



# **GROUNDSWELL**



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## SAN DIEGO ARTS

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### GROUNDSWELL at the Old Globe Theatre

*An Ian Bruce drama based in South Africa touches on race and wealth*

By [Welton Jones](http://www.sandiego.com/writers/welton-jones) (<http://www.sandiego.com/writers/welton-jones>) • Fri, Mar 18th, 2011

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The war for equality in South Africa is over. The good guys won. Apartheid is melting into the landfill of history.

This doesn't mean, though, that there are not still victims abroad in the land.

In dramatist Ian Bruce's *South Africa*, neither wealth nor fair play has been spread evenly throughout the country. Blacks suffer from frustrated disappointment; whites from aimless disenfranchisement.

But the blacks have hope and the whites have memories. In *GROUNDSWELL*, an absorbing new play now at the Old Globe's White Theatre, Bruce creates a pathetic wretch stripped of neither, fit only for oblivion.

This Johan is a former cop who served time for killing a black man during an arrest. He's a crude, tattooed loudmouth, quick with a sneer and shifty with facts, but he seems to be trying. In a remote coastal mining town, he has partnered with Thami, a nervous black striver, in a plan to secure scavenger rights to a mined-out diamond claim. The two seem close; Johan is learning Thami's language and even his dance moves.

There are opportunities aplenty in the illicit diamond trade, but Johan insists they must do it legally to insure the future of Thami and his family. But legal means finding capitol. And that's why the two are excited at the arrival of a guest in the bed and breakfast where they are the off-season staff. This well-dressed older man in his expensive car is obviously a businessman, and businessmen make investments.

But their pathetic plan just sounds lamer the longer they plug it, and Mr. Smith, trying to be polite, simply isn't interested. So Johan, muttering "trust me," plays the race card. Smith owes Thami, whose father disappeared into the maw of this same mining industry and whose children wait with their mother back home in a one-room steel shack.

When this predictably doesn't work on Smith, a forcibly retired banker with leftover life to spend, Johan slips over the line toward violence and any hope begins quickly to evaporate.

The difference between Johan and the other two men is savagely simple: Both Thami and Smith have their place in the world: one with his family, the other with his wealth. But Johan, his body worn out from labor and his spirit sputtering in a flood of failure, is one or two disappointments from a bitter end.

He is the victim who probably won't heal.

Antony Hagopian plays the part with a scabrous and sinister overlay that he maintains firmly even as the character's world staggers. Hagopian offers a clear projection of an argument not without merit with gradually founders from hopeless presentation.

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([http://static.sandiego.com/articlefiles/0cc15526-f1dc-4c58-ac27-edfcb39d8ea7/Groundswell8\\_print\\_325.jpg](http://static.sandiego.com/articlefiles/0cc15526-f1dc-4c58-ac27-edfcb39d8ea7/Groundswell8_print_325.jpg)) Qwiso Odera, Antony Hagopian and Ned Schmidtke, left to right, in *Old Globe Theatre DROUNDSWELL*.  
Photo J. Katarzyna Woronowicz

Ned Schmidtke makes Smith into a decent enough nebbish, only hinting at the bile seething within his defeated soul. And Owiso Odera, pressed into service quite late in the rehearsal process, is touching, immensely believable and full of natural grace as Thami.

Director Kyle Donnelly undoubtedly had her hands full changing one-third of the cast at the last minute, but no trace of tension showed in a production notable for its steady, plausible march to a finish not conclusive but far more provocative in its ambiguity. I liked just about everything Donnelly has done, even the use of a distant choral music cue building a climactic speech with all the delicacy of a dental drill. (Perhaps something by Gyorgy Ligeti?)

In addition to that little booster music, Lindsey Jones also supplied an occasional bell-buoy ring which was close to being exactly right, no easy task. Kate Edmunds' scenery is minimal but worth remembering for several unexplained bits, such as the stuffed possum. Routine kudos to Denitsa Blizakova's slightly exotic costumes and Russell H. Champa's unobtrusive lighting.

Apartheid is over, thankfully, but this play reminds us that it may be one of those outrages which just keep on scarring forever.

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#### The Details

**Category** [Arts \(http://www.sandiego.com/arts-and-theatre\)](http://www.sandiego.com/arts-and-theatre)  
**Organization** The Old Globe Theatre  
**Phone** 619 234-5623  
**Production Type** [Play \(http://www.sandiego.com/related/production-type/play\)](http://www.sandiego.com/related/production-type/play)  
**Region** [Balboa Park \(http://www.sandiego.com/related/region/balboa-park\)](http://www.sandiego.com/related/region/balboa-park)  
**URL** [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org)  
**Venue** The White Theatre, Old Globe, Balboa Park

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## Play review: Powerful "Groundswell" chills by degrees

BY JAMES HEBERT

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MARCH 18, 2011 AT 4:55 P.M., UPDATED MARCH 18, 2011 AT 5:15 P.M.

Envy, vengeance, redemption — those elements condense like a noxious fog in “Groundswell,” the compact, provocative thriller now onstage at the [Old Globe Theatre](#).

The actual fog that socks in the setting of [Ian Bruce](#)’s play — a lonely guesthouse on a remote coast of [South Africa](#) — remains unseen. But the play does plenty to convey its sense of oppression, mirrored in the way the three characters seem trapped by the past and their inability to see a way through to some resolution.



/ J. KATARZYNA WORONOWICZ

Director Kyle Donnelly dials up the piece's tension at a steady tempo, aided by a committed cast that makes manifest the complex frictions among this trio. The intimacy of the arena-style White

Theatre also magnifies an unsettling feel of confinement that ignites into open conflict as the 90-minute, one-act show progresses.

The unwitting flash point is [Thami](#) (Owiso Odera), who serves as the place's caretaker. He has a wife and children back in the city; although the end of the nation's shameful policy of racial apartheid restored rights to his community, it hasn't erased the poverty and hopelessness there.

As Thami labors to support his family, his friend Johan (Antony Hagopian), a hard-edged local diver and handyman, schemes to make the two rich, or at least solvent. His grand plan: To purchase rights to an abandoned diamond mine for whatever gems might be left.

But to do that, the pair needs more cash than they can cobble together from Thami's modest job or Johan's perilous (and apparently futile) efforts to scavenge diamonds from the seafloor. Enter Mr. Smith (Ned Schmidtke), an affluent ex-banker who has drifted into town. He's at loose ends after an enforced retirement that he ascribes to "affirmative action" in this country now governed largely by the black majority.

When Smith balks at the pair's clumsy proposal, scoffing that the government is playing them for saps, Johan turns menacing, his rage and disdain flashing like the blade of the knife he brandishes. Hagopian's bristling portrayal, with its fleeting glimpses of the pain behind the fury, gives the show a gripping focal point, particularly as Johan's troubling past as a cop is revealed.

Odera (a [UCSD](#) graduate) is likewise compelling as the man caught in the middle; his Thami struggles to reconcile a seemingly long-learned impulse to be deferential with a deep pride and an iron determination to provide for his family. (Odera's performance is all the more impressive because he was a last-minute replacement for the role.)

Ned Schmidtke as Smith, Owiso Odera as Thami and Antony Hagopian as Johan in the Old Globe Theatre's "Groundswell."

#### DETAILS

"Groundswell"

Old Globe Theatre

When: 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays (no matinee April 2); plus 2 p.m. March 30. Through April 17.

Where: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park.

Tickets: \$29-\$67

Phone: (619) 234-5623

Online: [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org)

Smith represents everything the other two hope for and all they hate; Schmidtke inhabits this complex role with subtleties of voice and gesture that hint at an ambivalence over his life of privilege.

The production's spare, almost airless feel is sabotaged slightly by a few too-pushy crescendos in Lindsay Jones' sound design, which is otherwise dominated by the ominous knell of an offshore buoy bell. (The play takes its name from [T.S. Eliot](#)'s maritime meditation "[The Dry Salvages](#).")

And while the guesthouse's décor projects a telling sense of halfhearted nautical cheer (as designed by Kate Edmunds), the life-size dummy of a diver that hangs overhead is a bit over the top.

Besides, you hardly need a fake diver hung from the ceiling when Johan already has fastened himself firmly to a cross, as an agitated and agonized self-sacrifice to his and a nation's disgrace.

As he says to Thami of Smith and others who managed to keep their country's suffering at arm's length: "I have to be guilty, so that they can play innocent."

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Page 1 of 4

#### THEATER REVIEW

## TENSION SWEEPS OVER 'GROUNDSWELL'

Cast, intimate arena suited for simmering story set in South Africa

**JAMES HEBERT • U-T**

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Page 2 of 4



Ned Schmidtke (from left) as Smith, Owiso Odera as Thami and Antony Hagopian as Johan in "Groundswell" at The Old Globe. J. KATARZYNA WORONOWICZ





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Page 4 of 4

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Page 1 of 2

## Three fine actors face a 'Groundswell' at The Old Globe



### Let's Review

BY DIANA SAENGER

Patrons taking their seats in The Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre for "Groundswell" see a sea-side lodge in South Africa on the stage before them. The sounds of continuous crashing waves and an occasional sea-bell clang set the mood for the nautical tale. The boding scene soon becomes the backdrop for a psychological thriller that builds to a powerful conclusion that will change the lives of three men.

Owiso Odera portrays Thami, a South African still reeling from the Apartheid aftermath. As he pens a letter to his wife (back in the city and caring for the cou-

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■ **When:** Evenings and matinees through April 17

■ **Tickets:** \$29-\$67

■ **Phone:** (619) 23-GLOBE

■ **Website:** [TheOldGlobe.org](http://TheOldGlobe.org)

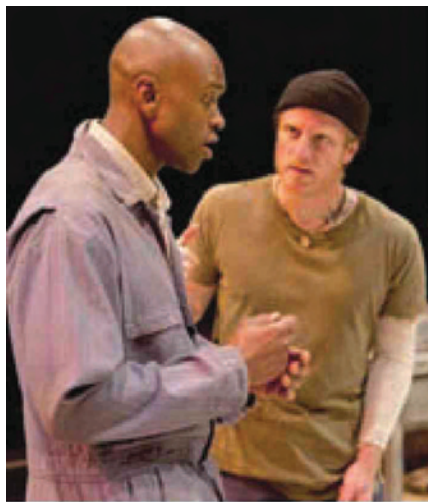
ple's children) Thami reveals an ocean of heartfelt regret that he's away from his family. He vows to work hard and be with them again soon.

Local diver and Thami's good friend, Johan (Anthony Hagopian), enters the dining room and makes small talk with Thami about his dreams and how far he's willing to go to make them come true. The conversation turns to the car in the parking lot that belongs to a lodge guest.





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**Thami (Owiso Odera) and Johan (Antony Hagopian) discuss a survival plan in Ian Bruce's 'Groundswell.'**

At first Johan questions his friend about what he knows of Mr. Smith (Ned Schmidtke). But as the conversation turns serious, Thami learns that Johan knows everything about Mr. Smith because he broke into his car.

Johan and Thami are hoping to take advantage of a government offer to purchase a commission, a small

piece of land that might hold hidden diamonds. Johan asserts they should approach Mr. Smith over dinner to become a third partner with them. Smith will put up the money, and the two of them will put up the sweat equity.

Thami is onboard as long as Johan (an alcoholic) agrees not to drink or let Mr. Smith know he's a



**Johan (Antony Hagopian) temps Mr. Smith (Ned Schmidtke) with a business deal.**

PHOTOS BY J. KATARZYNA WORONOWICZ

former police officer who served jail time for murder.

When Mr. Smith arrives for dinner, the scene becomes a three-ring circus as playwright Ian Bruce turns each character inside out. Johan, gulping drink after drink behind Thami's back, becomes unruly. He threatens Mr. Smith if he won't pay redemption for having a good life. Hagopian

(as Johan) plays the perfect villain, eliciting sympathy for his plight before revealing his true self.

Thami, a good and moral man, attempts to rein in Johan's threats, but is drawn in by Johan's hypnotic tirades of "this is for us" and insinuations that he is not measuring up to being a man.

Odera (who plays Thami superbly) is a UCSD grad. We feel his agony over missing his family, we flinch when he does after an inappropriate action by Johan, and just maybe we understand how he's easily swayed to the dark side.

Schmidtke steers Mr. Smith along a gentle slope of revelation. At first he's patient as he listens to the men's business deal, but then he tells them it is probably a scam and negotiations get ugly when Johan pulls out a long knife.

As bells from the buoys in the foggy sea ring out warnings to approaching boats, the situation inside the lodge becomes far more threatening.



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## Let's REVIEW: Three fine actors face a 'Groundswell' at The Old Globe

By Diana Saenger

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Katarzyna Woronowicz

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When Mr. Smith arrives for dinner, the scene becomes a three-ring circus as playwright Ian Bruce turns each character inside out. Johan, gulping drink after drink behind Thami's back, becomes unruly. He threatens Mr. Smith if he won't pay redemption for having a good life. Hagopian (as Johan) plays the perfect villain, eliciting sympathy for his plight before revealing his true self.

Thami, a good and moral man, attempts to rein in Johan's threats, but is drawn in by Johan's hypnotic tirades of "this is for us" and insinuations that he is not measuring up to being a man.

Odera (who plays Thami superbly) is a UCSD grad. We feel his agony over missing his family, we flinch when he does after an inappropriate action by Johan, and just maybe we understand how he's easily swayed to the dark side.

Schmidtke steers Mr. Smith along a gentle slope of revelation. At first he's patient as he listens to the men's business deal, but then he tells them it is probably a scam and negotiations get ugly when Johan pulls out a long knife.

As bells from the buoys in the foggy sea ring out warnings to approaching boats, the situation inside the lodge becomes far more threatening.



Johan (Antony Hagopian) tempers Mr. Smith (Ned Schmidtke) with a business deal in Ian Bruce's 'Groundswell.'

## If you go

**What:** "Groundswell"

**Where:** The Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

**When:** Evenings and matinees through April 17

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

**Phone:** (619) 23-GLOBE

**Website:** [TheOldGlobe.org](http://TheOldGlobe.org)

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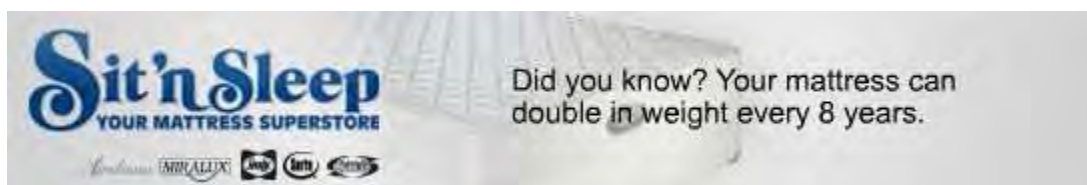
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### Theater review: 'Groundswell' at the Old Globe [Updated]

March 21, 2011 | 2:55 pm

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Racism erodes, as surely as the pounding surf.

The pain of apartheid, explicit and insidious, drives three desperate men in “Groundswell,” Ian Bruce’s taut chamber piece now at San Diego’s [Old Globe](#). Set in a port town on the rugged western coast of South Africa, “Groundswell” is a world away from the elegant allegories of Athol Fugard or the inspirational example of Nelson Mandela. Its politics are those of sweat, tears and minerals — diamonds, that is.

On a dark and stormy night — yes, that’s a big part of the play’s atmospheric appeal — two men hatch a plan. Thami (Owiso Odera) is the black caretaker of an oceanfront lodge, saving money to rescue his family from shantytown life. He’s befriended the rough-edged Johan (Antony Hagopian), a white

diver whose working days are numbered by the physical toll of his job. The two dream of buying a concession, a piece of land where diamonds can be mined. All they need is the cash.

**[For the record at 3:56 p.m.:** A previous version of this post identified Antony Hagopian's first name as Anthony.]

Enter retired investment banker Smith (Ned Schmidtke), a genial if entitled widower on a walkabout. Over wine and classical music, Thami and Johan ask Smith to invest in their scheme for a percentage of the returns. When Smith dismisses the concession as a government swindle, the two working-class men resort to more extreme measures of securing funding.

It's not a terribly surprising turn of events, but director Kyle Donnelly and her creative team weave an absorbing yarn. "Groundswell" works well in the round at the intimate White Theatre, where you're only a few feet away from the quicksilver feints, shifts in allegiance and one very sharp knife.

The flaws are evident from this distance too. The play takes its time gearing up; not even the quirky taxidermied animals on Kate Edmunds' set, or the eerie sound design of Lindsay Jones can entirely distract us from Bruce's lumbering exposition. The actors are powerful, but still discovering their character's subtleties. Yet the playwright makes us feel the guilt and fear that possess all three men, survivors of a system that has left each of them, in radically different ways, disenfranchised. As a case study in the corrosive impact of racial inequality, "Groundswell" is exemplary. As a nail-biter, it could learn a bit more from "Treasure of the Sierra Madre."

**[For the record at 11:25 a.m.** An earlier version of this review included the wrong name for the set designer.]

-- Charlotte Stoudt

**"Groundswell"** The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego. 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sundays. Ends April 17. \$29-\$67. Contact: (619) 23-GLOBE or [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org). Running time: 90 minutes.

*Photo: Ned Schmidtke, left, Owiso Odera and Antony Hagopian in "Groundswell." Credit: J. Katarzyna Woronowicz*

**[For the record at 3:56 p.m.:** A previous version of this post omitted photographer J. Katarzyna Woronowicz's first initial.]



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**Scam Watch:** The [Scam Watch feature](#) in the March 22 Business section included an item about a Pasadena man suspected of running a Ponzi scheme. The article said that Steven Yamashiro operated Cambridge Investment Research. In fact, Yamashiro was an independent contractor who sold securities for the firm from November 2002 until February 2006. He did not own or operate the company.

**Birth control:** An [article](#) in the March 21 Health section about injectable birth control said that Depo-Provera is administered monthly. It is administered once every three months.

**The Strokes:** In the March 22 Calendar section, a [review](#) of the Strokes' new album, "Angles," identified the band's debut album as "This Is It." The title is "Is This It."

**"Groundswell":** In the March 22 Calendar section, a [review](#) of "Groundswell" at the Old Globe misidentified the set designer. Kate Edmunds designed the set, not Alexander Dodge.

**Jodie Foster:** In some copies of the March 19 edition, a For the Record item in Section A correcting





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Page 1 of 1

#### THEATER REVIEW

## Race and a sinister plan

In 'Groundswell,' three men in South Africa engage in shifting alliances.

CHARLOTTE STOUDT

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The pain of apartheid, explicit and insidious, drives three desperate men in 'Groundswell,' Ian Bruce's taut chamber piece now at San Diego's Old Globe. Set in a port town on the rugged western coast of South Africa, "Groundswell" is a world away from the elegant allegories of Athol Fugard or the inspirational example of Nelson Mandela. Its politics are those of sweat, tears and minerals — diamonds, that

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**FAMILY MAN:** Thami (Owiso Odera) is a caretaker at a lodge.

### 'Groundswell'

**Where:** Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego

**When:** 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays. Ends April 17.

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

**Contact:** (619) 23-GLOBE or [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org)

**Running time:** 1 hour, 30 minutes

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Enter retired investment banker Smith (Ned Schmidtke), a genial if entitled widower on a walkabout. Over wine and classical music, Thami and Johan

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## THEATER REVIEW: Globe's 'Groundswell' a taut psychological thriller

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THEATER REVIEW: Globe's 'Groundswell' a taut psychological thriller

By PAM KRAGEN - pkragen@nctimes.com North County Times - The Californian | Posted: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 2:54 pm | No Comments Posted | Print

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[Buy this photo](#) Ned Schmidtke as Smith, left, Owiso Odera as Thami and Antony Hagopian as Johan in Groundswell, March 12 - April 17, 2010 at The Old Globe. Photo by J. Katarzyna Woronowicz.

*"Between midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception, the future futureless ... And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning, clangs the bell."*

*"The Dry Salvages," T.S. Eliot.*

Take three good actors, an eerie sound design and a script that takes you in unexpected directions and you've got "Groundswell," the taut thriller now on stage at the Old Globe.

Named for a line in T.S. Eliot's "The Dry Salvages," Ian Bruce's 90-minute psychological drama is the story of three deceptive men stranded together one night in a wind-whipped lodge on South Africa's Atlantic coast (a poetic bell tolling ominously outside). Antony Hagopian gives a mesmerizing performance as the driven-to-desperation diamond diver Johan, and director Kyle Donnelly gradually ramps up the suspense to keep audience members spellbound until the final, enigmatic moments.

Set in the post-apartheid era, "Groundswell" is the story of Thami (the black caretaker of a hotel that's closed for the winter) and his best friend Johan, an Afrikaan (a white South African native), who serves as the hotel's handyman. Together, they've hatched a get-rich-quick scheme to buy the concession rights for a government-owned diamond mine, but they don't have the money to make a bid.

To provide the capital, they make a pitch to Smith, a wealthy retired white widower who has stopped at the lodge for an overnight stay. Over dinner and one too many glasses of wine and brandy, the eager partners try to persuade Smith to underwrite the deal. When friendly persuasion fails, Johan opts for coercion, and ultimately, violence. From Johan's warped and drunken perspective, Smith has been sent to the lodge by divine providence to "compensate" Thami for all the evils done to blacks by white men of Smith's class (and if Johan gets rich along with his friend, all the better).

Watching these three men warily circle the in-the-round White Theatre stage is like observing a trio of tigers sizing each other up for the kill. The play's beauty is how gradually the layers masking these men's true motivations and secrets are subtly unveiled.

Thami writes deceptive letters home to his wife, boasting of the diamond claim he has yet to stake, and trusting (far too much) in Johan's

protective "friendship." Johan has a hair-trigger temper and far more at stake than he lets on. And Smith's seeming magnanimity hides a pettiness and sense of entitlement. Who are these men, really? Even in the closing seconds, you're not sure what future awaits them and what lurks outside with that ever-clanging bell.

