woman Naoia'. She is dedicating this play to Leiman Eron and Annie Ruben for doing such a wonderful job looking after her children.

Geraldine ('Mamma 3', 'Sara' and Playwright) Mum to 10 month old Haily. Loves music and singing.

Hanna Lindley-Jones ('Jenny', Playwright and Assistant Director) After 1 1/2 years in Vanuatu, is about to leave but is very glad to have been able to be part of such an exciting project before she goes. She only wishes she could have done something like this when she first arrived.

Jani Moon (Playwright) I am a twin. I have a fuzzy slipper fetish.

Josiana "Josie" Jackson ('Leipakoa' and Playwright) eats junk food when she's upset. She has dedicated this play to her beautiful baby girl – Ozona-Rose.

Kathy Bong ('Isabelle')

Leisande Otto ('Extra' and Stagehand) I originate from the island of Nguna, Shefa Province. I am kind and I usually enjoy the company of my friends. My sense of satisfaction is when I help people and meet targets.

Milena Stefanova ('Extra' and Stagehand) She hates nothing more than routine and boredom, loves adventure and change but would never trade her lovely husband and adorable daughter for anything!

Olivia Johnson (Playwright)

Rebecca Olul (Assistant Producer and Playwright) The struggles of being a woman now in Vanuatu ... and oh the joys.

Rolenas T. Baereteo ('Mamma 2' and Playwright) I like working in a team and I am a nature lover. I can not live without my family. Therefore I dedicate this play to the two most important people in my life, my husband and my daughter and also all my female friends and family members.

Sally Carter (Playwright) is volunteering in Vanuatu, working in the area of mental health. She loves the theatre and has felt very lucky to be able to share and develop this interest with other women living in Port Vila.

Sema Joel ('Extra' and Stagehand) I'm from Tanna. I am a single mother with a 2 year old son. I love to sing, listening to music and socializing with friends. I'm kind and love smiling a lot to people.

Tracey Martin ('Hilary' and Playwright) What brought me to Vila was a dream I had of walking on tropical beach in a sarong, knowing it was not in Australia and that I lived there. When my husband mentioned Vanuatu, I knew we would be there. I have always been a traveling spirit wanting to live in different places throughout the world.

#### Production Team

Director and Producer: Cristina Adriana Bejan

Assistant Producer: Rebecca Olul

Assistant Director: Hanna Lindley-Jones

Lighting: Zeak Smith

Videographer: Don Crossan

Video Assistants: Eslyn Kaltongga and Rusty (Ryan?) Taylor

Box Office: Anna Naupa and Lisa McDonald (?)

#### Special Thanks ~ Tankyu Tumas ~ Merci Beaucoup

Theodore Talbot, Leah Nimoho, Anthea Toka, UNIFEM, Anne Naupa, Pat Berinski, Barry and the VATS Board, Linda Musica, Asok at ColorRite, Vila Hand Prints Teresa, Jane, Anderson, Riordan, Tracy Missouri Carson PhD Hana Klamkova, Pereiha Catholic Church, Robert Wiley, Yasmine at Terre de Beaute Salon, Ana at Rendez-Vous Restaurant, Mireille at L'Hippocampus, Natalie, Michlean, the Yoga School, all the women who attended our informal get-creative get-togethers and those who couldn't keep coming for whatever reason and finally but certainly not least .... Jani Moon (who got the ball rolling).

Whilst the stories and characters presented in this play are inspired by life and the imagination the characters depicted here are not based on any one person or event and do not reflect the lives of the actresses playing them.

Poems by Mildred M.L. Sope

Reprinted from "The Questioning Mind"  
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MY

body you carry a heavy load  
head you are there to keep me sane  
nerves you send messages to the brain  
brain you tell me what to do  
eyes you make me see  
ears you feed me sound  
nose you warn me where danger lies  
feet you take me everywhere  
hands you carry out the job  
heart you are big  
you feel the pains  
you reject the hurts  
you receive the warmth and  
you keep the love  
My spirit, when will it be your turn?

Speak To Me

Speak to me  
share your feelings  
your silence doesn't help  
I am uneasy

You have nothing to lose  
I will try to understand  
don't pretend  
you can be alone

Don't keep me waiting  
let me out of this cage