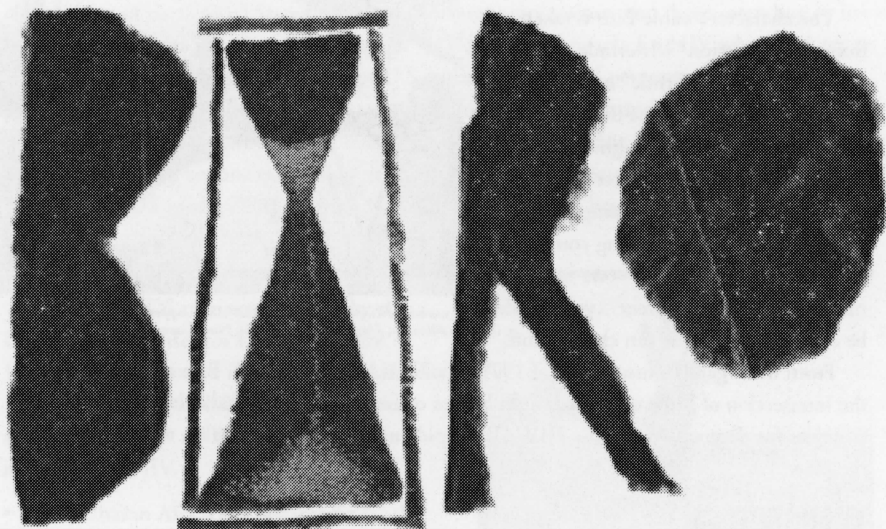


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WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY NTARE GUMA MBAHO MWINE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17
8 PM
CULBRETH THEATRE

PROGRAM NOTES

MWERINDE EBIRO

The character's name Biro is taken from the expression "Mwerinde ebiro", meaning, "beware of time" in the language Runyankole, one of the nearly forty dialects spoken throughout Uganda. As the title character Biro explains: If somebody is pissing you around you know mistreating you, you can say "Mwerinde ebiro—one time I may be somebody different...you should be conscious that time can change stuff."



A workshop Mwine conducted with The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) in Mbarara, Uganda 2003. Photo (c) Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine

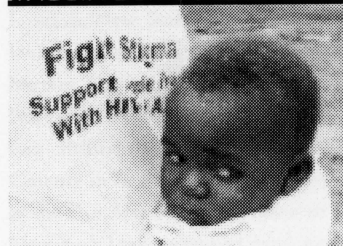
From the Ugandan insurgency of 1979 to a Texas jail cell in 2004, Biro negotiates a life at the intersection of some of the major fault lines of contemporary global culture: immigration, struggles for democracy, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Some basic facts on topics discussed in the play:

IMMIGRATION

The United States has a long history of regulating immigration. The 1924 National Origins Act and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 strongly favored immigrants from Europe over other regions of the world. The Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965 ushered in sweeping changes to immigration policy by abolishing the national origins quota system as the basis for immigration. In this period, the United States first began to witness the transformation from predominantly European immigration to Latin American and Asian flows that continue to characterize today's immigration patterns.

In 1986, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which granted amnesty to illegal immigrants who had resided in the United States for a certain period of time. Even with these many legislative attempts to control immigration, still today there are probably 9 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States, most of them in California and Texas. California and Texas have absorbed high costs due to emergency care for undocumented immigrants, with hospitals in each state covering around \$75 million in expenses annually. — The Migration Policy Institute

REFUGEE STATUS



Following a workshop Mwine conducted with the AIDS Information Centre (AIC) in Mbale, Uganda 2003. Photo (c) Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine

To qualify for refugee resettlement in the U.S., a person must prove that she/he has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, membership in a social group, political opinion, or national origin. In addition, a refugee must fit into one of a set of "priority" categories, which factor in degree of risk to the refugee's life, membership in certain groups of special concern to the U.S., and existence of family members in the U.S. — The National Immigration Forum