Hagopian is superb as the raw-edged Johan, an ex-constable who spent two years in prison for killing an unarmed black man and now supports himself digging diamonds out of underwater sand beds (though a build-up of air bubbles in his bloodstream threatens his future as a diver). Hagopian's a master with the Afrikaan dialect, he's wiry and wary, and he bristles authentically with righteous indignation when Smith declines to invest.

Ned Schmidtke (whose past Globe visits include two fine in-the-round plays, "A Body of Water" and "Blue/Orange") builds Smith from the outside in. At first, his Smith is overly genial, endlessly forgiving and uncomplicated, but under Johan's withering condemnation, he erupts, spewing biliously over his forced retirement (to make way for a black replacement), his generous charitable efforts and his late wife's anti-apartheid efforts. Ultimately, he's cowed into submission, but he holds a hidden trump card.

As Thami, Owiso Odera embodies his character's innate dignity with a gentle stillness. So inured is he to hardship, he doesn't flinch at Smith's racist rants and is embarrassed when Johan describes his family's struggles. Odera is particularly impressive, considering he stepped into the part just days before opening night (replacing actor Mfundo Morrison, who left the production March 11).

In a play where the characters' motivations and the political tide are forever shifting like sand, Kate Edmunds' nautical lodge scenic design (featuring taxidermied weasels and terns and a deep-sea diver mannequin all frozen in place) is especially evocative. And Lindsay Jones' sound design ---- rich with roaring tides, winds, a frantically ringing bell and a pulsing rumble that ebbs and flows ---- creates a soundscape that subtly builds tension as the play hurtles forward.

While it's helpful to know something about apartheid and alluvial diamonds, it's not required to appreciate "Groundswell," because the play is really about how far men can be pushed when they've run out of options. It's a white-knuckle ride at the Old Globe.

"Groundswell"

When: 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; through April 17

Where: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, The Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego

Tickets: \$29-\$67

Info: 619-234-5623

Web: [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org)

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## Diamond lust, Apartheid's after-effects shape 'Groundswell'

By Carol Davis



Carol Davis

SAN DIEGO—Several months ago I wrote about a documentary that was being shown as part of the Jewish Film Festival called *The Wrong Side of the Bus*. It was about a noted professor of psychiatry who was born, grew up and went to school in South Africa during the days of Apartheid.

He left his native country shortly after receiving his PhD. He never got over the guilt he felt for not standing up to it and protesting (unlike playwrights Ian Bruce and Athol Fugard who were politically active in their day). When he returned to Cape Town on the occasion of his fortieth college reunion, he visited old haunts trying to right the wrongs he felt were put on the Blacks in his country and in his community. After a long, agonizing and emotional trip visiting old haunts he was able to leave with a new sense of self but the wounds still remained.

While Apartheid might have been dismantled in the early 1990's the scars, guilt and injustices will be written about, examined and debated over for years to come. *Groundswell* (It comes from the TS Elliot poem "The Dry Salvages") a new play by Ian Bruce, who was trained as an actor in Johannesburg, is a fresh post-Apartheid look into the psychological ramifications that encompasses the social and economic damage that both White and Black citizens are still reeling from today.

Although none of the characters in Bruce's play, *Groundswell*, is cut from the same cloth they are all affected and intertwined and victims in one way or another by the strains of Apartheid and its not so feel-good aftermath. The play on the Harvey White Stage at the Old Globe is eye opening and somewhat of a thriller.

The three characters are thrown together in a large communal dining room at the beachfront cottages of the Garnet Lodge (Kate Edmonds). The Lodge is located in a small port town on the South African West Coast where diamonds are mined, oft times sucked up from the sea with a vacuum cleaner or hydraulic type hose. They are pulled up and fed on to the mother ships. Sometimes lone scuba divers risk life and limb for a chance to strike it rich by diving. A few independents or rebels enter into the waters at their own risk.

Such is the case of Johan (Antony Hagopian is the perfect chameleon like character hard and demanding on one hand and threateningly dangerous on the other). His body is wracked from diving for diamonds. He dives, commercially when the weather permits and body allows. He wants to be a mine owner. His left arm is barely useable and his mood is foul and threatening especially when he drinks. He can be engaging, but a little intense when sober. He does odd jobs as a handyman around the Lodge and lives in a shack across from it. Oh! He is also an ex cop who spent three years in jail for killing a man point blank while on duty.

Thami (Owiso Odera) is the gardener and caretaker at the lodge during the off-season. He also tends the main house and any potential guests. His wife and children live in poverty in a shack away in the city. His goal is to raise himself above the poverty level and have a farm of his own for his family to live on together. He writes promising letters to his wife assuring her that diamonds are but a step away. He and Johan have formed a business but rocky friendship, if you will. Both want something from the other and neither trusts the other.

Smith (Ned Schmidtke) happened on the Lodge to see if there was a golf course available. He seems an affable and pleasant guy who becomes the object of interest to both Johan and Thami. Smith is wealthy, a widower with children, grandchildren (who have since moved out of the country) and who is living off the investments he made over the years. He's easygoing and completely unaware of any potential danger to him.

All three have their special wounds from the before, during and after the effects of Apartheid. This unfolds after we discover that Thami and Johan need money to buy a deed to an unclaimed government-owned diamond mine. Johan just wants to take it; Thami wants to do it legally. To do this, they need more cash than either can scrape up. Over dinner they (Johan) pitch a deal to Smith who has the look, Gold Amax card and expensive wheels, of someone with investment money to spare.

When Smith, smoothly played by Schmidtke, scoffs at the idea of investing in a diamond mine, Johan becomes agitated and hostile toward him. Following a few drinks with dinner, something Johan promised Thami he wouldn't do, and becoming more frustrated with Smith, he flashes his knife and circles around Smith in threatening gestures that even Thami backs away from. Johan rages and rants about how he was unfairly treated and now that he and Thami are friends he can put his past behind him if only he had money (from the mine).

After being coerced, with a knife at his throat, into giving the pair a check Smith fumes telling them about how he was pushed out of his top-notch position as an investment banker after Apartheid fell and of a quota system that gave preferential treatment to younger black applicants. It is in this exchange, rather late in the play, that Schmidtke really comes to life.

As for Thami, (excellent timing and performance by Odera who stepped into the part at the last moment) he wavers back and forth gently siding with Johan and then backing off to a more realistic approach. Director Kyle Donnelly has us in suspense for several moments when Johan has Smith in a corner confiscating both his credit card and car keys and threatening to do him bodily harm.

At some point *Groundswell* looked like it would become a murder by numbers when in fact it turned out to be an eye-opening lesson of what Apartheid had done to citizens from many walks of life.

Watching the three circle, back off and circle again on Kate Edmunds' tell tale but sparse nautical set (this one has a stuffed possum and other beach creatures set on end tables and breakfronts) keeps the action moving when little else but talk is taking place. The suspense does grow to groundswell proportions but fizzles after all is said and done leaving all the three shaken and only one the better for the exercise.

In the end, Thami seems to come out the winner with Smith coming in a close second. Both will learn from this night's lesson but that doesn't mean the scars of oppression will go away any faster. Thami will buy his farm from the few diamonds he has been stashing away and Smith will continue to play golf. Johan's future is already in the drink (no pun intended). Apartheid is a thing of the past, maybe.

Lindsay Jones' sound design of waves pounding as if being surrounded by high tide with a buoy bell sounding every so often warning of the incoming fog reminds us how remote the characters really are from land. There must be a lesson there.

*Groundswell* is definitely worth a seeing.

See you at the theatre.

Dates: through April 17th

Organization: Old Globe Theatre

Phone: 619-234-5623

Production Type:

Where: 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Ticket Prices: \$29.00-\$67.00

Web: [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org)

Venue: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre

\*

Davis is a San Diego-based theatre critic. She may be contacted at [carol.davis@sdjewishworld.com](mailto:carol.davis@sdjewishworld.com)

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## “Groundswell” at Globe no Tsunami but thought provoking



**Carol Davis**



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Ned Schmidtke, Owiso Odera, Antony Hagopian

*Photo: J. Katrazyna*

**Slideshow: Groundswell by Ian Bruce**



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Although none of the characters in Bruce's play, "Groundswell", in an eye opening and somewhat of a thriller now on the Sheryl and Harvey White Stage at the Old Globe, are cut from the same cloth they are all effected and intertwined and victims in one way or another by the strains of Apartheid and its not so feel good aftermath.

Three in all, they are thrown together in a large communal dining room at the beachfront cottages of the Garnet Lodge (Kate Edmonds). The Lodge is located in a small port town on the South African West Coast where diamonds are mined oft times sucked up from the sea with a vacuum cleaner or hydraulic type hose. They are pulled up and fed on to the mother ships. Sometimes lone scuba divers risk life and limb for a chance to strike it rich by diving. A few independent or rebels enter into the waters at their own risk.

Such is the case of Johan (Antony Hagopian is the perfect chameleon like character hard and demanding on one hand and threateningly dangerous on the other). His body is wracked from diving for diamonds. He dives, commercially when the weather permits and body allows. He wants to be a mine owner. His left arm is barely useable and his mood is foul and threatening especially when he drinks. He can be engaging, but a little intense when sober. He does odd jobs as a handyman around the Lodge and lives in a shack across from it. Oh! He is also an ex cop who spent three years in jail for killing a man point blank while on duty.

Thami (Owiso Odera) is the gardener and caretaker at the lodge during the off-season. He also tends the main house and any potential guests. His wife and children live in poverty in a shack away in the city. His goal is to raise himself up above the poverty level and have a farm of his own for his family to live on together. He writes promising letters to his wife assuring her that diamonds are but a step away. He and Johan have formed a business but rocky friendship, if you will. Both want something from the other and neither trusts the other.

Smith (Ned Schmidtke) happened on the Lodge to see if there was a golf course available. He seems an affable and pleasant guy who becomes the object of interest to both Johan and Thami. Smith is wealthy, a widower with children, grandchildren (who have since moved out of the country) and who is living off

the investments he made over the years. He's easygoing and completely unaware of any potential danger to him.



All three have their special wounds from the before, during and after the effects of Apartheid. This unfolds after we discover that Thami and Johan need money to buy a deed to an unclaimed government owned diamond mine. Johan just wants to take it; Thami wants to do it legally. To do this, they need more cash than either can scrape up. Over dinner they (Johan) pitch a deal to Smith who has the look, Gold Amax card and expensive wheels, of someone with investment money to spare.

When Smith, smoothly played by Schmidtke, scoffs at the idea of investing in a diamond mine, Johan becomes agitated and hostile toward him. Following a few drinks with dinner, something Johan promised Thami he wouldn't do, and becoming more frustrated with Smith, he flashes his knife and circles around Smith in threatening gestures that even Thami backs away from. Johan rages and rants about how he was unfairly treated and now that he and Thami are friends he can put his past behind him if only he had money (from the mine).

After being coerced, with a knife at his throat, into giving the pair a check Smith fumes telling them about how he was pushed out of his top-notch position as an investment banker after Apartheid fell and of a quota system that gave preferential treatment to younger black applicants. It is in this exchange, rather late in the play, that Schmidtke really comes to life.

As for Thami, (excellent timing and performance by Odera who stepped into the part at the last moment) he wavers back and

forth gently siding with Johan and then backing off to a more realistic approach. Director Kyle Donnelly has us in suspense for several moments when Johan has Smith in a corner confiscating both his credit card and car keys and threatening to do him bodily harm.

At some point “Groundswell” looked like it would become a murder by numbers play when in fact it turned out to be an eye-opening lesson of what Apartheid had done to citizens from many walks of life.

Watching the three circle, back off and circle again on Kate Edmunds tell tale but sparse nautical set (this one has a stuffed possum and other beach creatures set on end tables and breakfronts) keeps the action moving when little else but talk is taking place. The suspense does grow to groundswell proportions but fizzles after all is said and done leaving all the three shaken and only one the better for the exercise.

In the end, Thami seems to come out the winner with Smith coming in a close second. Both will learn from this night’s lesson but that doesn’t mean the scars of oppression will go away any faster. Thami will buy his farm from the few diamonds he has been stashing away and Smith will continue to play golf. Johan’s future is already in the drink (no pun intended). Apartheid is a thing of the past, maybe.

Lindsay Jones sound design of waves pounding as if being surrounded by high tide with a buoy bell sounding every so often warning of the incoming fog reminds us how remote the characters really are from land. There must be a lesson there.

“Groundswell” is definitely worth a seeing.

See you at the theatre.

Dates: through April 17th

Organization: Old Globe Theatre

Phone: 619-234-5623

Production Type:

Where: 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

Ticket Prices: \$29.00-\$67.00

Web: [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org)

Venue: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre



By **Carol Davis**

Carol Davis is a regular contributor to [sdjewishworld.com](http://sdjewishworld.com). Before that she wrote for The San Diego Jewish Times for over twenty years. Carol has...[Read more](#)

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## SAN DIEGO

Regional Reviews by Bill Eadie

### *Groundswell*

Old Globe Theatre

Watching the performance, I kept wondering why the Old Globe would select Ian Bruce's slow-moving and emotionally manipulative play, *Groundswell*, for its 2010-11 season. After about eighty minutes of the play's ninety-minute no-intermission length, the play itself revealed the reason, but by then it was too little, too late.



**Ned Schmidtke, Owiso Odera and  
Antony Hagopian**

*Groundswell* is set on the wild and isolated west coast of South Africa. During the summer, the area is nice, but tourists are few and far between out of season. Thami (Owiso Odera) manages a guest house when the weather is poor, though he reverts to being the resort's gardener once the owners return. Johan (Antony Hagopian), a former police officer, has moved to the area to escape publicity associated with a manslaughter for which he did prison time, and he works as a diver for a syndicate that looks for diamonds that may remain in the river after a large diamond mine shut down. Thami's wife and children live in poverty elsewhere, and he dreams of opening a small diamond mining operation on one of the concessions that the South African government is offering on plots of land that used to be part of the larger mine. Johan is eager to help him with this plan, because it represents a legal means to find diamonds. There is also an informal market for diamonds, but jail time awaits those who are caught participating in this market. Thami and Johan do not have adequate start-up funds, however.

Enter Smith (Ned Schmidtke), a recently-retired financial trader who has booked a room in the guest house mistakenly thinking he will find an out-of-the-way golf course in the area. Smith drives a large car into a region where the size of the car indicates the amount of money one has. He is a widower who was pushed out of his job before he was ready to retire, and he has resentments of his own about his situation. Rather than stewing about them, however, he has decided to travel, something he had little time to do while working.

Prior to Smith's arrival, Thami and Johan had decided to pitch him to invest in their mine concession scheme. Thami prepared a nice dinner for the three of them and brought out the best wine. He sternly reminded Johan not to drink, however, implying that Johan could become out of control if he did so.

With such a premise (three men, a business deal involving valuable commodities), one would expect hidden motives, plot reversals, and back-stabbings to go on. And, indeed, a knife that could be used as a weapon is shown to the audience early in the play, implying that it will be put to such a use at some point. But, Mr. Bruce seems to be more interested in exploring the ongoing effects of apartheid on his characters than in building suspense for his plot. So, the dinner and subsequent business proposition proceed languidly, and once we find ourselves in Athol Fugard territory, we quickly realize that Mr. Fugard handles apartheid much more effectively. By the time the expected reversal actually occurs, we've stopped caring about what happens to these characters (or at least, I did). They're too wrapped up in guilting each other over the past to be more than mildly interesting as present-day people.

Director Kyle Donnelly has chosen to give the play space to breathe, which, I guess, is the only valid choice one could have made with this text. Her actors perform well and try to build the tension, but things don't quite gel. Mr. Odera, a last-minute cast replacement, gets the most complex role and manages it with a good deal of grace. Mr. Bruce makes him articulate, well-spoken, morally upright and literate (he has written a letter to his wife that he does not wish to show the others), but hardly a prototype for a black South African whose family lives in poverty. Mr. Hagopian easily shows Johan's potential for menace and less easily reveals any charm that may have attracted Thami to Johan as a business partner. He

is not helped by Denitsa Bliznakova's costume design, which makes him look grubby compared to the other two and certainly not credible as the pitch man for a serious business proposal. Mr. Schmidtke has the most underwritten role as a white South African of some privilege who nevertheless does not see himself as part of any sort of ruling class. He plays what he has been given, but I had the feeling that there was so much more to give.

The technical elements are up to the Old Globe's usual high standards, particularly Lindsay Jones' sound design that features a forever-tolling bell.

*Groundswell* comes up lacking, both as a psychological suspense drama and as a political screed. It runs through April 17 in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre on the Old Globe campus in San Diego's Balboa Park. Tickets (\$29-67) are available by telephoning the box office at (619) 23-GLOBE [234-5623], or by visiting [the Old Globe's website](#).

The Old Globe presents *Groundswell*, by Ian Bruce. Directed by Kyle Donnelly, with Kate Edmunds (Scenic Design), Denitsa Bliznakova (Costume Design), Russell H. Champa (Lighting Design), Lindsay Jones (Sound Design), Gillian Lane-Plescia (Dialect Coach) and Annette Yé (Stage Manager).

Featuring Antony Hagopian (Johan), Owiso Odera (Thami) and Ned Schmidtke (Smith).

*J. Katarzyna Woronowicz*

See the [current season schedule for the San Diego area](#).

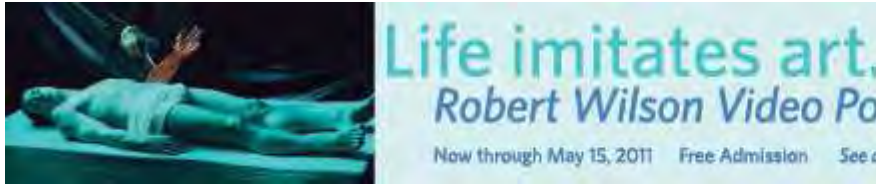
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## THE FOOD ISSUE

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Wednesday, Mar 23, 2011

# Haste makes waste

Groundswell and the rest of this weeks' theatre listings

By [Martin Jones Westlin](#)



Groundswell - Photo by J Katarzyna Woronowicz

Money does funny things to people, especially to the folks who don't have any. Take Johan, from Ian Bruce's *Groundswell*, the current Old Globe Theatre entry and a supposed diatribe about class distinction in post-apartheid South Africa. The lowborn white Afrikaner, a handyman at a lodge off the South African coast, thinks he has license to commandeer ex-banker Smith's checkbook as seed money for a diamond-mine operation. Johan served time for a murder he believes he didn't commit, so it

naturally follows that the world owes him, black lodge host Thami (who hopes to move his family to the area once he strikes it rich) and everybody else in their states of poverty a living.

While his argument is impassioned, it also doesn't make any sense. Bruce is in such a hurry drawing his characters that he forgets to color 'em in. Their speeches carry a lot of information, but that information isn't anecdotal so much as chatty (we'll never know, for example, why the diamond industry's illicitness is such a draw for Johan). Meanwhile, the mounting threat to Smith's life is hardly enough to sustain the action.

Still, Antony Hagopian excels as the obsolescent Johan, who has none of Smith's business acumen and even less of Thami's gentility. Owiso Odera was called into service as Thami at the last minute; he looks and sounds like he's been rehearsing for weeks. Director Kyle Donnelly gets a lot from Ned Schmidtke, whose Smith pleads a good case for his charitable nature. But the longer the performances succeed, the more certainly they pale against a mostly meatless script. Kate Edmunds' set includes a stuffed rodent of some kind (maybe an opossum); its odd colors and fixed stare add a superbly subtle touch of irony.

*Through April 17 at The Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. \$29-\$67. [oldglobe.org](http://oldglobe.org)*

## Opening

**Little Miss Sunshine:** When Olive Hoover enters a regional children's beauty pageant, the family thinks its bad luck could change and embarks on a cross-country trek. Produced by La Jolla Playhouse, it's in previews now and opens March 4 at the Mandell Weiss Theatre in La Jolla. \$49-\$64. [lajollaplayhouse.org](http://lajollaplayhouse.org)

**Rafta, Rafta:** Two newlyweds find that starting their life together under the groom's family's roof is no honeymoon. In previews now, it opens March 24 at The Old Globe Theatre mainstage in Balboa Park. \$29-\$70. [oldglobe.org](http://oldglobe.org)

**And Then I Wrote a Song About It:** Set to the rhythm of the disco era and beyond, this musical follows an overworked actor-singer-songwriterdancer-secretary as he searches for love and fame in the early 1980s. Opens March 25 at Diversionary Theatre in University Heights. \$30- \$35. [diversionary.org](http://diversionary.org)

**In the Next Room (or the vibrator play):** A group of men and women get curious as a gynecologist treats "women's problems" with a newfangled electric vibrator in 1885 upstate New York. Produced by San Diego Repertory Theatre, it's in previews now and opens March 25 at The Lyceum Downtown. \$29- \$53. [sdrep.org](http://sdrep.org)

**The Atom and Eve and Bury the Dead:** In Atom, Sen. Eve Baldwin faces a vote on a controversial revolutionary initiative; in Bury, a group of dead soldiers demand they be allowed to rejoin the living. Produced by Vanguard Theatre, the two plays open March 25 at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Point Loma. \$10-\$15. [westminstersd.org](http://westminstersd.org)

**Fiddler on the Roof:** Tevye the milkman tries to keep his family's traditions in place and marry off his three daughters as the Russian

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## THEATRE

### CHECK THIS OUT

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—Martin Jones Westlin



*Groundswell*

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THEATER REVIEW: "Groundswell" shows demise of apartheid didn't heal social wounds

JEAN LOWERISON - SDGLN THEATER CRITIC

March 22nd, 2011

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ENLARGE

Disappointment is the common denominator in the lives of three men in Ian Bruce's "Groundswell," playing through April 17 at the Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre.

Apartheid is over, equality is law, but these three aren't quite on solid, let alone equal ground.

Thami (Owiso Odera) barely makes a living as gardener of the Garnet Lodge in a sleepy beachfront South African town, but takes over caretaking duties in low season, when the owner goes to Capetown. Now he sits composing a letter full of hope and empty promises to his wife and daughters in a distant slum.

