



29 November 2019
Cape Town, South Africa

A very warm greeting and a big welcome to schools, teachers, students, directors and parents to your Third Shakespeare Schools Festival experience! I am so proud of the SSF Malawi reaching its 3rd year! A big congratulation to all involved for growing the Festival to the extent of reaching so many more schools, including two very special schools for Deaf Learners. A truly remarkable achievement in such a short period of time!



Kseniya Filinova-Bruton (Left)
Dr. John Kani (Right)

Our Festival is a space where we do not discriminate and where we welcome young people from all walks of life to experience the thrill of mastering Shakespeare's works in live performance. We do not judge but rather celebrate every young actor and make them feel like stars! We encourage the teachers to develop special relationship with their casts, making it a unique journey and creating special connections and memories for a life time.

My special memories take me back to my own childhood. As a little girl in St. Petersburg, Russia, my home country, I grew up within a theatre family. The experience of being in the theatre space; observing from the wings my mom rehearsing; roaming the corridors of the back stage; popping in to the wardrobe department to look at magical creations of costume designers; acting on stage at the tender age of 3 – are special moments, which installed my life-long love, and passion for, theatre. My life's mission is to give these same opportunities to as many children as I possibly can. I want the theatre to become a special home for them too, and the stage a place where they grow their confidence and self-belief. I cannot emphasize how deeply-moving every SSF SA Festival is for me.

I am truly sad not be able to join you once again for the Festival. Funding remains the biggest obstacle, but I look forward to further developing our partnership and relationship with schools in Malawi, for now remotely supporting you with resources and advice. Our doors are always open in South Africa, and I do believe the financial support will come to make our big dream of exchange programmes a reality.

May I take this opportunity to thank Kamuzu Academy for once again hosting the SSF Malawi Festival. Big thanks to all the principals of schools and teachers, who see the great value in Shakespeare's works and its impact on our youth; to students for being brave to take on the challenge to perform the complex texts and characters. Thank you to all the parents supporting your children in this process. And anyone else who is making SSF MW possible.

Enjoy every moment of your Festival!

With kindest regards, Kseniya Filinova-Bruton
(SSF International Festival Director)