HIV AND IMMIGRATION

HIV is specifically listed in U.S. Immigration Law as a reason for finding non-citizens “inadmissible” to the United States. INS may keep everyone who is HIV positive, except U.S. citizens, out of the United States. This includes temporary visitors and those intending to live in the United States permanently. Although INS doesn't test people for HIV when they try to enter the United States, everyone except U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents must get a visa to enter legally. Noncitizens who want to permanently immigrate to the United States as lawful permanent residents must take a medical exam that includes an HIV test. INS also may keep anyone out who it thinks is HIV positive because, for instance, the person is carrying AIDS medications in his or her luggage. – The San Francisco AIDS Foundation

UNAIDS FACTS

The first AIDS case was reported by the United States Center for Disease Control in 1981. Uganda reported its first case of AIDS in 1982. Since the epidemic began two decades ago, more than 60 million people have been infected with HIV.

- Sub-Saharan Africa has become by far the region worst-affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In 2003, an estimated 26.6 million people in this region were living with HIV.
- AIDS killed approximately 2.3 million people in sub-Saharan Africa in 2003.
- In the 45 countries most affected by the epidemic, it is projected that between 2000 and 2020, 68 million people will die prematurely as a result of AIDS. The projected toll is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa where 55 million additional deaths can be expected.



Moroto, Uganda, one of the districts in Uganda that has been affected by internal conflict. Photo (c) Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAY



*Mwine with the President of Uganda H.E. Yoweri Museveni at the world premiere of *Biro* at Uganda's National Theater on Jan. 26, 2003. Photo (c) courtesy of Uganda Presidential Press Unit*

Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine began working with rural based theatre artists in South Africa in 1996 on a grant from the William & Eva Fox Foundation. Inspired by this experience to further collaborate with other African artists he turned to his native homeland of Uganda. Working together with local HIV/AIDS advocacy groups he came in contact with theatre artists who were infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Mwine recalls, “Watching these individuals use theatre to restore hope and improve quality of life rein-

vigorated my sense of purpose as an artist. It was this exposure to theatre in local African communities that served as a catalyst in the writing of *Biro*.”

In 2002 Mwine conducted a series of interviews from which *Biro* was developed. He traveled throughout Uganda photographing and collecting thousands of images and hours of audio recordings used in developing the text and production. The play held its World Premiere in Kampala, Uganda at The National Theater on January 26th, 2003.

DEPARTMENT OF

DRAMA

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

presents

BIRO

Written, performed and directed by Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine

Stefon Taylor, Audio Engineer

Bob Barker, Costume Design

Leonard Okware and Chris Reay, Lighting Design

Aloysius Ssalongo and Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine, Principal Photography

Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine's residency at the University of Virginia is funded in part by the Provost's Arts Enhancement Fund and The Caplin Guest Artist Endowment

NTARE GUMA MBAHO MWINE

Theatre credits include leading roles at The Steppenwolf Theater, The Kennedy Center, The Lincoln Center, The Public Theatre and the National Tour of *Six Degrees of Separation*, for which he received an NAACP Image Award nomination for Best Actor. TV credits include *ER*, *CSI* and *Law & Order*. As a photographer Ntare's work has exhibited at The United Nations, Rush Arts Gallery, Museum Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa, the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, The Latino Art Museum and HBO's *Six Feet Under*. Ntare's first effort as a playwright is *Biro*. The play held its world premiere at Uganda's National Theater in January 2003. *Biro* subsequently premiered in London, New York's The Public Theater, the 2004 African Union summit meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, The Market Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa, Seattle's Empty Space Theater, Kenya's National Theatre and in Harare, Zimbabwe. Ntare's first effort as filmmaker is a documentary entitled *Beware Of Time*, which was selected as Best Film at the Black International Cinema in Berlin. The film received its first broadcast in Uganda and subsequently screened at the Pan African Film Festival in Los Angeles. Ntare received his M.F.A in Acting from New York University and completed studies at The Moscow Arts Theater, The Royal National Theater and The University of Virginia. For further details please visit www.BewareOfTime.com