Also on the grounds is handyman Johan (Antony Hagopian), an Afrikaner ex-cop once convicted of manslaughter, now trying to supplement his meager income with work as a commercial diver (a job which is ruining his health). Johan is not allowed to hobnob with the guests, partly because of his notoriety and partly because he favors the grape too much.

Johan hardly knows who he is anymore – "ex-con" isn't the designation he wants to be known by, but he's a loner on shaky financial and emotional ground, thinking that money will solve his problems.

The innocent and openhearted Thami and the cleverly manipulative Johan make an odd pair. But South Africa is diamond country; they are united by mutual economic need and are pondering a mining partnership. They need an investor.

This night there is a rare wintertime guest – Smith (Ned Schmidtke), a former investment banker of some means, and though Johan has been expressly forbidden access to the main house when guests are present, he convinces Thami that this man may represent the only way out of their economic doldrums – and that only he, a white man, can get another white man to invest.

Thami serves a lovely crayfish dinner and a nice wine as Johan starts in on his pitch. Smith has his own sorrows: pushed into early retirement by an affirmative action program, he then lost his wife to a hot-rodding driver. He is here in search of a golf game. Still, he listens politely, registers suspicion of the government ("Why not fob off the nation's spent natural resources on the hungry?") – and refuses.

He may regret it, as Johan, by now under the influence and increasingly desperate, becomes more insistent and less civil. He even pulls out the race card (Thami's father disappeared into the maw of a DeBeers mine years before). And there's also that knife in the drawer.

By the time this is over, these characters will know more about each other than they may want to.

"Groundswell," tautly directed by Kyle Donnelly, benefits from fine acting by the triumvirate. Especially notable is UCSD MFA Odera, who stepped in at the last minute to bring Thami to life and make the part his own.

Hagopian's Johan shows the proper combination of a tightly wound ball of anger covered with a slippery veneer of hail-fellow-well-met.

Schmidtke is effective as Smith, whose own problems make him slow to realize that the situation is spinning out of control.

Apartheid was an unlamented social reality. Pity its demise did not solve other social ills.

The details

"Groundswell" plays through April 17 at The Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre in Balboa Park.

Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 7 p.m.; matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 pm.

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Photo credit: J. Katarzyna Woronowicz

From left, Owiso Odera as Thami and Antony Hagopian as Johan in "Groundswell" at The Old Globe.

1 of 3

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THESE SHOWS ARE UP FOR REVIEW

## Cheap thrills

***Groundswell*: The actors are excellent, but the play is more brains than brawn**

BY CHARLENE BALDRIDGE

Fearful of ruining the experience, I did not read South African playwright Ian Bruce's *Groundswell* in advance of attending opening night at The Old Globe Theatre. Billed as a psychological thriller, the play's thrills, such as they are, result more from physical threat than psychological surprise.

Apparently, the characters symbolize three faces of post-apartheid South Africa. Bruce presents the Afrikaner lowlife Johan (jumpy Antony Hagopian), a former policeman who believes himself wrongly accused of a murder for which he served time. Hagopian bestows upon his character all the feral qualities that come with self-delusion and deprivation. Now reduced to diving for diamonds off the coast of a small town in South Africa, he's been deprived of even that due to the bends, which have rendered the left side of his upper torso unusable.



Johan (Antony Hagopian, right) commandeers the checkbook of the hapless Smith (Ned Schmidtke, left) as Thami (Owiso Odera) looks on. (Photo by J. Katarzyna Woronowicz)

Johan functions as a kind of handyman for the Bekkers, absentee owners of the hundred-year-old Garnet Lodge, in which the action is set. His friend, the pliable and trusted Thami (Owiso Odera), acts in the hosts' absence. The hardworking Thami originally came to the coast in search of his absent father, leaving behind a wife and two daughters for whom he hopes to provide a better life through discovery of diamonds that abound in the region, both underwater and in "parcels" recently opened up by the government. With Johan as his partner, Thami hopes to obtain his own parcel. The only thing lacking is funding.

Johan sees the arrival of Smith (Ned Schmidtke), a former Afrikaans business executive, as an opportunity to obtain the seed money, hence the "psychological" dance and eventual, suspenseful and potentially fatal separation of rich man from pocketbook.

Smith is self-righteous, pointing out that he and his wife were always liberal with that pocketbook when it came to providing funds for and dealing fairly with those "under" their station in life. He blames his wife's death on his disenfranchisement in favor of a black man the company had the gall to ask him to train.

Who gets out, who wins and who loses hang in the balance of one drunken evening. The actors, not the play, make for a riveting experience. It was an advantage sitting in the sweet spot that afforded a glimpse of Schmidtke's face in the closing moments. But all three performances are tops.



Odera's performance is especially amazing when one considers he's an 11th-hour replacement for the previously announced Mfundo Morrison in a drama about which we may never know the truth. According to Globe Executive Producer Louis G. Spisto, Morrison was relieved of his duties by mutual agreement of management and director Kyle Donnelly.

Odera, who received his MFA from UCSD in 2005, must be some quick study. He got the script on Friday, March 11, and was in previews by the following Tuesday.

*This review is based on the opening-night performance of March 17. Groundswell runs through April 17 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, part of the Old Globe's Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. \$29-\$67. [oldglobe.org](http://oldglobe.org), (619) 23-GLOBE.*

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Rating: **five burgoos** for audacity. Not for the squeamish.

### Posturing: Groundswell of ideology

South African playwright **Ian Bruce's** *Groundswell*, playing at the Old Globe through April 17, features three splendid performances by **Owiso Odera**, **Antony Hagopian** and **Ned Schmidtke**. In fact, the performances far outweigh the content of the work, which feels as if Bruce selected men representative of three layers of society in post-apartheid South Africa and built a play around them. The result, touted as suspenseful, is oddly flaccid.



Owiso Odera Photo: J. Katarzyna Woronowicz

Thami (Odera) originally came to the play's small port town locale seeking his father. He stayed to become a trusted employee at the absent Bekkers' Garnet Lodge. He sells a few diamonds illegally in hopes of bettering the lives of the family he left

behind. Smith (Schmidtke), a former businessman disenfranchised by his company and a guest at Garnet Lodge, came looking for a golf course he heard was in the area. Johan (Hagopian), Thami's partner in a diamond-mining scheme, is a jittery ex-con who tries to convince Smith, with Thami's initially passive help, to invest in their purchase of a diamond-mining claim.

As best they can, the three actors inhabit Bruce's stereotypes, trying to bring the script the mounting tension and vitality needed to make it believable. Kyle Donnelly, who staged the award-winning *Opus* for the Globe in 2009, is the director. Atmosphere is provided by scenic designer Kate Edmunds, costume designer Denitsa Bliznakova, lighting designer Russell H. Champa and sound designer Lindsay Jones.

*Groundswell* continues Tuesdays-Sundays through April 17 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, at the Old Globe's Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Tickets: [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org) or (619) 23-GLOBE.

Rating: **Three Burgoos** for ensemble

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## Post-Apartheid Character Study at Old Globe Theatre “Groundswell”



By Jack Lyons Theatre and Film Critic

Language is the province of the stage. Interesting and compelling words and ideas are the tools of the actor. In the right hands, they can become powerful motivators; capable of causing change in societies and governments, and a host of other interpersonal relationships.

This “power” is compellingly evident in The Old Globe production of Ian Bruce’s post-apartheid drama “Groundswell”. The insightful drama, currently on stage at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, is penetratingly and intelligently directed by Kyle Donnelly.

The intense political drama and psychological thriller offers a peek into the lives of three disappointed and conflicted South African men whose lives intersect at a guest lodge (during the off season) in a sleepy port town on South Africa’s west coast.

Thami (Owiso Odera), the gardener and caretaker during the off-season, and Johan (Antony Hagopian), the handy man who lives in a shack across the way, are the only winter staff. Both men share a loneliness that comes with separation and isolation which draws them together in friendship and possibly into a business partnership. Thami barely makes enough money to support his wife and children, who live back in the city he left to make his fortune. He is a trusting, gentle, but naïve man looking for any way to improve his situation and grab a piece of the brass ring for himself and his family.

Johan, a disgraced former policeman jailed for manslaughter, is now an embittered alcoholic, and must now scrape for a living any way he can. When he’s not helping out around the guest lodge, he works as a commercial diver in search of diamonds in the shoals and sea along the coastline. It’s a dangerous way to earn money and it’s destroying his life. Johan is a street-smart person who has seen the underbelly of society and is one who knows his way around the “art of persuasion”. It is their hopeless situations and the desperation of their existences, that bring the two men together; forging an improbable business partnership that results in volatile consequences. The South African government has decided to auction off previously mined sections of land to interested buyers who want to mine for diamonds privately. Thami and Johan would like to give such a venture a try, however, they have no capital. The lone guest at the lodge, Mr. Smith (Ned Schmidtke), a former investment banker who has been forced to retire to make way for younger black candidates following reconciliation, becomes the obvious target-investor for Thami and Johan. There is one problem, however, Smith is not interested in joining them in their get-rich-quick business adventure. He listens politely, but when pressed by Johan, Smith cynically asks, “Why not fob off the nation’s other spent natural resources on the hungry?”

Johan is not amused and the discussion begins to turn dark and intense as the three men ultimately reveal what it is that is eating at the craw of South African society, as well as themselves. The underlying message sent by playwright Bruce is: practically no one, black or white, has escaped untouched or untainted from the effects of the apartheid years.

Playwright Bruce himself is no stranger to the poison that was apartheid. He emigrated from South Africa to the Netherlands where he lived for seventeen years working as an actor and playwright, returning only when the country transitioned into a post-apartheid society.

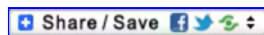
Bruce is a very passionate voice in denouncing the evils of apartheid, as was, and still is, the great South African playwright Athol Fugard. Over the years, Fugard exposed the corrosive and crippling effects of an apartheid-driven society through his bold and courageous plays. Many credit Fugard, along with the late South African writer Nadine Gordimer, with influencing Bruce. It’s an astute observation.

The cast of Odera, Hagopian, and Schmidtke is engaging and riveting and fully captures the passion of the playwright – some of Hagopian’s speeches are a little preachy and didactic, but none-the-less, are on the nose as to the facts – while at the same time allowing the actors to deliver fully nuanced character studies of their own. The play is crisply acted with precision and just the right amount of uncertainty as to its outcome. One is also struck by the authenticity of the dialects spoken by the actors.

The provocative play embraces Bruce’s vision of “Groundswell” as a metaphor for the expiation and redemption of South Africa’s apartheid years, as well as for the characters in the play.

The technical team’s contributions: Scenic design by Kate Edmunds, Costumes by Denitsa Bliznakova, Lighting by Russell H. Champa, and Sound by Lindsay Jones are all first rate.

[“Groundswell” runs through April 17, 2011.](#)



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### “GROUNDSWELL ” - The Old Globe

A joke played on an unsuspecting traveler nearly takes him over the edge, forcing him to confront his own and his country's worst nightmare. Smith wanders into an isolated guesthouse on the windswept western coast of South Africa, and all hell breaks loose. The deep-rooted problems of his homeland are played out in a bracing three-way game of cat-and-mouse.

Welcoming Smith to the inn are its two wintertime caretakers: an affable, accommodating black man and a bitter, brutal white man. On this bleak, blustery night, a buoy-bell sets the tone and keeps the rhythm, as tensions rise and tempers boil.

Thami and Johan have big plans for striking it rich. They're hoping to convince Smith to invest in their scheme to take over an abandoned diamond mine. All they need is capital. Smith has money, but he also has resentment. A former investment banker, he was pushed into premature retirement by the taking over of white jobs by black workers in the post-apartheid period. He's not interested in their caper; in fact, he thinks the mine concessions are a government scam. He's ready to celebrate his newfound freedom, and that doesn't include helping others find theirs, though Johan does everything imaginable to inflame his guilt.

Brash, abrasive Johan takes charge of the 'negotiations,' which head south from the get-go. The more desperate he becomes, the more violent. He's carrying as much baggage as dreams; age and injury may prohibit him from working any more; he doesn't have time to fool around. Thami has been plodding along at his own pace, trying to save money, get back to his impoverished wife and children, and in supporting them, prove that he's a man.

The disparate life-plans ultimately collide in a vicious confrontation. Clearly, every class has suffered from the monstrous policy of apartheid; in his own way, each of these men is displaced and disaffected.

In his 2009 thriller, "Groundswell," writer Ian Bruce plays for high stakes, and the Old Globe production, deftly directed by UCSD acting professor Kyle Donnelly, ratchets up the suspense and intensity. In a last-minute cast change, Owiso Odera, a talented UCSD alumnus performed in the 2008 Summer Shakespeare Festival at the Globe, stepped in and made Thami his own, a frightened but determined young black man whose fortitude, resolve and hope exceed those of his white counterparts: Ned Schmidtke's affably steely Smith, and Antony Hagopian's Johan, an angry, resentful hothead who, at the enigmatic end, has nothing left and nothing left to lose.

The three play off each other marvelously, in a well appointed set, backed by a wonderfully evocative soundscape. Like the characters, we onlookers are totally swept up in the Groundswell.

"Groundswell" continues through April 17 in the Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre.

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### “THE LIEUTENANT OF INISHMORE ” - Ion Theatre



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# Groundswell

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Schmidtke, Odera, Hagopian. Photo by J. Katarzyna Woronowicz.

The aftermath is often the most excruciating aspect of war. When the dust settles, exposing the rubble, the real work begins. Governments may divide the territorial spoils, but individuals must negotiate their own spaces.

That private negotiation is the focus of *Groundswell*, South African native Ian Bruce's intriguing and disquieting drama set in post-apartheid South Africa. Aptly directed by Kyle Donnelly, the production offers an uncomfortable look at the reality of race and class disparity not unique to its set country. Currently occupying the limited and confining Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre stage of San Diego's Old Globe, the play showcases three men's searches for personal peace. As the diamond mines were an integral part of both the oppression and the wealth of South Africa, it is no coincidence that they figure into the plot.

Although not a declared war in the usual sense, the social and political system labeled *apartheid* (Afrikaans for "apartness") that held more than 80% of South Africa's people hostage for forty-plus years devastated the nation and its souls. Its official ending in 1991 terminated the racial segregation and the punishing international sanctions. Nelson Mandela's election to President several years later signaled only the beginning of

## NEWS

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an ethnic and economic reconstruction depending upon South Africa's people.

Two of those people, Thami and Johan, inhabit Garnet Lodge, a beachfront resort on west South Africa's coast; a third, Smith, drops in for a visit. Each man has his own approach to reconciliation, as well as his own share of responsibility. Each bears his own wounds, and none is ready to lay down all his weapons.

The resort caretaker, Thami, could claim the most injury, yet holds out the most hope. A black man whose family was first ripped apart by decades of government-sanctioned injustices and is now struggling to salvage some means of support, Thami dreams of a house in his village, where he can be a man among his Khosa people, just living with his wife and children. Beautifully wrought and perfectly spoken by Owiso Odera, Thami is the essence of a displaced person whose search for meaning must end in a return to cultural and physical place.

His friend Johan, a former cop with a bad past and now a professional diver employed by diamond mines, has a different vision. Potently played by Antony Hagopian, Johan sees his and Thami's future in a government-declared, homesteader-like act that offers depleted diamond mines to ordinary folks who can come up with the funds to purchase a concession. His body wracked by the effects of too many dives ending in the painful condition called bends and his mind twisted by trying to maintain a middle-class existence in a third world situation, Johan envisions a wealthy retirement with his pal, Thami, and their mutual business.

It is a dark and foggy night, full of tension and the sounds of a warning (and intentionally irritating?) sea bell when Smith, a retired banker looking for a golf course in this port town, arrives for a stay in the guesthouse. Ned Schmidtke portrays Smith's entitled white man character precisely, but he needs more time with a dialect coach to avoid lapsing into Southern U.S. twang.

The unforeseen visitor inspires Johan to make a plan for financing the concession that will liberate him and Thami from their current financial doldrums. He will convince Smith to invest the funds and become a partner, and the trio will reap the spoils.

Unfortunately, Smith is much more pessimistic about the venture than the others, labeling it a government scam and immediately tweaking Johan into vicious mode. Alternating between aggressive physical threats and equally brutal blame

---

-game guilt-assignment, Johan forces a showdown that dissolves the alliance he thought he had. He launches into a (too long) diatribe full of accusations against Smith, a businessman who benefited most obviously from apartheid. In demanding that Smith compensate Thami for white domination, Johan declares that white South Africans fear their black compatriots, a truth that accounts for the "white flight" of the mid 1990s and the current uneasy cultural climate of the country. The absence of war does not mean peace comes to all its citizens.



The anticipated groundswell did not, and does not happen. None of the men wins this battle, but maybe one of them, like the peacemaker president, retains his honor.

*"Groundswell" by Ian Bruce plays at the Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre through April 17.*

*Performances: Tues-Weds at 7 p.m.; Thurs-Sat at 8 p.m.; Sun at 7 p.m. Sat & Sun matinees at 2 p.m.*

*Tickets: \$29-\$67, with discounts for full-time students, patrons 29 and under, seniors and groups.*

*Reservations: online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or at the box office, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.*

*Reviewer January Riddle served in South Africa as Educational Resource Specialist in the U.S. Peace Corps from July, 2002 to October, 2004.*

# Groundswell

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The legacy of Apartheid lives on even today, two decades after the end of its ugly segregationist laws, in Groundswell, Ian Bruce's ninety-minute psychological thriller now getting an absolutely swell Southern California production at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre.

On the surface, Groundswell's plot seems a simple one. Two South African friends, one white, one black, attempt to persuade a wealthy white fellow countryman to invest in their somewhat shady diamond mining scheme.

Policeman turned alcoholic handyman Johan (Antony Hagopian) and gardener-caretaker Thami (Owiso Odera) work at a remote seaside guest lodge on South Africa's West Coast. The two have invited businessman (and lodge guest) Smith (Ned Schmidtke) to dinner tonight in hopes of turning their gone-sour lives around. Their get-rich scheme may be Johan's inspiration, but Thami is an essential part of it, the government's offer to auction off portions of an abandoned diamond mine available only to businesses with at least one black partner. All the down-on-their-luck buddies need to complete the transaction is the cash Johan is certain they can convince Smith to invest.

Though it takes a good while for Groundswell to get past the long stretches of dialog that set the scene for its gripping final half-hour, once it has arrived there, the result makes for truly edge-of-your-seat theater.

Rendering Groundswell much more than just a conventional psychological thriller is the extent to which Apartheid's legacy plays a part in its unfolding. As a black man barely scrounging enough money to send home to the wife and children he has left behind in the city, Thami would seem to be the most obvious victim of Apartheid, but he is not the only one. Ex-policeman Johan not only lost his career in law enforcement but ended up jailed for manslaughter when he shot and killed a black man who pointed a finger at him, a finger Johan assumed was a gun. (Would he have made the same assumption had the man been white?) Reduced now to working as a commercial diver, a job which is slowly but surely destroying his health, Johan sees this money-making scheme as a do-or-die last chance at financial and personal salvation. As for Smith, no amount of charitable contributions can erase his sense of white guilt for the evils of Apartheid, a guilt a steadily drunker Johan attempts to take advantage of through the art of persuasion, and if that doesn't work, a knife just may do the trick.

Under Kyle Donnelly's highly assured direction, all three actors give pitch-perfect performances, work that rises to a bravura level as Groundswell heads towards its powerful final moments.

Kate Edmund's splendid in-the-round scenic design makes the audience at the Sheryl And Harvey White Theatre virtual flies on the wall as Groundswell's plot twists unravel. Denitsa Bliznakova has designed three character-reflecting costumes, Russell H. Champa's fine lighting design accentuates the suspense, and sound designer Lindsay Jones scores highest marks for the wind and waves which situate us on South Africa's icy West Coast, and for the subtle underscoring that keeps us ever further on the edge of our seats. Dialect coach Gillian Lane-Plescia shares credit for what seem to be three spot-on South African accents. Annette

Ye is stage manager.

Groundswell makes for a terrific companion piece for Athol Fugard's many plays about South Africa then and now. Apartheid may be a dark stain on South Africa's history, but as Groundswell proves once again, it has inspired some absolutely first-rate theater.

Old Globe Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, Balboa Park, San Diego.

[Click here](#) for current performance schedule, closing date, and reservation line.

[www.oldglobe.org](http://www.oldglobe.org)

--Steven Stanley

March 27, 2011

Photos: J. Katarzyna Woronowicz







The role of Johan is played by [Antony Hagopian](http://www.imdb.com/person.php?id=459167) (<http://www.imdb.com/person.php?id=459167>) (from Broadway's "Frost/Nixon") and [Owiso Odera](http://owiso.com/) (<http://owiso.com/>) is Thami ("The Overwhelming" at Roundabout Theatre Company and "Romeo and Juliet" at The Public Theater). Hagopian's energy is powerful and drives the action. He successfully portrays a complex character in search of redemption and willing to risk everything to find it. Odera is an adequate Thami, an honest fellow with moderate convictions in the possibilities ahead and who struggles to move forward in a world of racial inequity. The character of Smith is played by the brilliant [Ned Schmidtke](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0773307/bio) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0773307/bio>) ("Aren't We All?" Broadway and National Tour.) The trio does a great job at building the dramatic tension in this complicated tale of greed. Johan knows that only drastic measures can help tip the racial scale, but Thami doesn't feel quite comfortable breaking the rules. The rules, new laws introduced by the government in an attempt to mend the damage generated by apartheid, such as affirmative action, are fresh in Smith's mind. He has worked hard to succeed and doesn't want to see his accomplishments undermined in spite of obvious racial advantages. In "Groundswell," race becomes the argument used to justify a man's own right to wealth.

Patricia Humeau

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Page 1 of 2

## Three fine actors face a 'Groundswell' at Old Globe

**BY DIANA SAENGER  
REVIEW**

Patrons taking their seats in The Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre for "Groundswell" see a seaside lodge in South Africa on the stage before them. The sounds of continuous crashing waves and an occasional sea-bell clang set the mood for the nautical tale. The boding scene soon becomes the backdrop for a psychological thriller that builds to a powerful conclusion that will change the lives of three men.

Owiso Odera portrays Thami, a South African still reeling from the Apartheid aftermath. As he pens a letter to his wife (back in the city and caring for the couple's children) Thami reveals an ocean of heartfelt regret that he's away from his family. He vows to work hard and be with them again soon.

Local diver and Thami's good friend, Johan (Anthony Hagopian)

### **If you go**

**What:** "Groundswell"  
**Where:** The Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park  
**When:** Evenings and matinees through April 17  
**Tickets:** \$29-\$67  
**Phone:** (619) 23-GLOBE  
**Website:** [TheOldGlobe.org](http://TheOldGlobe.org)

enters the dining room and makes small talk with Thami about his dreams and how far he's willing to go to make them come true. The conversation turns to the car in the parking lot that belongs to a lodge guest.

At first Johan questions his friend about what he knows of Mr. Smith (Ned Schmidtke). But as the conversation turns serious, Thami learns that Johan knows everything

about Mr. Smith because he broke into his car.

Johan and Thami are hoping to take advantage of a government offer to purchase a commission, a small piece of land that might hold hidden diamonds. Johan asserts they should approach Mr. Smith over dinner to become a third partner with them. Smith will put up the money, and the two of them will put up the sweat equity. Thami is onboard as long as Johan (an alcoholic) agrees not to drink or let Mr. Smith know he's a former police officer who served jail time for murder.

When Mr. Smith arrives for dinner, the scene becomes a three-ring circus as playwright Ian Bruce turns each character inside out. Johan, gulping drink after drink behind Thami's back, becomes unruly. He threatens Mr. Smith if he won't pay redemption for having a good life. Hagopian (as Johan) plays the perfect villain, eliciting sympathy for his plight





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Page 2 of 2

before revealing his true self.

Thami, a good and moral man, attempts to rein in Johan's threats, but is drawn in by Johan's hypnotic tirades of "this is for us" and insinuations that he is not measuring up to being a man.

Odera (who plays Thami superbly) is a UCSD grad. We feel his agony over missing his family, we flinch when he does after an inappropriate action by Johan, and just maybe we understand how he's easily swayed to the dark side.

Schmidtke steers Mr. Smith along a gentle slope of revelation. At first he's patient as he listens to the men's business deal, but then he tells them it is probably a scam and negotiations get ugly when Johan pulls out a long knife.

As bells from the buoys in the foggy sea ring out warnings to approaching boats, the situation inside the lodge becomes far more threatening.



**Johan (Antony Hagopian) tempts Mr. Smith (Ned Schmidtke) with a business deal in Ian Bruce's 'Groundswell.'** PHOTO: J. KATARZYNA WORONOWICZ

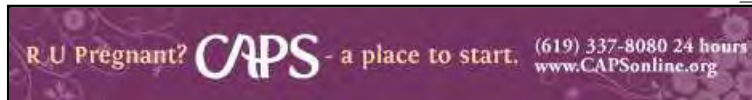
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## **Chaotic thriller ‘Groundswell’ is riveting**

David Dixon,

Posted on 07 April 2011.



Owiso Odera, Antony Hagopian and Ned Schmidtke give outstanding performances in this clever production about schemers looking for a way to strike it rich. Courtesy of [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org)

There is something darkly magical about “Groundswell,” an absorbing drama now playing at The Old Globe Theatre. It starts out as a sentimental semi-satire about a shady economic business, and eventually becomes a shockingly chaotic thriller.

Thami (Owiso Odera) is a poor caretaker of a South African beachfront guesthouse. His mysterious friend, Johan (Antony Hagopian) thinks he has found a surefire way to make both of them rich. The plan is to buy a deserted diamond mine, which is said to contain diamonds worth tons of cash. For this to happen, they need to find an investor. Johan tells Thami a new visitor to the area, Smith (Ned Schmidtke), is a highly successful businessman. Everything about Johan’s idea is completely illogical, yet he still believes if Smith has



dinner with them, he might agree to make their dream a reality.

Ian Bruce’s smart and insightful script could have easily taken several different paths in how the events unfold. During the opening scenes, audience members might be fooled into thinking the play is a comedy-drama. At the very beginning of dinner, Johan talks to Smith like a sketchy traveling salesman. These moments are funny because Johan can be such a wannabe entrepreneur in the way he tries to persuade the retired guest.

After Smith finds out the truth about Thami and Johan, “Groundswell” shifts gears. Believing fate is the reason Smith came to their hotel, Johan becomes something of an intellectual terrorist and hopes his close friend will follow whatever actions he dictates. From that point on, the events in the story become more wildly unpredictable.

All three actors give phenomenal performances. Odera conveys plenty of sympathy as Thami, making him the moral center. Schmidtke’s character, Smith, might be the riskiest one to portray. Self-made wealthy men are not usually the most relatable people, in real life or in fiction, but what the performer is able to accomplish is nothing short of amazing. Schmidtke finds the humanity in a person who many cynical people would label as “the Man.”




Hagopian is compelling and scary in his portrayal of Johan. The performance brings to mind Christian Bale in the way he manages to create so much effective intensity from the smallest of gestures.

Russell H. Champa’s lighting design, along with Lindsay Jones’ sound design produces a surreal tone. In several moments, the lighting dims while psychedelic music can be easily heard in the background. Those sequences happen when the action is at its most bleak.

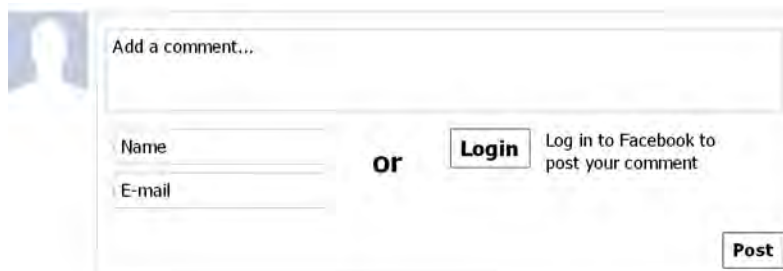
“Groundswell” cannot be described as feel-good theater, but the result is well worth watching. It is the kind of production that stays unpredictable about where the situations will go next. For viewers who crave riveting tension mixed with originality, this should be a satisfying evening.

Tickets and information about “Groundswell” can be found on [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).

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# The Old Globe: featuring two culturally-relevant shows

## *"Groundswell" explores South African racial anxieties in a three-man play*

By Kyle Strickland

"Groundswell," a play written by Ian Bruce and directed by Kyle Donnelly, arrived at the renowned Old Globe in March and is nearly ready to depart the stage with its final show this weekend. This short yet dense play is not to be missed; it is full of tense situations and deep emotions. The drama embodies the anxious post-apartheid sentiment of its setting in South Africa, especially highlighting how both white and black citizens struggled to cope with the aftereffects of the racial system's demise.

Performed without an intermission, this play features three characters whose lives are fraught with secret pain and tension. Thami, played by Owiso Odera, is an African man living away from his family, working in a rental cottage to provide for them and hoping for a big break to help him buy his own farm. Johan, played by Antony Hagopian, is a white friend of Thami's who has worked long and hard diving for diamonds in the sea nearby after leaving the police force under mysterious circumstances.

As the two discuss the possibility of finding a big break, Johan realizes that the third and final character, the wealthy cottage guest, Smith (Ned Schmidtke), could be the investor they have been looking for. Their goal is to invest in a government

concession that would provide them with the means to excavate diamonds in the nearby mines. Smith is an older gentleman whose wealth is obvious and in stark contrast to the other men. With Johan's overbearing insistence that Thami go along with his plan, the possibility that all the men will clash only increases as alcohol begins to pour.

The play features a completely static set, which allows for the true nature of the characters and their struggles to stand out. From beginning to end, the play's action remains within the confines of the rental cottage. As day turns to night and stormy weather effects reflect growing tension, the situation grows dangerous. With only three characters in the play, the audience is able to develop a full understanding of each man's struggles, while the night peels back the layers of the characters' pasts and forces out repressed anger towards their society's injustices.

The problematic idea of compensation dominated in the play, lending a powerful emotional side that is reflective of sentiment present not only in South Africa, but in the United States as well. This made the play relevant to the American idea of identity in comparison to our segregated history, and the actors demonstrated these anxieties all too well in their performances.

Aside from the many positive

aspects of the play, there were a few minor detractors to the overall experience. Even though the play was only a single act and not significant in length, the action tended to drag slowly in the beginning. Johan and Thami spent what seemed like ages in iterative arguments over the same things.

The characters moved in and out very little, all three staying on stage for the bulk of the play. While this definitely seemed intentional in order to solely emphasize the character development, the play could have used a bit more action to spice up the transitions throughout the play.

Senior Jen Gabrielli reacted to the action in the play, agreeing with the decision to force the characters into close proximity with no distractions.

"I appreciated the playwright's volleying of dialogue between the characters over who owed compensation to who," Gabrielli said. "I thought it represented both sides well and provided a fair argument, which demonstrated the troubles faced by the entire society. I did think that the action was somewhat anticlimactic, however, because the end result was not too hard to guess."

Despite minor diversions, this play is definitely worth a viewing. Hurry this weekend to one of the final showings of "Groundswell" at The Old Globe, before this pertinent cultural and racial drama disappears.

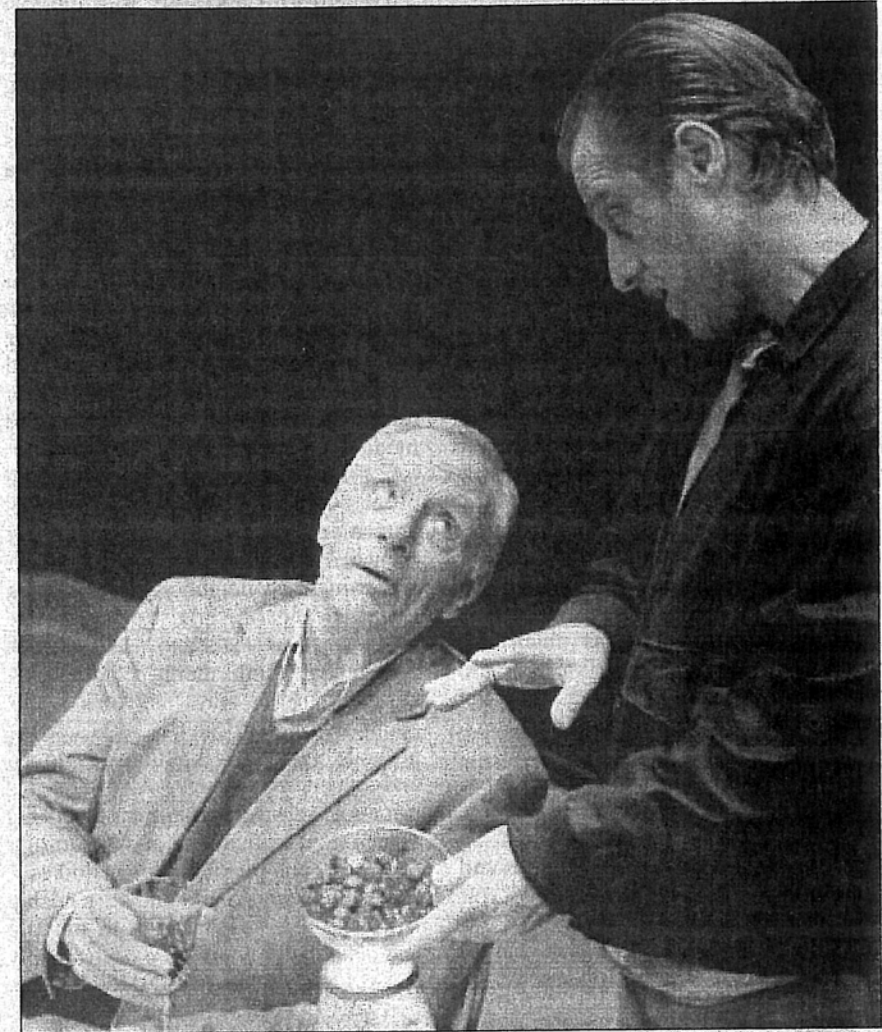


Photo Courtesy of the Old Globe

Johan (Hagopian) tries to tempt Smith (Schmidtke) with jewels to invest in his scheme.



## *"Rafta, Rafta..." pokes fun at generational differences of British-Indian immigrants*

By Kyle Strickland

"Rafta, Rafta..." is Jonathan Silverstein's rendition of the Olivier Award-winning British comedy. This play, originally written by Ayub Khan-Din, is a humorous look at the complex intertwining of two first-generation Indian families in England. The play's cast includes Kamal Marayati as the hilariously entertaining father, Eeshwar Dutt, and Gita Reddy as Lata Patel, the proper Indian mother who is humorously too involved in her daughter's new marriage.

A marriage between the children of the two families kicks off the comedy, with both bride and groom having grown up in England. The differences groom Atul Dutt, played by Rachid Sabitri, and new wife Vina Patel, played by Mahira Kakkar, have from their parents are notable, leading to hilarious situations and awkward moments.

The crux of the humor in the play is the couple's decision to live in Atul's home until they have enough money to move into their own. Laughter was abundant as the couple returned to the groom's family's home to begin their new life together, only to be barraged with witty sexual innuendos about what their first night together would inevitably bring.

Unfortunately, Atul and Vina

underestimated the pressures of the contrasting traditions of their parents and those of their peers in England. A month later, a big problem has arisen, or Atul's case, does not arise. More puns ensue as the audience finds out that Atul cannot quite get it up, causing an awkward and silent problem between him and his wife. From here, the comedy continues, as more and more family members become involved in their very personal problems.

The show takes place in the Dutt home on a large, two-story set. Beautiful stage lights, Indian music and a few snippets of live singing make this show exciting and fresh, and the action is relatively dynamic. Multiple layers exist in the plot, adding to a diverse show that grabs attention through both comedy and relatable family issues. Atul, for example, is obviously having some daddy issues, which are only compounded by the fact that the rest of his family keeps him from getting any real alone time to actually consummate his marriage.

The impotence issue, though funny, actually leads to some tense, dramatic moments. The audience gasped when Atul shouted at his wife on their wedding night, providing a darker contrast to the airy humor leading up to it. He snapped at her after their bed broke underneath them, stopping their first attempt at

having sex and revealing how much Atul's family had been bothering him all night. These moments, though important, digress from the overall light mood of the play, and somewhat hurt its comedic aspect.

USD Senior Akhil Israni noted that the comedy didn't encompass the essence of Indian family drama enough to be truly hilarious.

"It was funny at certain points, of course," Israni said, "but it seemed like an inaccurate depiction of an Indian family, which made me confused more than amused overall. The accents were especially off, and this stood out a little too much in my opinion."

Despite these minor drawbacks, audiences were still smiling and laughing throughout the play. The married couple's struggle with fitting into two completely opposite cultures is dealt with expertly, expressing both the realistic angst and humor. The good-natured presentation of the newlyweds' naivety is inspiring and fun to watch.

The Old Globe will be showing this comedy until April 24. Whether you are Indian, British or American, the pressures depicted of trying to find one's own place in the world will undoubtedly speak to you. A good comedy reveals our true nature and helps us laugh at it, and this is exactly what "Rafta, Rafta..." achieves.

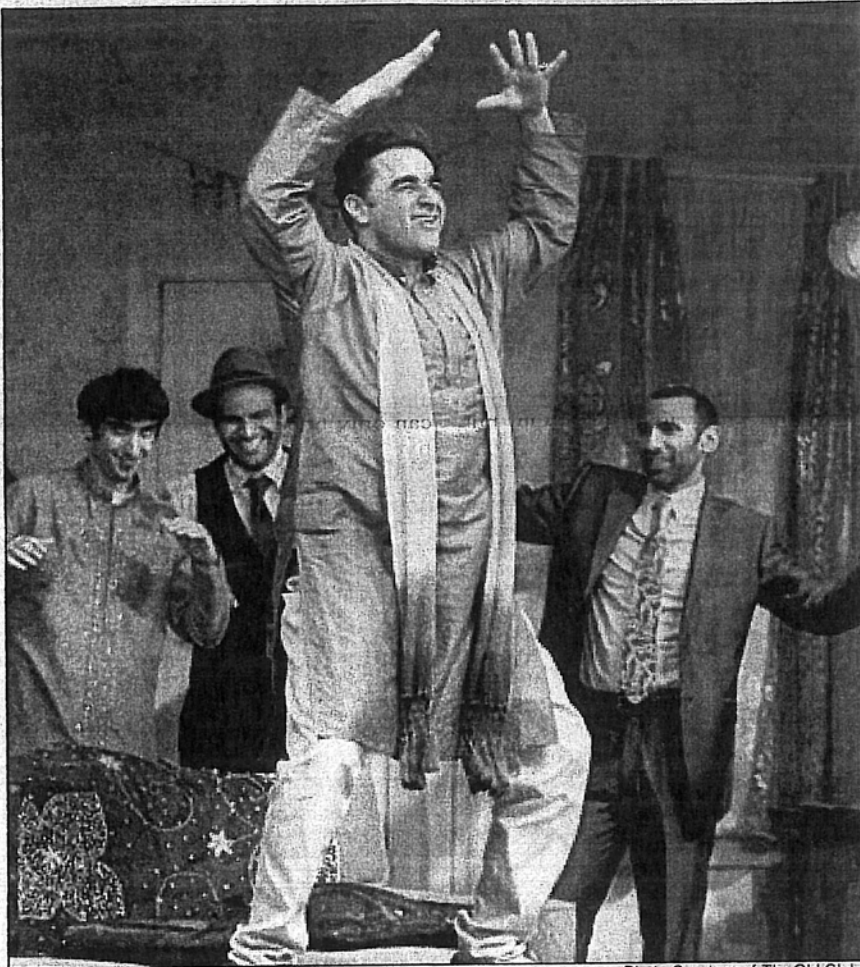


Photo Courtesy of The Old Globe

Kamal Marayati is table-dancing Eeshwar Dutt in this witty comedy.

# The Old Globe: featuring two culturally-relevant shows

## "Rafta, Rafta..." pokes fun at generational differences of British-Indian immigrants

By [Kyle Strickland](#)

**Published:** Wednesday, April 13, 2011

**Updated:** Wednesday, April 13, 2011 15:04

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# FEATURES



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Page 1 of 4

## Arts

In 'Groundswell,' three South Africans struggle to come together in a post-apartheid world

Across North Africa and the Middle East, revolution ignites, tyrants are toppled, legions of the newly liberated rejoice. ■ But what happens when the euphoria fades and it's time to face rebuilding a society from scratch?

To witness one still-developing answer to that question, the peoples of Tunisia and Egypt and Libya might look to the far tip of Africa, where for some 20 years a country has been struggling to remake itself — and reconcile a combustible mix of lingering traumas and animosities.

Ian Bruce's play "Groundswell," which opens at the Old Globe Theatre this week, is set in modern-day South Africa, a nation that broke the shackles of brutal racial apartheid, but now is riven by corruption, crime and other troubles.

"Groundswell" in some ways tells a story specific to South Africa. It's about three men — two white, one black — whose nation's painful past meshes with their own difficult histories to lead them toward a potentially deadly confrontation.

But its playwright perceives strong parallels to the spirit of popular rebellion now gripping lands to the north.

"I think it's a huge event," Bruce says of that wave of uprisings. "It's probably the equivalent of the fall of apartheid. It's people saying 'No,' and putting their lives on the

line to say it. That's what ended apartheid as well.

"What we don't know is what comes after. I think that's what South Africans have become aware of: What happens the day after the victory?"

Bruce has seen South Africa grapple with its problems over a span of decades. A politically active playwright there in his youth, he eventually went into a 17-year exile in the Netherlands.

While there, he spent some time with Athol Fugard, his fellow playwright and a South African national hero for his courageous anti-apartheid writing. (Fugard now lives in Del Mar and has been outspoken in his concern for the present plight of South Africa.)

Bruce returned home after apartheid fell in the early '90s. He now serves as executive director of the Cape Town-based New Africa Theatre Association, which educates destitute black youths from the surrounding townships. But his own chil-

SEE 'GROUNDSWELL' • E6

### "Groundswell"

#### Old Globe Theatre

**When:** Previews begin March 12. Opens March 17. Schedule: 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays (no matinees March 12, 13 or April 2); plus 2 p.m. March 30. Through April 17.

**Where:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park.

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

**Phone:** (619) 234-5623

**Online:** theoldglobe.org





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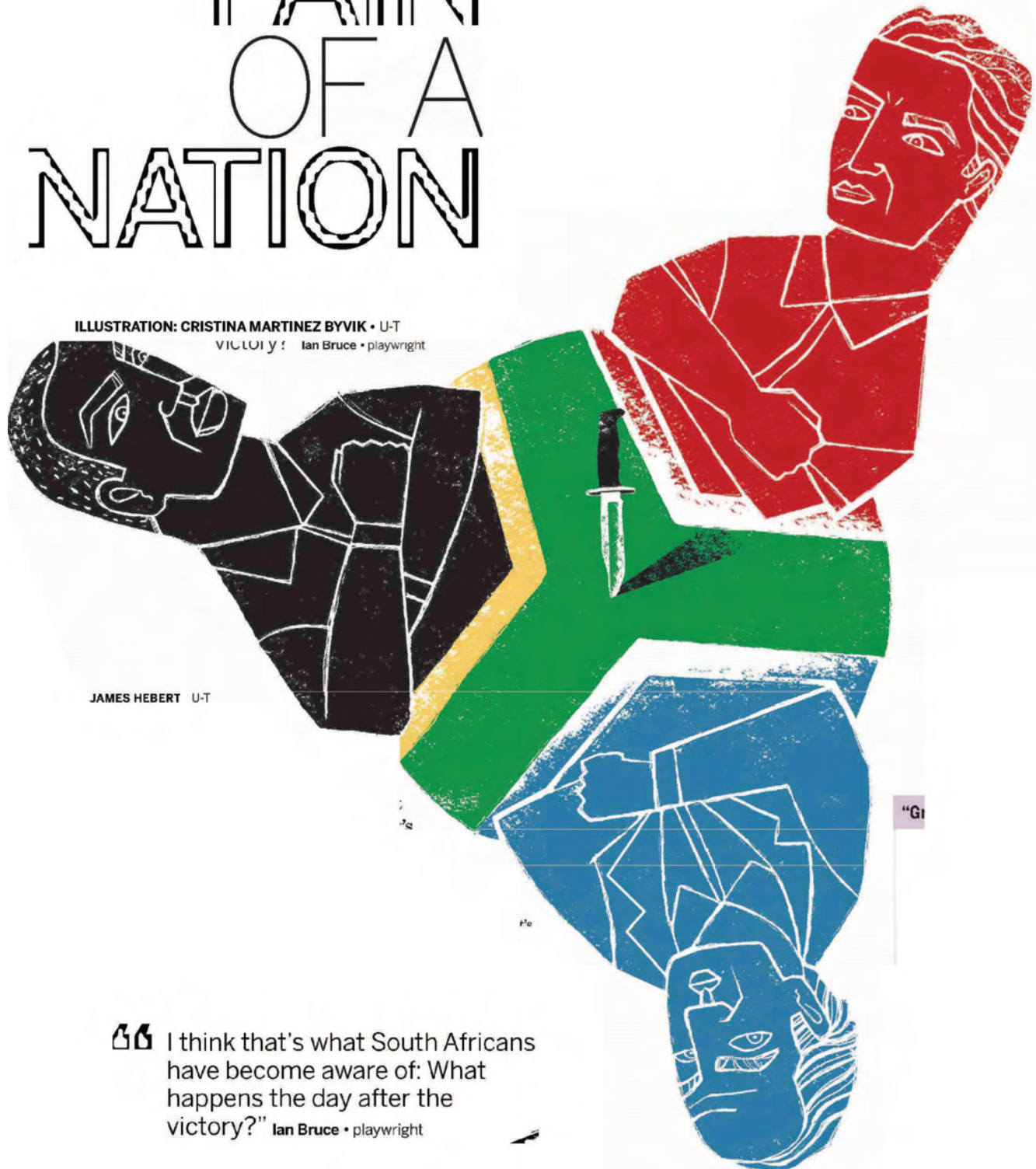
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Page 2 of 4

# PAIN OF A NATION

ILLUSTRATION: CRISTINA MARTINEZ BYVIK • U-T  
VICTORY: Ian Bruce • playwright



JAMES HEBERT U-T

“ I think that’s what South Africans have become aware of: What happens the day after the victory?” Ian Bruce • playwright



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Page 3 of 4

## 'GROUNDSWELL' • Play focuses on the frustration that follows a revolution

FROM E1  
dren, now young adults, are "not finding a life for themselves here," he says. One lives in Holland; the other plans to leave soon.

### Elusive common ground

There's a similar thread in "Groundswell" for the character Smith (played by Ned Schmidtke), an older white South African whose privileged way of life has been sharply altered post-apartheid.

Smith has found himself at an isolated seaside lodge whose caretakers are Johan (Antony Hagopian), a white ex-policeman and laborer with a shadowy past, and Thami (Mfundo Morrison), a black gardener who's been separated from his family in the city.

Thami and Johan have designs on acquiring an old diamond mine that the government plans to auction off, but they need money to do it. Smith, they discover, has money, but not much faith in their plan. Trapped at the lodge by a persistent fog, the three rush toward violence instead of compromise.

Bruce says the characters and situation sprang from his observations of the conflicts among different sectors of modern South African society, and his frustration with the difficulties in finding common ground among them.

"The premise of it that got me going was, what if everyone who was differ-

ent got together and decided to help each other?" the playwright says.

"I lived in that area where those diamonds were. There was a lot that could have come out of just



Ian Bruce

the little source of wealth. But the undercurrents of the past do not allow for people to come together on a project and (improve) each other's lives."

The story also underscores the obstacles to finding simple solutions in a place with such a complex legacy of shame. People like Smith didn't invent apartheid, but they undeniably benefited from it.

"Why shouldn't this man with money help these guys who clearly in some ways are victims of that past, of that legacy?" as Bruce puts it. "He had the ability to do it. He could have done it. But it's not as easy as that.

"I think that's what 'Groundswell' is saying, for me. That it's just not going to happen like that. And in fact, it's not happening like that."

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Morrison's Thami, meanwhile, seems torn between calming the volatile Johan and letting Smith take the full force of his words. (One compelling real-life twist: Morrison's parents were themselves political refugees from South Africa.)

Donnelly says the play's innate suspense is a big part of what drew her to it.

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But "our job is not to give (the audience) a history lesson. I'm more interested (as a director) in the metaphorical world of the play.

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And living in a nation mired in its own kind of limbo.

"There's a certain line of thinking that goes, when the revolution happens, everything's going to change," says Bruce. "And when it doesn't, there's huge disappointment, huge disillusionment. And at the end of it all, there's an anger that drives

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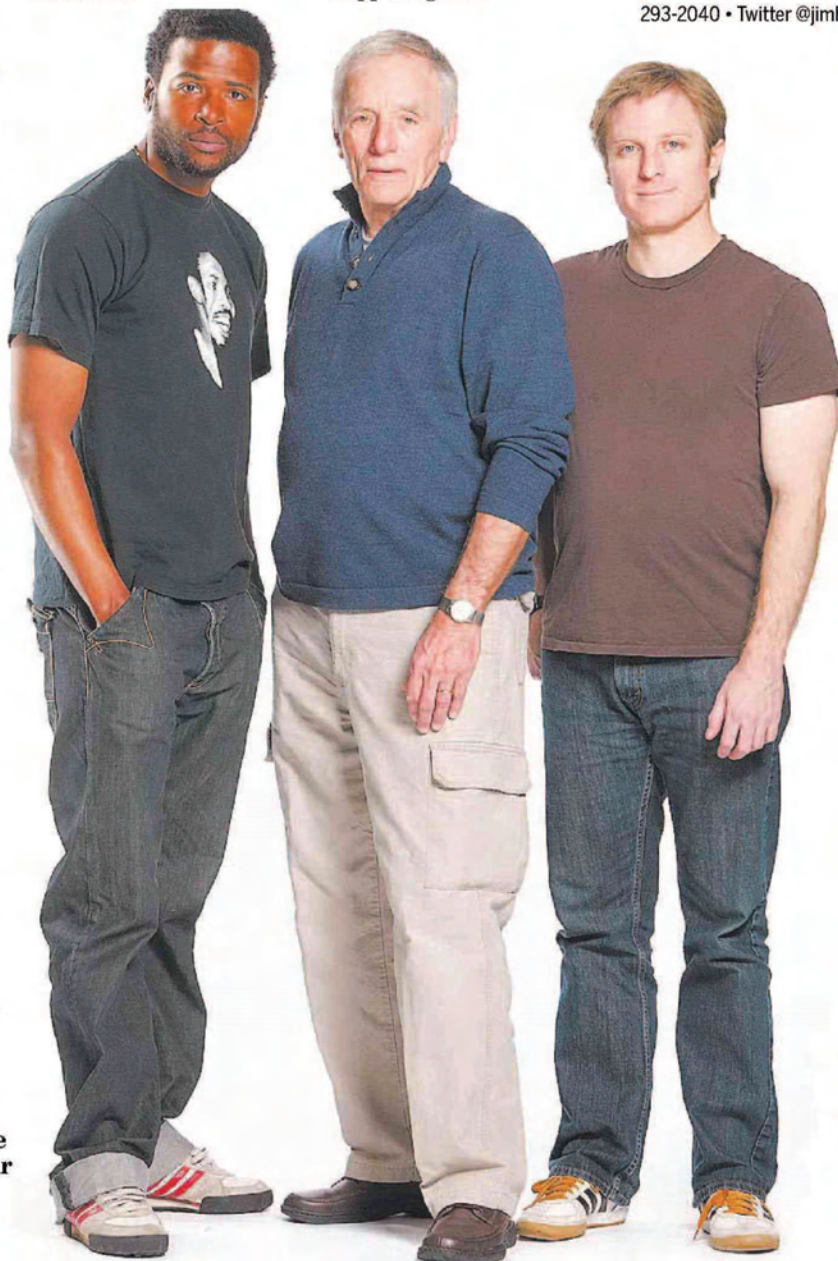
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jim.hebert@uniontrib.com • (619) 293-2040 • Twitter @jimhebert

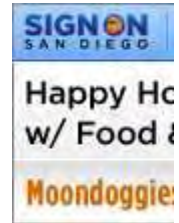


**From left: Mfundo Morrison, Ned Schmidtke and Antony Hagopian star in Ian Bruce's "Groundswell" at The Old Globe.**  
J. KATARZYNA WORONOWICZ



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## Theater preview: 'Groundswell' maps a nation's pain

In Old Globe play, three South Africans try to reconcile past agonies

 BY [JAMES HEBERT](#)

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2011 AT 10:46 A.M.

Across North [Africa](#) and the [Middle East](#), revolution ignites, tyrants are toppled, legions of the newly liberated rejoice. But what happens when the euphoria fades and it's time to face rebuilding a society from scratch?

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EDUARDO CONTRERAS

- and reconcile a combustible mix of lingering traumas and animosities.

Mfundo Morrison, Antony Hagopian and Ned Schmidtke (left to right) rehearse a scene from "Groundswell" at the Old Globe.

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## A twist of fate traps three men in “Groundswell” at the Old Globe

By **Diana Saenger**

*Contributor*

Post apartheid South Africa may seem far away from here, but the tale that unravels in “Groundswell,” which is set there, is one many Old Globe audience members may relate too quite easily. Written by Ian Bruce and director by Kyle Donnelly, the thriller follows three men who traverse a tightrope of greed and desperation in a chaotic scheme.

The cast includes Antony Hagopian (Johan), Mfundo Morrison (Thami), and Ned Schmidtke as Smith. Before rehearsals got underway, the trio was presented with background material to reacquaint them with the history, said Schmidtke who plays an investment banker. Schmidtke said the play’s setting is the far west coast of South Africa near the Namibia border where the area has been left dredged and desolate by diamond mine conglomerates.





Mfundo Morrison, Ned Schmidtke and Antony Hagopian star in Ian Bruce's 'Groundswell' at the Old Globe. Photo: J. Katarzyna Woronowicz.

"This is a contemporary play, kind of like (Jean-Paul) Sartre's 'No Exit,' " Schmidtke said. "In 'Groundswell,' you can't change a society or erase the scars that a society or culture has inflicted upon people's souls; and by decree it takes a long time to heal as we know in this country as well."

Schmidtke worked with director Donnelly ("The Constant Wife," "Dancing at Lughnasa") years ago and has performed at the Globe in the productions of "The Pleasure of His Company," "Sea of Tranquility," "A Body of Water," "Blue/Orange" and "Pericles." He has also starred in many television and film roles.

"I'm thrilled to return to Globe, it's like coming home," Schmidtke said. "The people here – past and present – are wonderful to work with, and so is Kyle. She's smart, suggests rather than demands, asks questions of the actors that lead to discoveries, and is an acting teacher who trusts her actors and wants them to follow their instincts and then shapes them."

Schmidtke knows what it takes to bring a play to the stage. He earned a B.A. in speech and theatre arts at Beloit College in Wisconsin, and received his Masters in directing at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh where he went on to be a stage manager and director at the Pittsburgh Playhouse for five years.

Schmidtke said he totally understands the conflict in "Groundswell."

"These are three guys with shifting alliances and all with considerable need and the energy to suave that need," he said. "They are literally locked-in together in this remote area because of the fog and left to thrash it out."

With a haunting background and back-story, the psychological drama feels perfect for the intimate Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. "It all happens in an emotionally charged and dangerous environment," Schmidtke said. "And the characters are hewn out of a culture we know about from a distance in the news – but these are living breathing corporeal people that bring the news to life."

#### If you go

**What:** 'Groundswell'

**Where:** Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park

**Previews:** 8 p.m. March 12 and 7 p.m. March 13-16. **Performances:** 7 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sunday; 7 p.m. Sundays through April 17

**Tickets:** \$29-\$67

**Contact:** (619) 23-GLOBE. [TheOldGlobe.org](http://TheOldGlobe.org)

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# Twist of fate traps three men in 'Groundswell' at The Globe

## If you go

- **What:**  
'Groundswell'
- **Where:**  
Sheryl and Harvey  
White Theatre,  
1363 Old Globe Way,  
Balboa Park
- **Previews:**
  - 8 p.m. March 12
  - 7 p.m. March 13-16
- **Performances:**
  - 7 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesdays
  - 8 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays
  - 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sunday
  - 7 p.m. Sundays through April 17
- **Tickets:**  
\$29-\$67
- **Contact:**  
(619) 23-GLOBE
- **Website:**  
TheOldGlobe.org

BY DIANA SAENGER

Post apartheid South Africa may seem far away from here, but the tale that unravels in "Groundswell," which is set there, is one many Old Globe audience members may relate too quite easily. Written by Ian Bruce and directed by Kyle Donnelly, the thriller follows three men who traverse a tightrope of greed and desperation in a chaotic scheme.

The cast includes Anthony Hagopian (Johan), Mfundo Morrison (Thami), and Ned Schmidtke as Smith. Before rehearsals got underway, the trio was presented with background material to acquaint them with the history, said Schmidtke who plays an investment banker. Schmidtke said the play's setting is the far west coast of South Africa near the Namibia border where the area has been left dredged and desolate by diamond mine conglomerates.

"This is a contemporary play, kind of like (Jean-Paul) Sartre's 'No Exit,'" Schmidtke said. "In 'Groundswell,' you can't change a society or erase the scars that a

society or culture has inflicted upon people's souls; and by decree it takes a long time to heal as we know in this country as well."

Schmidtke worked with director Donnelly ("The Constant Wife," "Dancing at Lughnasa") years ago and has performed at the Globe in the productions of "The Pleasure of His Company," "Sea of Tranquility," "A Body of Water," "Blue/Orange" and "Pericles." He has also starred in many television and film roles.

"I'm thrilled to return to



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**Mfundo Morrison, Ned Schmidtke and Antony Hagopian star in Ian Bruce's 'Groundswell' at the Old Globe.**

J. KATARZYNA WORONOWICZ

Globe, it's like coming home," Schmidtke said. "The people here — past and present — are wonderful to work with, and so is Kyle. She's smart, suggests rather than demands, asks questions of the actors that lead to discoveries, and is an acting teacher who trusts her actors and wants them to follow their instincts and then shapes them."

Schmidtke knows what it takes to bring a play to the stage. He earned a B.A. in speech and theatre arts at Beloit College in Wisconsin, and received his Masters in directing at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh where he went on to be a stage manager and director at the Pittsburgh Playhouse for five years.

Schmidtke said he totally understands the conflict in "Groundswell." "These are

three guys with shifting alliances and all with considerable need and the energy to suave that need," he said. "They are literally locked-in together in this remote area because of the fog and left to thrash it out."

With a haunting background and back-story, the psychological drama feels perfect for the intimate Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre. "It all happens in an emotionally charged and dangerous environment," Schmidtke said. "And the characters are hewn out of a culture we know about from a distance in the news — but these are living breathing corporeal people that bring the news to life."





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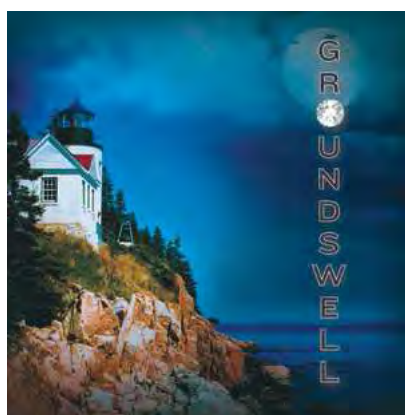
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## UCSD grad gets a 'Groundswell' of recognition

by Charlene Baldrige

5 days ago | 327 views | 0 | 1 |



*This poster art represents the Old Globe show "Groundswell," a story of a diamond diver in South Africa. Courtesy photo*

Owiso Odera received South African playwright Ian Bruce's script of "Groundswell" on March 11, and the young actor-on-the-rise was word perfect in previews beginning the following Tuesday and leading up to opening night on March 17, said Old Globe Executive Producer Louis G. Spisto.

Like many alumni of the University of California, San Diego's highly ranked three-year Master of Fine Arts theater program, Odera has been busy with stage and television roles since his graduation in 2005. He was in the midst of a pilot season when he got the call informing him that the originally cast Mfundo Morris had left the company. Spisto said show director Kyle Donnelly and Globe management ousted Morris.

Donnelly, who has an excellent feel for the taut, suspenseful "Groundswell," heads the university's

MFA actor training program, so there is a strong connection to be savored in what's happening now at the Old Globe. She staged the Globe's award-winning "Opus," among others.

Odera is already a Globe veteran, having played Mercutio in "Romeo and Juliet" during the 2008 Shakespeare Festival.

"Groundswell" concerns three men who come together at Garnet Lodge, a beachfront guest house in a small port town on the west coast of South Africa. Because it's off-season, the inn's owners have left their trusted employee Thami (Odera) in charge. Having left his wife and children behind, Thami came to the town originally looking for his father, who had disappeared. He goes to work for the inn's owners and picks up the occasional raw diamond and sells it illegally, or as he says, "informally."

The government has opened up seven diamond parcels along the coast. Thami and his ex-con friend, an Afrikaner diamond diver named Johan (Antony Hagopian), aspire to a parcel even though they don't have the funds to qualify.

The alcoholic Johan is devious, volatile and hell-bent on extracting, by whatever means necessary, needed funds from the inn's sole guest, Smith (played by the excellent Ned Schmidtke). Smith stumbled upon the Garnet Inn thinking there was a golf course nearby. In truth he is a rudderless, forcibly "retired" investment broker with some means. Conveniently for Johan's purposes, Smith is a widower whose children, like so many Afrikaners, moved elsewhere rather than endure the social and political chaos that followed the ending of Apartheid.



Tension builds as Johan goes about his nefarious purpose. As each man reveals his story, he becomes representative of an archetype in South African history. All are disenfranchised. All struggle to find a purpose and a handhold in the new society.

It's a fascinating play with extraordinary acting. As usual the Old Globe's supporting elements, visual and aural, are excellent. Scenic designer Kate Edmunds creates the 100-year-old inn, which features rough-hewn furniture and décor reflecting the coast's flora and fauna. Denitsa Bliznakova is costume designer; Russell H. Champa, lighting designer; and Lindsay Jones, sound designer. Dialect coach Gillian Lane-Plescia effects accents that are believable yet understandable.

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**San Diego's first Drink & Draw**  
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Page 1 of 2

## UCSD grad gets a 'Groundswell' of recognition



UCSD MFA theater graduate Owiso Odera made an impressive appearance at the opening of "Groundswell" at the Old Globe Theatre on March 17. Courtesy photo

By **CHARLENE BALDRIDGE** | VILLAGE NEWS

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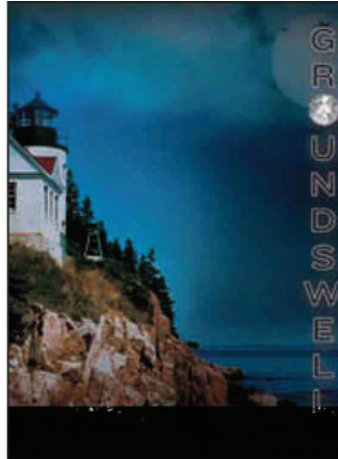
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This poster art represents the Old Globe show “Groundswell,” a story of a diamond diver in South Africa. *Courtesy photo*

**“Groundswell” continues Tuesdays-Sundays through April 17 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, part of the Old Globe’s Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. Tickets are available at [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org) or by calling (619) 23-GLOBE.**



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### **“GROUNDWELL”**

UC San Diego's Kyle Donnelly directs this play about life in post-apartheid South Africa at the Old Globe.

**Page 14**

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## 'Groundswell' looks at life in post-apartheid South Africa

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'Groundswell' looks at life in post-apartheid South Africa

By PAM KRAGEN - pkragen@nctimes.com North County Times - The Californian | Posted: Wednesday, March 9, 2011 9:42 am | No Comments  
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Antony Hagopian, Mfundo Morrison and Ned Schmidtke star in "Groundswell," opening March 12 at the Old Globe in San Diego. Photo by J. Katarzyna Woronowicz.



Give director Kyle Donnelly a play that she can direct in the round and she's interested, but add in the elements of fog, alcohol and a very big knife, and she's hooked.

Ian Bruce's suspense thriller "Groundswell" has all of the above, so Donnelly said she was happy to be invited to direct the South African drama in its San Diego premiere at the Old Globe this month.

The play is set in a remote, fog-shrouded lodge on the South African coast, where three desperate men have come together to plot a diamond-mining deal, but as they begin to drink and secrets are revealed, things take a dangerous turn. "Groundswell" examines how the end of apartheid in South Africa in the early 1990s has affected the lives of the country's citizens, both black and white.

In "Groundswell," Thami (the black caretaker of a hotel that's closed for the winter) and his best friend Johan, an Afrikaan (a white South African native) who serves as the hotel's handyman, have hatched a get-rich-quick scheme to buy the rights to a diamond mine. As part of the country's affirmative action efforts, the government is giving preferential treatment to mine-buyers headed by black South Africans, but Thami and Johan don't have the money to make a bid.

To provide the capital, they invite in Smith, a wealthy older white man who was forced to retire to make way for a younger black candidate at his company. But as the men talk and begin to drink, things take a dark turn.

"This is three guys in a room surrounded by fog, and whenever you get people trapped in a room with a lot of alcohol and a knife, then you've got



something exciting," said Donnelly, who heads the MFA acting program at UC San Diego. Donnelly specializes in directing plays in the round, a form that at first terrified her, but now is her favorite way to direct (she directed both "Opus" and "Orson's Shadow" in the round at the Globe).

"You have to think three-dimensionally all the time," she said. "It's more sculptural than pictorial, and it breaks down the barrier between the actor and the audience. With all the barriers broken down like that, you can really see what's going on and nothing can be hidden."

While the business deal and the secrets in the men's past are the focus of "Groundswell," the political aftermath of apartheid weighs heavily in what the characters bring to the table, Donnelly said. The play's title was inspired by a line from T.S. Eliot's 1941 poem "The Dry Salvages," where Eliot uses the sea as a metaphor for the hopelessness of man's efforts to control the passage of time.

"I've been very interested in what happens to a society after it makes a huge change," she said. "When we hear about a big change in a country, we always imagine the results will be very positive, and in the long term they usually are, but in the short term, things get worse before they get better."

A good example is "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," an August Wilson play Donnelly just directed at UCSD, where she's been on the faculty for 11 years. That play tells the story of several ex-slaves looking for home, identity and belonging in post-Civil War America.

"This is my theme of the season ---- the aftershocks," she said. "I'm fascinated by how far desperate people will go to figure out a way to survive with any kind of dignity. Each character in this play is at the end of his rope. We see them in limbo and they're on a path toward an end of something. They just don't know what that ending is."

The cast for "Groundswell" includes actor Mfundo Morrison as Thami, who just happens to be the great-nephew of South African archbishop Desmond Tutu.

"He didn't actually grow up in South Africa, his parents were political exiles ... but he's got an amazing connection to the material," Donnelly said. Even if the audience doesn't know the history of apartheid, Donnelly said they'll still enjoy the play.

"It's nice to understand the political background, but we're taking the story in a more metaphorical direction. I don't want the audience to feel like they're sitting through a history lesson, and this play allows you the opportunity to focus on the characters as human beings."

"Groundswell" runs just 90 minutes, a playwriting style that Donnelly said is increasingly popular with both playwrights and playgoers.

"Audiences love them," she said. "As a director, they're a challenge to direct. You have to be on the ball. Once the train leaves the station, you can't control it anymore, so you have to make sure your track is laid out really carefully so it can speed up when it wants to."

"Groundswell"

When: Opens Saturday and runs through April 17; showtimes, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Where: Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, The Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego

Tickets: \$29-\$67

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Owiso Odera joined the "Groundswell" cast just two days before previews began. J. KATARZYNA WORONOWICZ

## GETTING THEIR ACT TOGETHER QUICKLY

Last-minute substitutes ably step into major roles at Old Globe

**ANNE MARIE WELSH**  
 SPECIAL TO THE U-T

Casting changes — like other surprises in the evanescent art of theater — sometimes happen. An actor gets sick. Or her mother does. Or the dreaded "creative differences" divide actor and director. Yet the show must go on, and does, with a hastily hired replacement.

Rarely, though, does a theater have to replace an actor in a big, juicy role as

close to opening night as the Old Globe just did. And not in one show, but two.

After an intense, recent performance as Thami in the Globe's South African political thriller "Groundswell," actor Owiso Odera joked that he and Kamal Marayati "have set a very bad standard for the theater. Just come in at the last minute and do it."

Odera stepped into his part two days before the first preview; no understudy had been hired.

Marayati, who took over the leading role from an ailing actor in the Indian immigrant comedy "Rafta, Rafta," arrived at the Globe three days before audiences. In part because of the difficulty of finding the right "ethnic" actors, no understudy had been hired for that role either.

Actors generally sign on to a show and begin reading the script a month or two before the cast gathers for rehearsals. Yet, despite

SEE ACTORS • E3



It's amazing what the human mind can do under pressure. ... We often underestimate ourselves as actors, as people. And the guys were great."

**Owiso Odera**  
 Thami in Groundswell



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## ACTORS • Late additions say they felt welcome immediately

**FROM E1**  
the nearly nonexistent rehearsal time, both Odera and Marayati proved pros and won good notices.

"I think the advantage is that you don't have time to think or overthink the role," said Marayati, who plays the showboating father of the groom in Ayub Khan-Din's comedy. "You have no choice. You just have to do it."

A genial man of Arab descent, he pulls out a stack of 5-by-7 file cards, each containing a line or speech, all bound with a thick metal ring. "I asked for these, so I could just flip through at odd moments, when I'm eating or backstage. The Globe also brought in a script helper to run lines."

Odera, Kenyan by birth, surprised himself with his speedy memorizing of Ian Bruce's script. "It's amazing what the human mind can do under pressure. ... We often underestimate ourselves as actors, as people. And the guys were great."

The "guys" are Antony Hagopian, who plays the volatile Afrikaans diamond diver, Johan, and Ned Schmidtke, who plays a South African banker of English descent, Smith. Together they create a chilling picture of the post-Apartheid nation.

Another plus for Odera was the director, Kyle Donnelly, who heads the acting program at UCSD where Odera received his master of fine arts.

"We already had a kind of shorthand; we spoke the same language," Odera said.

When he arrived on the Thursday before Saturday's preview, Donnelly and the actors gave him a road map of the production, which is staged in the round at the White Theatre. Odera's Thami must bustle in and out, set the table, open wine, serve dinner and much else.

Schmidtke and Hagopian were flexible and open to making changes to the "road map" of physical placement and gesture. "They listened and looked me in the eyes and reacted to what I did," Odera said. So the show changed and became their own.

Both actors accepted the roles within 24 hours of the offer.

"I had been in L.A. auditioning for pilots — it's pilot season in TV," Odera said. "But I was literally riding my bike in Pacific Palisades when I got the call. I asked how soon, and they said right away. I said I would have to talk to my wife."

The next morning, Odera was on the train to San Diego. "I had no time to be scared. What I think made everything OK was that when I walked in, I felt I was in a very supportive artistic environment."

Marayati got the call on a Tuesday night when his manager emailed him the "Rafta, Rafta" script. He has a day job as a computer analyst at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, so the actor had to negotiate time off with his boss. Wednesday afternoon, he was at the Globe, greeted by casting director Samantha Barrie, whisked to a dialect coach and in rehearsal with actors he had never met for a show already "in tech."

The nine other actors had weeks to explore the script, experiment in a





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Page 3 of 3



**"Rafta Rafta" actor Kamal Marayati warms up before being called to the stage. JOHN R. MCCUTCHEN • U-T**

studio and then block the action on stage. In "tech," actors run bits and pieces of scenes while the director (Jonathan Silverstein) and crew set the lights, sound and props.

"The cast was very warm. The director and actors immediately embraced me," Marayati said. And he had another re-

source: His father, an Iraqi immigrant, was a lot like Eeshwar Dutt, the character Marayati played.

Both actors could use scripts or a prompter for the first few previews. Opening night for "Rafta, Rafta" was moved forward three nights. And preview audiences, informed of the late replacements in a

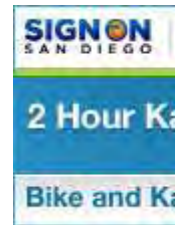
preshow announcement, seemed to root for them.

"So here's how I have been looking at it," Marayati said, "as if the rehearsal process is just totally backwards. But I have the other actors. They've got my back."

Anne Marie Welsh is a San Diego theater writer.



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## Getting their act together quickly

Last-minute substitutes ably step into major roles at Old Globe

BY ANNE MARIE WELSH SPECIAL TO THE U-T

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED APRIL 10, 2011 AT 12:01 A.M., UPDATED APRIL 11, 2011 AT 1:13 P.M.

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Actors generally sign on to a show and begin reading the script a month or two before the cast gathers for rehearsals. Yet, despite the nearly nonexistent rehearsal time, both Odera and Marayati proved pros and won good notices.

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"Rafta Rafta" actor Kamal Marayati warms up before being called to the stage. John R. McCutchen • U-T



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each containing a line or speech, all bound with a thick metal ring. “I asked for these, so I could just flip through at odd moments, when I’m eating or backstage. The Globe also brought in a script helper to run lines.”

Owiso Odera joined the “Groundswell” cast just two days before previews began. J. Katarzyna Woronowicz

Odera, Kenyan by birth, surprised himself with his speedy memorizing of [Ian Bruce](#)’s script. “It’s amazing what the human mind can do under pressure. ... We often underestimate ourselves as actors, as people. And the guys were great.”

The “guys” are Antony Hagopian, who plays the volatile Afrikaans diamond diver, Johan, and Ned Schmidtke, who plays a South African banker of English descent, Smith. Together they create a chilling picture of the post-Apartheid nation.

Another plus for Odera was the director, Kyle Donnelly, who heads the acting program at [UCSD](#) where Odera received his master of fine arts.

“We already had a kind of shorthand; we spoke the same language,” Odera said.

When he arrived on the Thursday before Saturday’s preview, Donnelly and the actors gave him a road map of the production, which is staged in the round at the White Theatre. Odera’s Thami must bustle in and out, set the table, open wine, serve dinner and much else.

Schmidtke and Hagopian were flexible and open to making changes to the “road map” of physical placement and gesture. “They listened and looked me in the eyes and reacted to what I did,” Odera said. So the show changed and became their own.

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The next morning, Odera was on the train to San Diego. “I had no time to be scared. What I think made everything OK was that when I walked in, I felt I was in a very supportive artistic environment.”

Marayati got the call on a Tuesday night when his manager emailed him the “Rafta, Rafta” script. He has a day job as a computer analyst at Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles, so the actor had to negotiate time off with his boss. Wednesday afternoon, he was at the Globe, greeted by [casting director](#) Samantha Barrie, whisked to a dialect coach and in rehearsal with actors he had never met for a show already “in tech.”

The nine other actors had weeks to explore the script, experiment in a studio and then block the action on stage. In “tech,” actors run bits and pieces of scenes while the director (Jonathan Silverstein) and crew set the lights, sound and props.

“The cast was very warm. The director and actors immediately embraced me,” Marayati said. And he had another resource: His father, an Iraqi immigrant, was a lot like Eeshwar Dutt, the character Marayati played.

Both actors could use scripts or a prompter for the first few previews. Opening night for “Rafta, Rafta” was moved forward three nights. And preview audiences, informed of the late replacements in a preshow announcement, seemed to root for them.

“So here’s how I have been looking at it,” Marayati said, “as if the rehearsal process is just totally backwards. But I have the other actors. They’ve got my back.”

*Anne Marie Welsh is a San Diego theater writer.*





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Owiso Odera joined the "Groundswell" cast just two days before previews began. J. KATARZYNA WORONOWICZ

## GETTING THEIR ACT TOGETHER QUICKLY

Last-minute substitutes ably step into major roles at Old Globe

**ANNE MARIE WELSH**  
 SPECIAL TO THE U-T

Casting changes — like other surprises in the evanescent art of theater — sometimes happen. An actor gets sick. Or her mother does. Or the dreaded "creative differences" divide actor and director. Yet the show must go on, and does, with a hastily hired replacement.

Rarely, though, does a theater have to replace an actor in a big, juicy role as

close to opening night as the Old Globe just did. And not in one show, but two.

After an intense, recent performance as Thami in the Globe's South African political thriller "Groundswell," actor Owiso Odera joked that he and Kamal Marayati "have set a very bad standard for the theater. Just come in at the last minute and do it."

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It's amazing what the human mind can do under pressure. ... We often underestimate ourselves as actors, as people. And the guys were great."

**Owiso Odera**  
 Thami in Groundswell





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## ACTORS • Late additions say they felt welcome immediately

FROM E1

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Anne Marie Welsh is a San Diego theater writer.

## With No Understudies, the Pressure's On

**"Rafta, Rafta" at The Old Globe March 22 to April 24, 2011**



**Photo by Henry DiRocco / Courtesy of The Old Globe**

Kamal Marayati, the arm-wrestler on the left of this cast photo from "The Old Globe's "Rafta, Rafta," stepped into his role as the father of the groom in a last-minute cast change just days before the show was supposed to start.



Photo by J. Katarzyna Woronowicz / Courtesy of The Old Globe Owiso Odera joined the cast of "Groundswell" as Thami in a last-minute cast change at The Old Globe.

Posted: Tuesday, April 12, 2011 11:34 am | *Updated: 7:10 pm, Wed Apr 13, 2011.*

### **With No Understudies, the Pressure's On**

by **Kelly Bennett**

It's rare for a theater to have to hire a replacement actor for a "big, juicy role" so close to opening night as The Old Globe recently had to — for two plays. But the theater had a key cast member for "Rafta, Rafta," withdraw from the show due to illness. And a cast member [left "Groundswell"](#) soon before it opened for reasons that haven't been specified.

Local theater writer Anne Marie Welsh dove into the actors' work behind the scenes to manage the [last-minute scramble](#) in a story in Sunday's Union-Tribune.

Partly because both roles require actors of particular ethnicities, the Globe had hired no understudies to fall back on, Welsh says.

Actor Owiso Odera came into the role in "Groundswell" only two days before the play's first preview performances. And actor Kamal Marayati had just three days before audiences were supposed to show up for "Rafta, Rafta."

I was glad to read the story because I was hoping to hear more about how this process works. I thought these were interesting bits about the allowances the theater — and the audience — made for the latecomers:

Both actors could use scripts or a prompter for the first few previews. Opening night for "Rafta, Rafta" was moved forward three nights. And preview audiences, informed of the late replacements in a preshow announcement, seemed to root for them.

"So here's how I have been looking at it," Marayati said, "as if the rehearsal process is just totally backwards. But I have the other actors. They've got my back."

Have you seen either play? What'd you think of how Odera, who plays Thami in "Groundswell," and Marayati, the father of the groom in "Rafta, Rafta," did to blend in with the other actors who've been rehearsing for much longer? Did you find yourself rooting for them?

*I'm the arts editor for VOSD. You can reach me directly at [kelly.bennett@voiceofsandiego.org](mailto:kelly.bennett@voiceofsandiego.org) or 619.325.0531 and follow me on Twitter: [@kellyrbennett](https://twitter.com/kellyrbennett) and at [facebook.com/behind.the.scene.SD](https://facebook.com/behind.the.scene.SD).*






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## Antony Hagopian, Mfundo Morrison Join Old Globe's GROUNDSWELL



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divided past.

The cast of Groundswell features [Antony Hagopian](#) (Johan), Mfundo Morrison (Thami) and [Ned Schmidtke](#) (Smith).

The creative team includes [Kate Edmunds](#) (Scenic Design), [Denitsa Bliznakova](#) (Costume Design), [Russell H. Champa](#) (Lighting Design), [Lindsay Jones](#) (Sound Design), [Gillian Lane-Plescia](#) (Dialect Coach) and Annette Yé (Stage Manager).

Playwright [Ian Bruce](#) was trained as an actor in Johannesburg and appeared briefly in the early 1970s on the South African stage and TV before leaving South Africa to begin a 17-year long political exile in Holland, where he cofounded the Tekhwini Theatre Foundation with Anthony Akerman and Joseph Mosikili. In 1978 his first play, *Falls the Shadow*, won a Dutch [Arts Council](#) Best New Play Award and several works on South African themes followed. The only one of these to evade South Africa's censorship laws, *My Father's House*, was courageously produced by PACT, the most progressive of the four provincial [Arts Councils](#) that existed in South Africa at the time, in 1987. After his return to South Africa in the early 1990s, Bruce focused on the uses of drama for development and spent some years living and working in poverty-stricken rural communities. In 1998 he began working with the New Africa Theatre Association, for which he and his wife, Ina, have created a host of productions, educational plays and industrial theater works. He is the current Executive Director of the New Africa Theatre Association. Since *Groundswell*, Bruce has written two more major plays: *Transit* (written and produced in 2009) and *Burnt!* (written in 2010 and currently in production in Cape Town).

Director [Kyle Donnelly](#) has directed *Opus*, *Orson's Shadow* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at [The Old Globe](#). She has had a long association with [Arena Stage](#) in Washington, D.C., having been Associate Artistic Director from 1992 to 1998 and



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directed many productions including Dancing at Lughnasa (winner of the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Resident Play) and Polk County (Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding New Musical). She directed the American premiere of [Brian Friel's](#) Give Me Your Answer, Do! for [Roundabout Theatre Company](#). Her regional credits include Spoon Lake Blues (The [Eugene O'Neill](#) Theatre Center Festival), The Constant Wife ([American Conservatory Theater](#) and [Seattle Repertory Theatre](#)), Philadelphia, Here I Come! ([Williamstown Theatre Festival](#)), Dancing at Lughnasa ([Goodman Theatre](#)), Molly Sweeney ([Steppenwolf Theatre](#)), Polk County ([McCarter Theatre](#) and [Berkeley Repertory Theatre](#)), Zara Spook and Other Lures (Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville) and Three Nights in Tehran ([Signature Theatre Company](#)). She is the head of the professional actor training program at the University of California, San Diego.

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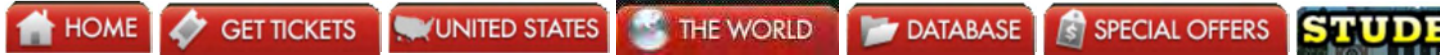


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## Antony Hagopian, Mfundo Morrison Join Old Globe's GROUNDSWELL



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[Antony Hagopian](#) (Johan) most recently appeared as Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* at the John W. Engeman Theater at Northport in Long Island, New York. He has appeared on Broadway in *Frost/Nixon* (and also in the National Tour) and Off Broadway in *Walking Down Broadway* ([Mint Theater Company](#)) and *Stray* ([Cherry Lane Theatre](#)). His regional credits include [Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park](#), Pittsburgh [Public Theater](#), The [Shakespeare Theatre Company](#), Pioneer Theatre Company, [Missouri Repertory Theatre](#), The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, The [Alabama Shakespeare Festival](#), Virginia Stage Company, [Indiana Repertory Theatre](#), New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, PlayMakers Repertory Company and Dorset Theatre Festival, among others. Television credits include "Law & Order," "The Sopranos," "As the World Turns," "All My Children" and "Guiding Light."

Mfundo Morrison (Thami) is an actor/writer/producer and is the grandson of South African activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop [Desmond Tutu](#). Morrison has been a cast member on several award-winning television shows including "General Hospital" and "The Closer." He was part of the "General Hospital" cast that won the Daytime Emmy for Outstanding Drama Series several years in succession. Morrison's [Production Company](#), Harmattan Productions, is currently developing a comedy he has written set in Los Angeles and Johannesburg, South Africa.

[Ned Schmidtke](#) (Smith) has previously appeared at the Globe in *The Pleasure of His Company*, *Sea of Tranquility*, *A Body of Water*, *Blue/Orange* and *Pericles*. He has appeared on Broadway and in the National Tour of *Aren't We All?* His many regional credits include *Tonight at 8:30* (The Antaeus Company), The Molière Comedies ([Mark Taper Forum](#)), *Driving Miss Daisy* (Utah Shakespeare Festival), *Six Degrees of Separation* (National Tour), *The Real Thing* (Court Theatre), *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), *The Three Sisters* ([Goodman Theatre](#)), *Libra* ([Steppenwolf Theatre Company](#)), *Enemy of the People* ([Northlight Theatre](#)), *Tartuffe* (Stratford Shakespeare Festival), *Passion Play* ([Arena Stage](#)) and *Plenty* ([Huntington Theatre Company](#)). Schmidtke's film credits include *The Change-Up* (in post-production), *Accepted*, *Wedding Crashers*, *xXx: State of the Union*, *Mercury Rising*, *My Best Friend's Wedding*, *Chain Reaction*, *The Relic* and *Music Box*. His television credits include "Criminal Minds," "Medium," "Point Pleasant," "24," "Without a Trace," "Cold Case," "Huff," "NYPD Blue," "JAG," "The West Wing," "The Practice," "ER" and "Crossing Jordan."

TICKETS to Groundswell can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. Performances at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre begin on March 12 and continue through April 17. Ticket prices range from \$29 to \$67. Performance times: Previews: Saturday, March 12 at 8:00 p.m., Sunday, March 13 at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 15 at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday, March 16 at 7:00 p.m. Regular Performances: Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m. and Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. There is also a Wednesday matinee on March 30 at 2:00 p.m. and no Saturday matinee performance on April 2. Discounts are available for full-time students, patrons 29 years of age and under, seniors and groups of 10 or more.

Photo Credit: Katarzyna Woronowicz

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## Old Globe Announces Cast of Three for Ian Bruce's South African Play *Groundswell*

By *Kenneth Jones*  
23 Feb 2011

The new Old Globe Theatre production of *Groundswell*, Ian Bruce's psychological drama set in South Africa, will feature Antony Hagopian, Mfundo Morrison and Ned Schmidtke.

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Kyle Donnelly (former associate artistic director of Arena Stage in Washington, DC) directs the staging, to play March 12-April 17 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre in San Diego. Opening night is March 17.

Here's how Old Globe characterizes the drama, which was seen in separate productions by Off-Broadway's The New Group and San Jose Rep: "Set in a beachfront resort on the jagged edge of west South Africa, two men plot to convince their lone guest to invest in their diamond-mining scheme. The three men find themselves caught in a power struggle fueled by greed and desperation and will go to any length to secure a chance at a better life.

*Groundswell* is a haunting, psychological thriller that offers a provocative look at a society still haunted by

its divided past."

The creative team includes Kate Edmunds (scenic design), Denitsa Bliznakova (costume design), Russell H. Champa (lighting design), Lindsay Jones (sound design), Gillian Lane-Plescia (dialect coach) and Annette Yé (stage manager).

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uses of drama for development and spent some years living and working in poverty-stricken rural communities." In 1998 he began working with the New Africa Theatre Association, for which he and his wife, Ina, have created a host of productions, educational plays and industrial theatre works. He is the current executive director of the New Africa Theatre Association. His post-*Groundswell* plays include *Transit* (written and produced in 2009) and *Burnt!* (written in 2010 and currently in production in Cape Town).

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Cast member Antony Hagogian

## Groundswell, Ian Bruce's South African Play, Begins at Old Globe March 12

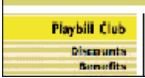
The new Old Globe Theatre production of *Groundswell*, Ian Bruce's psychological drama set in South Africa, begins previews March 12. Antony Hagogian, Owiso Odera and Ned Schmidtke are featured.

## Hugh Martin, Composer of *Meet Me in St. Louis*, Dies at 96



Hugh Martin, the songwriter who enlivened the Judy Garland movie musical "Meet Me in St. Louis" with an indelibly melodic trio of evergreen songs — "The Trolley Song," "The Boy Next Door" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" — died March 11 in California. He was 96.

October 22, 2010



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## Groundswell, Ian Bruce's South African Play, Begins at Old Globe March 12

By [Kenneth Jones](#)

12 Mar 2011



Playwright Ian Bruce

The new Old Globe Theatre production of *Groundswell*, Ian Bruce's psychological drama set in South Africa, begins previews March 12 in anticipation of a March 17 opening. Antony Hagopian, Owiso Odera and Ned Schmidtke are featured.

Kyle Donnelly (former associate artistic director of Arena Stage in Washington, DC) directs the staging, to play to April 17 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre in San Diego.

Here's how Old Globe characterizes the drama, which was seen in separate productions by Off-Broadway's The New Group and San Jose Rep: "Set in a beachfront resort on the jagged edge of west South Africa, two men plot to convince their lone guest to invest in their

diamond-mining scheme. The three men find themselves caught in a power struggle fueled by greed and desperation and will go to any length to secure a chance at a better life. *Groundswell* is a haunting, psychological thriller that offers a provocative look at a society still haunted by its divided past."

The creative team includes Kate Edmunds (scenic design), Denitsa Bliznakova (costume design), Russell H. Champa (lighting design), Lindsay Jones (sound design), Gillian Lane-Plescia (dialect coach) and Annette Yé (stage manager).

Playwright Ian Bruce was trained as an actor in

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Johannesburg and appeared briefly in the early 1970s on the South African stage and TV before leaving South Africa to begin a 17-year-long political exile in Holland, where he co-founded the Tekhwini Theatre Foundation with Anthony Akerman and Joseph Mosikili. In 1978 his first play, *Falls the Shadow*, won a Dutch Arts Council Best New Play Award. Several works with South African themes and subjects followed. The only one of these to evade South Africa's censorship laws, *My Father's House*, was produced by PACT, the most progressive of the four provincial arts councils that existed in South Africa at the time, in 1987.

After his return to South Africa in the early 1990s, Bruce "focused on the uses of drama for development and spent some years living and working in poverty-stricken rural communities." In 1998 he began working with the New Africa Theatre Association, for which he and his wife, Ina, have created a host of productions, educational plays and industrial theatre works. He is the current executive director of the New Africa Theatre Association. His post-*Groundswell* plays include *Transit* (written and produced in 2009) and *Burnt!* (written in 2010 and currently in production in Cape Town).

Actor Mfundo Morrison, originally announced for the production, left the project.

The Old Globe is located in San Diego's Balboa Park at 1363 Old Globe Way. For more information, visit [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org) or call (619) 23-GLOBE.

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## Groundswell, Ian Bruce's South African Play, Opens at Old Globe March 17

By [Kenneth Jones](#)  
17 Mar 2011



Playwright Ian Bruce

The new Old Globe Theatre production of *Groundswell*, Ian Bruce's psychological drama set in South Africa, opens March 17 following previews from March 12. Antony Hagopian, Owiso Odera and Ned Schmidtke are featured.

Kyle Donnelly (former associate artistic director of Arena Stage in Washington, DC) directs the staging, to play to April 17 at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre in San Diego.

Here's how Old Globe characterizes the drama, which was seen in separate productions by Off-Broadway's The New Group and San Jose Rep: "Set in a beachfront resort on the jagged edge of west South Africa, two men plot to convince their lone guest to invest in their diamond-mining scheme. The three men

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Playwright Ian Bruce was trained as an actor in Johannesburg and appeared briefly in the early 1970s on the South African stage and TV before leaving South Africa to begin a 17-year-long political exile in Holland, where he co-founded the Tekhwini Theatre Foundation with Anthony Akerman and Joseph Mosikili. In 1978 his first play, *Falls the Shadow*, won

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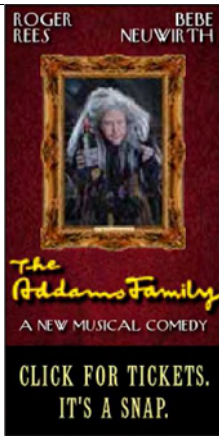
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a Dutch Arts Council Best New Play Award. Several works with South African themes and subjects followed. The only one of these to evade South Africa's censorship laws, *My Father's House*, was produced by PACT, the most progressive of the four provincial arts councils that existed in South Africa at the time, in 1987.

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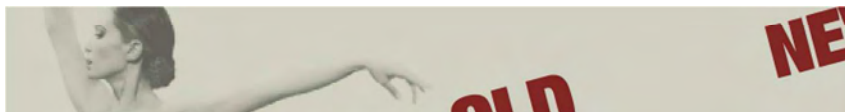
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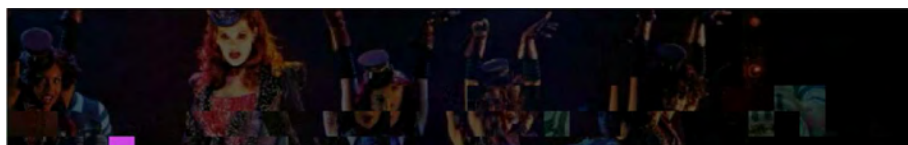
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## Photo Flash: The Old Globe's GROUNDSWELL Production Shots!



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Thursday, March 17, 2011; Posted: 06:03 PM - by [BWW News Desk](#)

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Set in a beachfront resort on the jagged edge of west South Africa, two men plot to convince their lone guest to invest in their diamond mining scheme. The three men find themselves caught in a power struggle fueled by greed and desperation and will go to any length to secure a chance at a better life. Groundswell is a haunting, psychological thriller that offers a provocative look at a society still haunted by its divided past.

The cast of Groundswell features [Antony Hagopian](#) (Johan), Mfundo Morrison (Thami) and [Ned Schmidtke](#) (Smith).

The creative team includes [Kate Edmunds](#) (Scenic Design), [Denitsa Bliznakova](#) (Costume Design), [Russell H. Champa](#) (Lighting Design), [Lindsay Jones](#) (Sound Design), [Gillian Lane-Plescia](#) (Dialect Coach) and Annette Yé (Stage Manager).

TICKETS to Groundswell can be purchased online at [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. Performances at the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre began on March 12 and continue through April 17. Ticket prices range from \$29 to \$67.



[Owiso Odera](#) as Thami, [Antony Hagopian](#) as Johan and [Ned Schmidtke](#) as Smith



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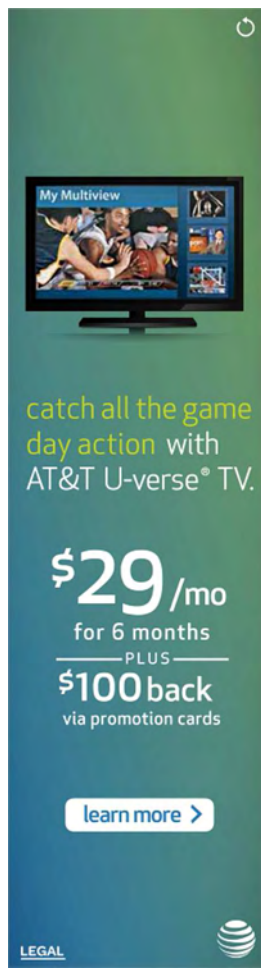
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[Ned Schmidtke](#) as Smith and [Antony Hagopian](#) as Johan

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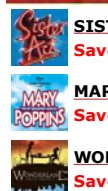
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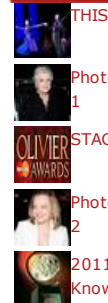
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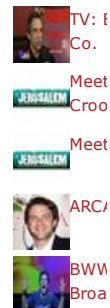
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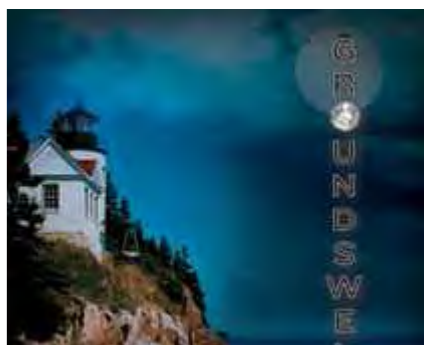


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**Erin Reiter**

## Groundswell special events at The Old Globe



Groundswell at The Old Globe  
 Photo: The Old Globe

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The Old Globe's new show *Groundswell* has some amazing special events for you to enjoy before the performances!

*Groundswell* is set in a beachfront resort on the jagged edge of west South Africa, as two men plot to convince their lone guest to invest in their diamond mining scheme. The three men find themselves caught in a power struggle fueled by greed and desperation and will go to any length to secure a chance at a better life. *Groundswell* is a haunting, psychological thriller that offers a provocative look at a society still haunted by its divided past.

Associated events taking place during the run of *Groundswell* include:

#### INSIGHT SEMINAR: *Groundswell*

Monday, March 14 at 7:00 p.m. FREE

Insight Seminars are informal presentations of ideas and insights to enhance the theater-going experience. The seminars feature a panel selected from the artistic company of each production and take place in the theater where the production is performed. Reception, 6:30 p.m. Seminar, 7:00 p.m. Admission is free and reservations are not required.

#### POST-SHOW FORUMS: *Groundswell*

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#### FREE

Discuss the play with members of the *Groundswell* cast and crew at post-show discussions led by the Globe's creative staff after the performances.

OUT AT THE GLOBE: Thursday, March 31 at 6:30 p.m. \$20

An evening for gay and lesbian theater lovers and the whole LGBT community, Out at the Globe includes a hosted wine and martini bar, appetizers and door prizes. \$20 per person.

RSVP at (619) 23-GLOBE. (Tickets to *Groundswell* are sold separately.)

THANK GLOBE IT'S FRIDAY: Fridays, March 25 and April 1 at 6:30 p.m. \$20

Kick off the weekend with the Globe's Friday pre-show bash.

TGIF includes a hosted wine and martini bar, appetizers and desserts. \$20 per person. RSVP at (619) 23-GLOBE. (Tickets to *Groundswell* are sold separately.)

Tickets to *Groundswell* can be purchased online at

[www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org), by phone at (619) 23-GLOBE or by visiting the Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. There are numerous free parking lots available throughout the park. ). For additional parking information visit [www.BalboaPark.org](http://www.BalboaPark.org).

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By **Erin Reiter**

Erin Marie is a dedicated theater attendee, theatre performer and worker, a dedicated talker, and has a lifelong passion for theater. She loves to...[Read more](#)

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Page 1 of 1

## ACTORS LEAVE GLOBE PLAYS JUST BEFORE 2 SHOWS OPEN

They're replaced;  
productions have  
no understudies

**JAMES HEBERT • U-T**

Two actors have departed the Old Globe Theatre's latest productions, just as the shows are poised for their official openings.

The Balboa Park theater announced Wednesday that Mfundo Morrison has left the cast of "Groundswell," a political thriller set in South Africa. A Globe spokesman

said only that the show's director and the theater's artistic staff "felt that it was necessary to replace" the actor. Owiso Odera, an alumnus of UCSD's graduate theater program who has appeared in several Shakespeare plays at the Globe, has taken over the role of Thami.


The theater also said that Ranjit Chowdhry, who was to play the Indian-immigrant father in the family comedy-drama "Rafta, Rafta," has left that production due to illness. His

replacement is Kamal Marayati, who has had roles in film as well as on such TV shows as "Desperate Housewives" and "Invasion."

"Groundswell" began previews last week and opens tonight. "Rafta, Rafta" has its first preview Saturday and opens March 24. Both actors came in on short notice (neither production includes understudies). But a Globe spokesman said Odera was able to perform in the first preview of "Groundswell," and that Marayati has joined the "Rafta" rehearsals.

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# NIGHT AND DAY



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## Casting update: Globe replaces two actors

BY JAMES HEBERT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2011 AT 1:59 P.M.

It's been an eventful day in the offices (and rehearsal halls) of the [Old Globe Theatre](#). The Globe has two shows in the works right now, and each one has lost a cast member late in the game.

First, the theater reported that Mfundo Morrison left the cast of ["Groundswell"](#) last week, for reasons that haven't yet been



specified. "Groundswell," a political thriller set in South Africa, is in previews; it opens Thursday. Morrison has been replaced by Owiso Odera, a graduate of [UCSD's](#) MFA program who had a memorable turn in the 2008 Summer Shakespeare Festival production of "[Romeo and Juliet](#)."

Now the latest word out of Balboa Park is that [Ranjit Chowdhry](#), who had been cast as the Indian-immigrant father in the family comedy-drama "[Rafta, Rafta](#)," has left due to illness. His replacement is Kamal Marayati, who has had roles in film as well as on such [TV shows](#) as "[Desperate Housewives](#)" and "Invasion."

"Rafta, Rafta" begins previews Saturday and opens next Thursday. There are no understudies in either play's cast ("Groundswell" only has three actors), so both Odera and Marayati have had a little catching-up to do. But a theater spokesman reports that Odera was in the first preview of "Groundswell" on Saturday.



/ OLD GLOBE THEATRE

Owiso Odera is now playing Thami in the Old Globe's "Groundswell."

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## The lively arts: March comes in like a lion and stays the entire month!

by Charlene Baldridge

7 days ago | 55 views | 0 | 0 |



[view slideshow \(3 images\)](#)

### At Copley Symphony Hall, picking just two of numerous San Diego Symphony opportunities this month:

March 11-13 St. Louis Symphony music director David Robertson conducts pianist Ori Shaham, his wife, and the San Diego Symphony in Edward Grieg's ultra-melodic Piano Concerto in A minor. Also programmed are Robert Schumann's Symphony No. 3 ("Rhenish") and Gyorgy Ligeti's "Concert Românesc."

March 25-26 Silent Film Night: film restoration expert/conductor Gillian Anderson leads the San Diego Symphony in accompanying Herbert Brenon's Peter Pan (1924), based upon J.M. Barrie's original play, with Betty Bronson as Peter and Anna May Wong as Tiger Lily. Popcorn will be sold for only \$1 a bag. [www.sandiegosymphony.org](http://www.sandiegosymphony.org) or (619) 235-0804

### At the Lyceum, Horton Plaza

March 19-April 17 on the Lyceum Stage, Sam Woodhouse stages Sarah Ruhl's comic period piece, "In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)," which takes place in an era when "hysteria" resulted from the latest electronic gadget. Wednesdays-Sundays at San Diego Repertory Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza, Downtown San Diego, [www.sdrept.org](http://www.sdrept.org) or (619) 544-1000.

### At The Old Globe, Balboa Park

March 12-April 17 The Old Globe presents Ian Bruce's "Groundswell," a suspenseful drama that takes place on the rocky coast of South Africa, where the subject is diamonds. Tuesdays-Sundays in the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre at the Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org) or (619) 23-GLOBE

### At Civic Theatre

8 p.m. Friday, March 11 La Jolla Music Society presents the acclaimed Joffrey Ballet in Gerald Arpino's "Reflections," Jessica Lang's "Crossed" and Edwaard [sic] Liang's "Age of Innocence" (lecture at 7 p.m.), San Diego Civic Theatre, 1100 3rd Ave., \$30-\$75, <http://www.ljms.org/> or (619) 570-1100.

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## The Shorthand Lingo of Art-Making

To an outsider, the dancers at Malashock Dance the other afternoon seemed to [speak their own language](#). I'd just watched six dancers run through one of the scenes of their upcoming piece, "The Floating World," and artistic director John Malashock was giving them notes on things they should tweak for the next time.



They gestured and waved their arms and spoke in vague grunts and half-formed sentences. But, remarkably, this shorthand lingo of people who make art together all the time worked: They all knew what part they were talking about, and what each other meant. Malashock has been opening its studio doors for the last several weeks to let the public in on this new piece headed for performances next month at the San Diego Museum of Art. We stopped in on a couple of rehearsals, one with [photographer Sam Hodgson](#), and one with a [videographer from NBC San Diego](#), to see the dancers work to turn these grunts and gestures into fluid narratives.

You're reading the Arts Report, our weekly collection of San Diego arts stories, from our pages and elsewhere. You can stay in the loop the rest of the week by checking our [Behind the Scene blog](#), [following us on Facebook](#), or following me, [@kellyrbennett](#), on Twitter.

### Locals:

» Making inflatable sculptures - [or, balloon animals](#) - is just one of Dan McLellan's jobs. He's also a Chargers reporter for CBS Sports and elsewhere.

[Forward to a Friend](#)

### Arts Headlines

#### Behind the Scene TV: Dancers Afloat

We go inside an afternoon rehearsal as Malashock Dance prepares its next piece.

#### Dancers on a Plane

A new piece at Malashock Dance follows a story of a dance company on tour and weaves together woodblock prints, videos and costumes.

#### Moonlighting: Chargers Expert, Balloon Sculptor

Balloon artist Dan McLellan creates crazy hats, pretty hats, bows and arrows, monkeys on a tree with bananas. The rest of the time, he reports on football.

#### The Curtain Dropped; One Horn Player Won

After an intriguing, stealthy audition process, Bay Area musician Darby Hinshaw, 31, won the San Diego Symphony's tryout for an open French horn seat yesterday.

### Photo of the Week



#### Dancers on a Plane

Dancers Christine Marshall and Bradley Lundberg rehearse a dance piece at the Malashock studios in Point Loma.



To purchase Gala tickets, call 619-794-8272

» Engineer-turned-photographer Joseph Rubenson, a former trustee of the Museum of Photographic Arts, self-published a book of [photographs of Julian](#) in 2005, the rural community he'd called home since buying an apple ranch there in the mid-1980s. He died last month at age 90. (Union-Tribune)

» Famed UCSD neuroscientist V.S. Ramachandran speculates 20 percent of art can now be explained by brain science. ([The Smart Set](#))

#### On Stage:

» The Old Globe Theatre's two current shows had to [replace a cast member at the last minute](#) in each play. (Union-Tribune)

On Twitter, I asked [how often this happens](#).

Jim Hebert, the U-T's theater critic, chimed in:

"I'd say [unusual but not unheard of](#). Globe's 'Whisper House' replaced 1 actor in previews & another in midrun last year. ... But haven't seen it happen [this late](#) with 2 actors in 2 separate shows. Appears to be just an unfortunate coincidence."

The [Globe delayed its opening](#) of one of those plays, "Rafta, Rafta," by a few days to give the new cast member more rehearsal time.

» Actor Malcolm Gets, who plays the depressed Uncle Frank in La Jolla Playhouse's "Little Miss Sunshine," has been [sitting out "a number of performances"](#) of the show due to a throat infection. (L.A. Times)

» A costume designer works with "[garish and kitschy](#)" as guides - definitely not "pretty" - as she builds the wardrobe for Cygnet Theatre's upcoming production of "Cabaret." (KPBS)

» For that play, Cygnet is [twisting the usual casting](#) to have a woman play The Emcee - its artistic director hopes to convey the "seductive quality of fascism and Nazism and nationalism." (Union-Tribune)

#### Music:

» The San Diego Symphony's board chairman believes the

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# CALENDAR

Orange County/San Diego/Inland Empire  
**MARCH 2011**



## THURSDAY, MARCH 10 **FOLLIES FOREVER!**

The Follies are known for celebrating the music and dance of the '40s, '50s and '60s with a cast ranging in age from 56 to 81. Guest stars, The Four Preps, stroll down memory lane with their million-sellers like "Big Man," "Lazy Summer Night," "Down By the Station" and their chart-topping "26 Miles" (Santa Catalina). Plaza Theatre, 128 South Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs. Follies run through May 15, 2011. \$50-\$92. (760) 327-0225. psofollies.com.

## ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY, MARCH 10

### LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

Hop in the bus with the Hoover family on their outrageously funny cross-country trek to win the coveted title Little Miss Sunshine. La Jolla Playhouse, UCSD Campus, Mandell Weiss Forum, 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla. Through March 27. \$31-\$66. (858) 550-1010. lajollaplayhouse.org.

### THE FANTASTICKS

This romantic charmer is the longest-running musical production in the world. At the heart of its breathtaking poetry and subtle theatrical sophistication are a purity and simplicity that transcends cultural barriers. The result is a timeless fable of love that is both nostalgic and universal. Welk Resorts Theatre, 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido. Wed.-Sun. through April 3. \$44-\$63. (888) 802-7469. welktheatre.com.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

### ANNIE GET YOUR GUN

The story of sharpshooter Annie Oakley, who falls in love with her rival, Frank Butler. Non-

stop musical hits, including "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better," "I Got the Sun in the Morning," and "There's No Business Like Show Business." Musical Theatre Village, 36-C Mauchly, Irvine. Fri.-Sun. through March 20. \$14. (949) 753-1996. musicaltheatrevillage.net.

### THE PRINCESS AND THE PIGS

Poor King Artero cannot understand how his beautiful daughter, Princess Mirabel has become ridiculously rude, spoiled and selfish. But his surprising idea to pair her with a singing beggar and a herd of pampered pigs will ensure Mirabel will never be the same. LifeHouse Theater, 1135 N. Church St., Redlands. \$15-\$19. Through March 13. (909) 335-3037 ext. 21. lifehousetheater.com.

### SHOTGUN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

An evening of comedy, betrayal, and ...murder. Help solve the murder mystery before it is too late and the inheritance is lost. Mystery Café Dinner Theatre, Imperial House Restaurant, 505 Kalmia St., San Diego. Fri.-Sat. through April 30. \$60. (619) 544-1600. mysterycafe.net.

### A SIXTIES EVENING

Groove to the songs that made the '60s one of the greatest eras in music history. Gary Lewis & The Playboys, Sonny Geraci

of The Outsiders and Climax, Dennis Tufano of The Buckinghams and Ron Dante of The Archies and The Cufflinks. Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Drive, Cerritos. \$47-\$71 (562) 467-8818. cerritoscenter.com.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

### GROUNDSWELL

In a small lodge on the ferociously rocky coast of South Africa, two men plot to convince their lone guest to invest in their diamond-mining scheme. The three men find themselves caught in a power struggle fueled by greed and desperation and will go to any length to secure a chance at a better life. The Old Globe, Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Tues.-Sun. through April 17. \$29-\$67. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

### AN IRISH HOOLEY!

Rip-roaring music, song and dance abound at this An Irish Hooley ("a boisterous party"). Superb music from harps, fiddles, flutes and bodhráns soothe your soul while dancing,

singing and storytelling transport you to the Emerald Isle. California Center for the Arts Escondido, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido. \$30-\$35. (800) 988-4253. artcenter.org

TUESDAY, MARCH 15

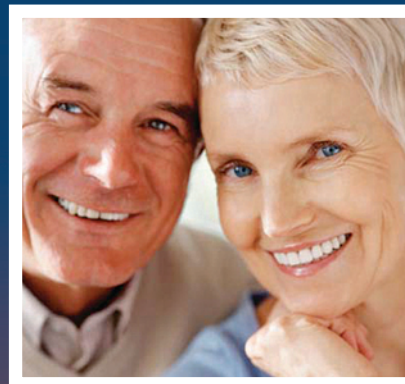
### PHILHARMONIC OF POLAND

On its first transcontinental tour of the United States, the Philharmonic of Poland performs under the direction of conductor Boguslaw Dawidow. Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa. \$30-\$250. (714) 556-2787. scfta.org.

### PRIVATE LIVES

Passion, anger, love, laughter and romance all shaped by Noël Coward's wit and comic genius sets the stage for perpetually dueling lovers Amanda and Elyot. In Coward's most celebrated comedy, the two divorcees unwittingly book adjoining rooms while honeymooning with their new spouses, and quickly realize the folly of their new marriages. The Laguna Playhouse, Moulton Theatre, 606 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach.

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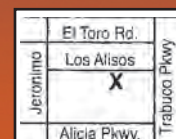
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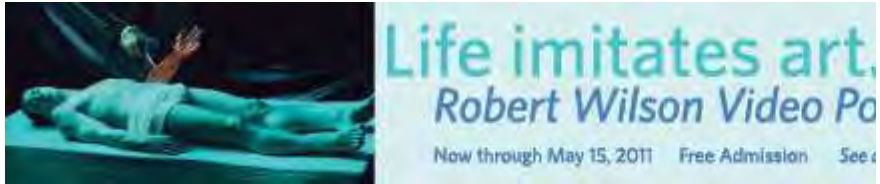
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## THE FOOD ISSUE

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Wednesday, Mar 16, 2011

# Blood feud

The Lieutenant of Inishmore and more San Diego theater listings

By [Martin Jones Westlin](#)



The Lieutenant of Inishmore - Photo by Claudio Raygoza

Wee Thomas the cat isn't quite feeling himself these days. Truth be told, he's not feeling much of anything ever since two blokes blew his brains out in a ruse to lure his master home. It so happens the owner is the notorious Padraic, a Northern Irish paramilitary whose love for Wee Tom trumps his bloodlust (when we first meet him, he's trussed up a badly beaten drug dealer by the ankles and is about to relieve him of a nipple). He beats feet to the more placid climes of Inishmore island posthaste, his

search for feline justice evolving into a bloodletting and dismemberment the likes of which local theater has rarely seen.

Irish playwright Martin McDonagh wrote *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* as a jet-black satire on Irish republican activists and their supposedly shallow motives—their colossal maudlin streak, he seems to say, invariably wins out over whatever sense of patriotism drives their cause.

But two elements hobble this ambitious Ion Theatre Company entry: Even as the blood and gore is considerable, it also falls short against McDonagh's eviscerating dialogue (featuring Ryan Kidd's thunderous bombasts as the simpleton Davey). Director Claudio Raygoza needs to drown his stage in rivers of crimson and arms and legs, the same way McDonagh must do more to humanize his characters and thus gain our interest in them; he's on the right track as he introduces Mairead (Morgan Trant), who's equally interested in bloody revolution and banging Padraic. McDonagh knows black comedy, and Kyle Sorrell and Walter Ritter are fine as time-bomb Padraic and his punch-drunk father Danny in a show that almost works (but not quite).

Through April 9 at BLK BOX @ 6th & Penn, 3704 Sixth Ave. in Hillcrest. \$25-\$29.  
iontheatre.com

## Opening

**Cabaret:** A cabaret singer, an American writer and the denizens of Berlin's Kit Kat Klub are caught up in the swirling maelstrom of a changing society on the eve of Hitler's rise to power. Produced by Cygnet Theatre Company, it's in previews March 17 and opens March 26 at the Old Town Theatre in Old Town. \$25-\$54. cygnettheatre.com

**Groundswell:** In a small lodge on the South African coast, three men find themselves caught in a power struggle fueled by greed and desperation and will go to any length to secure a chance at a better life. In previews now, it opens March 17 at The Old Globe Theatre's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre in Balboa Park. \$29-\$67. oldglobe.org

**In the Next Room (or the vibrator play):** A group of men and women get curious as a gynecologist treats "women's problems" with a newfangled electric vibrator in 1885 upstate New York. Produced by San Diego Repertory Theatre, it opens in previews March 19 at The Lyceum, Downtown. \$29-\$53. sdrep.org

**Rafta, Rafta:** Two newlyweds find that starting their life together under the groom's family's roof is no honeymoon. In previews March 19, it opens March 24 at The Old Globe Theatre mainstage in Balboa Park. \$29-\$70. oldglobe.org

## Now Playing

**Last of the Red-Hot Lovers:** Dreary Barney invites three women to his house while his wife and kids are away for the summer. Through March 19 at OnStage Playhouse in Chula Vista. \$8-\$16, onstageplayhouse.org

\* **Eurydice:** Dying too young on her wedding day, Eurydice must journey to the underworld, where she reunites with her father and struggles to remember her lost love. Produced by the SDSU School of Theatre, Television and Film, it runs through March 20 at the Experimental





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Page 1 of 1

## » AGENDA

# APPLAUSE

BY PHYLLIS DeBLANCHE

### CIRCLING THE GLOBE

The Old Globe proffers triple treats this month: Bubbly hit *Jane Austen's Emma* is held over on the main stage through Mar. 6, bowing out for the familial comedy *Rafta, Rafta...*, Mar. 19–Apr. 24. In the Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre, thriller *Groundswell* has audiences holding their breath Mar. 12–Apr. 17. [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).



HENRY DIROCCO





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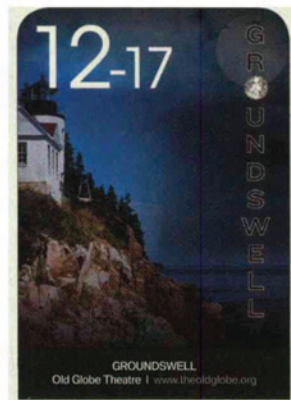
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Page 1 of 1



## THE LIVELY ARTS

Charlene Baldrige

### **At The Old Globe, Balboa Park**

March 12-April 17 The Old Globe pre-

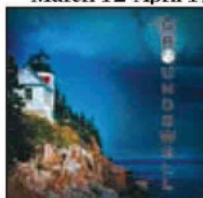


Photo courtesy of Old Globe Theater

sents Ian  
Bruce's  
"Groundswell,"  
a suspenseful  
drama that  
takes place on  
the rocky coast  
of South Africa,  
where the sub-

ject is diamonds. Tuesdays-Sundays in  
the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre at  
the Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, The  
Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa  
Park, [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org) or (619) 23-  
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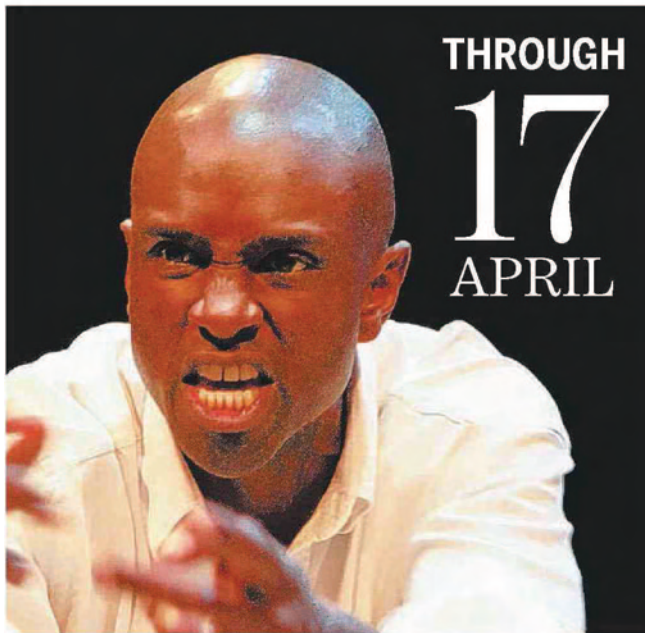


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Page 1 of 1

## [ SPOTLIGHT ]



### **"Groundswell"**

Old Globe Theatre, 7 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays (no matinee April 2); plus 2 p.m. March 30. Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park. \$29-\$67; (619) 234-5623 or [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org)

The pain of post-apartheid South Africa is at the raw center of Ian Bruce's thriller, whose three characters grapple with guilt and anger. Kyle Donnelly directs a committed cast with a cool precision that gets at the play's pent-up despair. **JAMES HEBERT • U-T**

# News Summary



**ATTENTION:**

**M. Hausberg**

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**Old Globe Theatre**

**March 28, 2011**

<b><u>Keyword</u></b>	<b><u>Publication</u></b>	<b><u>Publication Date</u></b>	<b><u>Page #</u></b>	<b><u># of Pages</u></b>
<b><u>Old Globe Theatre</u></b>				
Article	Riviera Magazine	March 01, 2011	28	1
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Page 1 of 1

## AND THIS...

### DIAMONDS ARE FOR KILLING

Give *CSI* a rest for a night and go watch a suspense unfold with real people. *Groundswell* was a hit in NYC last year—the story of three desperate men hunkered in a South African lodge, about to tear each other's hearts out over the chance to mine for diamonds in the rocks below. It runs **March 12-April 17**.  
*Old Globe*, [oldglobe.org](http://oldglobe.org)



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Page 1 of 1

## THEATER

### **“GROUNDSWELL”**

#### **Opens Saturday in San Diego**

The Old Globe presents Ian Bruce's suspenseful thriller about three desperate men negotiating an African diamond mining scheme in a remote South African lodge; opens Saturday and runs through April 17; show-times, 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, The Old Globe complex, Balboa Park, 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego; \$29-\$67; 619-234-5623 or [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).



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Page 1 of 1

## CALENDAR



**A SOUTH AFRICAN THRILLER —** The Old Globe Theatre presents the thriller "Groundswell," through April 17. It tells the story of two men who plot to convince a guest to invest in their diamond mining scheme. The three men find themselves caught in a power struggle fueled by greed and desperation and will go to any length to secure a chance at a better life. Pictured from left are Ned Schmidtke, Owiso Odera and Antony Hagopian. For more information, go to [www.TheOldGlobe.org](http://www.TheOldGlobe.org).

Photo by J. Katarzyna Woronowicz



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Page 1 of 1

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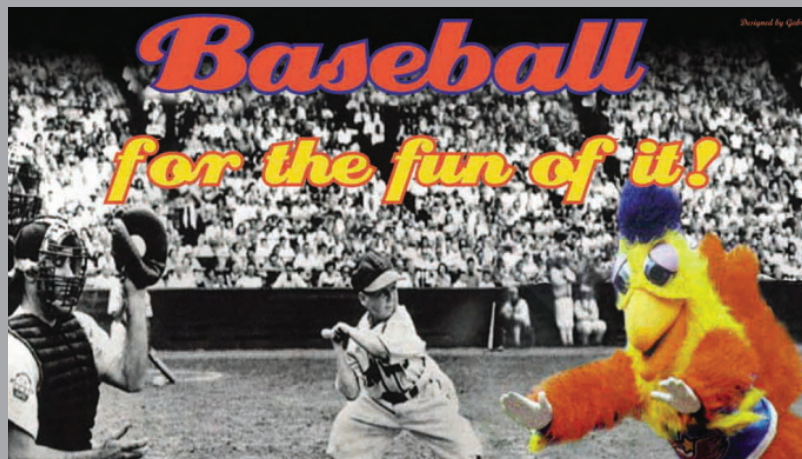
Photo by J. Katarzyna Woronowicz



# CALENDAR

Orange County/San Diego/Inland Empire

**APRIL 2011**



## TUESDAY, APRIL 12 BASEBALL FOR THE FUN OF IT!

An exhibition of photographs, artworks, artifacts and documents exploring some of the amusing events and personalities that have added much to the history and legacy of the national pastime. Highlights include a 60th anniversary tribute to Eddie Gaedel, the 3-foot, 7-inch tall player who came to the plate for the St. Louis Browns in 1951. The feathered orange and yellow San Diego Chicken, the pioneering mascot who transcended his character to become a virtual folk hero, is featured in a display of various personal artifacts and props from a game-worn suit to his famous eye chart for umpires. West Covina Public Library, 1601 West Covina Pkwy., West Covina. Through April 23. (626) 791-7647 or terymar@earthlink.net

## ENTERTAINMENT

### SUNDAY, APRIL 10

#### FOLLIES FOREVER!

The Follies are known for celebrating the music and dance of the '40s, '50s and '60s with a cast ranging in age from 56 to 81. Guest stars, The Four Preps, stroll down memory lane with their million-sellers like "Big Man," "Lazy Summer Night," "Down By the Station" and their chart-topping "26 Miles." Plaza Theatre, 128 South Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs. Follies run through May 15, 2011. \$50-\$92. (760) 327-0225. psfollies.com.

#### PRIVATE LIVES

Passion, anger, love, laughter and romance all shaped by Noël Coward's wit and comic genius sets the stage for perpetually dueling lovers Amanda and Elyot. In Coward's most celebrated comedy, the two divorcees unwittingly book adjoining rooms while honeymooning with their new spouses, and quickly realize the folly of their new marriages. The Laguna Playhouse, Moulton Theatre, 606 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. \$50-\$70. (949) 497-2787. lagunaplayhouse.com.

#### TEN LITTLE INDIANS

In this classic Agatha Christie mystery, 10 people are invited to an unfamiliar

country house on an island off the coast of Devon, England. When life starts to imitate the nursery rhyme, the stranded strangers frantically search for a murderer, and their own pasts return to haunt them. Riverside Community Players, 4026 14th St., Riverside. \$15-\$18. (951) 686-4030. riversidecommunityplayers.org.

#### THE BOOK OF THE DUN COW

In a mythical age before time, a barnyard of animals must band together to fight evil. Walter Wangerin's memorable characters include Chauntecleer the Rooster, the mournful, Mundo Cani Dog and the mysterious Dun Cow. Lamb's Players Theatre, 1142 Orange Ave., Coronado. \$48-\$53. Through May 15. (619) 437-6000. lambsplayers.org.

#### CURTAINS

When a Broadway musical is in its out-of-town tryout... well, sometimes it's murder. Never fear. Boston's finest detective and a diehard musical theatre fan himself is on the case. Landis Performing Arts Center, 4800 Magnolia Ave., Riverside. \$20-\$75. (951) 222-8100. performanceriverside.org.

### MONDAY, APRIL 11

#### THE FLOWER FIELDS AT CARLSBAD RANCH



Explore 50-acres of Giant Tecolote Ranunculus flowers in bloom. This year a new one-acre orchid showcase joins other recent additions such as the 4,000-sq. ft. Paul Ecke Jr. Family Barn designed to recall even more of a ranch setting. The Flower Fields at Carlsbad Ranch, Paseo Del Norte, Carlsbad. Through May 8. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. \$9-10. (760) 431-0352. theflowerfields.com.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 12

#### ROSENKAVALIER

Light and dark themes of relationships mingle in this masterpiece of love and loss. San Diego Opera, Civic Theatre, Third Ave. & B St., downtown San Diego. \$35-\$220. (619) 533-7000. sdopera.com.

#### GROUNDSWELL

In a small lodge on the ferociously rocky coast of South Africa, two men plot to convince their lone guest to invest in their diamond mining scheme. The three men find themselves caught in a power struggle fueled by greed and desperation and will go to any lengths to secure a chance at a better life. The Old Globe, Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Tues.-Sun. through April 17. \$29-\$67. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

#### DRINKIN', SINGIN', SWINGIN'

A salute to Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr. and Dean Martin. Welk Resorts Theatre, 8860 Lawrence Welk Dr., Escondido. Wed.-Sun. through April 24. \$45-\$65. (888) 802-7469. welktheatre.com.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 14

#### RAFTA, RAFTA . . .

Following their wedding, two newlyweds find that starting their life together under the groom's family's roof is no honeymoon. With warmth and humor, this British comedy examines what happens when a young couple must choose between saving money or their marriage. The Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Tues.-Sun.

through April 24. \$55-\$94. (619) 234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

#### JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

Considered the world's first rock opera, this fabulous musical depicts the final days in the life of Christ. Music and lyrics by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. Old Town Temecula Community Theater, 42051 Main St., Temecula. Thurs.-Sun. through April 24. \$20-\$28. (866) 653-8696. temeculatheater.org.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 15

#### SHOTGUN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

An evening of comedy, betrayal, and ...murder. Help solve the murder mystery before it is too late and the inheritance is lost. Mystery Café Dinner Theatre, Imperial House Restaurant, 505 Kalmia St., San Diego. Fri.-Sat. through April 30. \$60. (619) 544-1600. mysterycafe.net.

#### RUTH

The uplifting biblical story of Ruth is recounted in this award-winning musical. Ruth's moving portrait of love and devotion reveals the poignant path to her marriage – a union granting her a special place in the family's lineage leading to Jesus. LifeHouse Theater, 1135 N. Church St., Redlands. \$15-\$19. Weekends through May 8. (909) 335-3037 ext. 21. lifehousetheater.com.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 16

#### PHOTOGRAPHING THE CAHUILLA LANDSCAPE

Enjoy a day outdoors photographing the beautiful landscape of Cahuilla Indian territory with Sue Meyers, an award-winning photographer and naturalist. Bring camera equipment and picnic lunch. Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, 219 S. Palm Canyon Dr., Palm Springs. \$10. Register (760) 833-8169 or cvictor@accmuseum.org. (760) 833-8167. accmuseum.org.

#### SPRING BUSKER FESTIVAL

The cobblestone streets of Seaport Village bring the unbelievable to life as one-of-a-kind street performers showcase their extraordinary and bizarre talents for a weekend of exhilarating outdoor family amusement unlike any other festival in the region. Jugglers, sword swallowers, contortionists, comedic stuntmen and more will awe the crowds. Festival is free of charge, all buskers accept tips. Seaport Village, West Harbor Dr. and Pacific Hwy., adjacent to Embarcadero Park North. Also April 17. (619) 235-4014. seaportvillage.com.

#### RAMONA

Based on Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel, this classic story follows the tragic romance of an orphan girl raised by a rich Mexican family and traces the many struggles of




# CURTAIN CALL


## FEBRUARY AND MARCH THEATRE OPENINGS

Craving a little culture in your life? Look no further than the latest theatre openings SD has to offer...

### San Diego Civic Theatre

**What:** *The Wizard of Oz*  
**When:** February 15 – 20  
**Where:** 1100 Third Ave., San Diego  
**How:** 619-570-1100  
 800-982-2787  
 broadwaysd.com  



### Cygnnet Theatre Company Old Town Theatre

**What:** *The Tragedy of the Commons*  
**When:** Through February 20  
**Where:** 4040 Twiggs St., San Diego  
**How:** 619-337-1525  
 cygnnettheatre.com  



### La Jolla Playhouse Mandell Weiss Theatre

**What:** *Little Miss Sunshine*  
**When:** February 15 – March 27  
**Where:** 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla  
**How:** 858-550-1010  
 lajollaplayhouse.org  


### The Lyceum Theater

**What:** *Romeo and Juliet*  
**When:** February 12 – 13  
**Where:** 79 Horton Plaza, San Diego  
**How:** 619-295-7311  
 sandiegoballet.org  



### Old Globe Theatre

**What:** *Jane Austin's EMMA: A Musical Romantic Comedy*  
**When:** Through February 27  
**Where:** 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego  
**How:** 619-23-GLOBE  
 theoldglobe.org  



### Old Globe Theatre

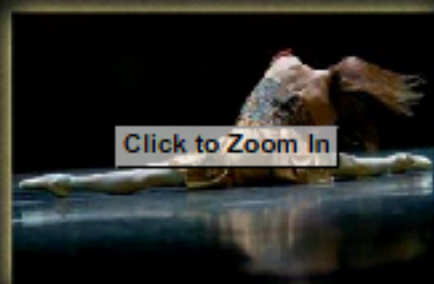
**What:** *Rafta, Rafta...*  
**When:** March 19 – April 24  
**Where:** 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego  
**How:** 619-23-GLOBE  
 theoldglobe.org  


### San Diego Symphony Copley Symphony Hall

**What:** *Brahms' Double Concerto: A Jacobs Masterworks Concert*  
**When:** February 11 – 13  
**Where:** 750 B St., San Diego  
**How:** 619-235-0804  
 sandiegosymphony.org  


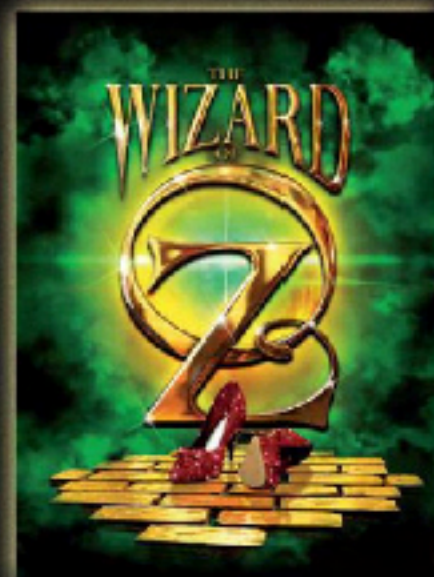
### Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre Old Globe Theatre

**What:** *Groundswell*  
**When:** March 12 – April 17  
**Where:** 1363 Old Globe Way, San Diego  
**How:** 619-23-GLOBE  
 theoldglobe.org  




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Romeo and Juliet



The Wizard of Oz



La Jolla Playhouse



Old Globe Theatre

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