

In 2021, Damon Galgut was awarded the prestigious Booker Prize for his phenomenal novel *The Promise*. It is only the third time a South African writer has been given that honour. Damon has now collaborated with award-winning theatre director Sylvaine Strike, and together, they will bring to the stage an electrifying and exciting first: the adaptation of his own novel, with a stunning cast of South African actors. The world premiere of *The Promise* kicks off in Cape Town, South Africa, in the Star Theatre at the beautiful The Homecoming Centre.

On the edge of District Six, and home to the District Six Museum, the Homecoming Centre is the perfect symbolic venue for a work dealing with the most charged of all South African issues.

On a small farm outside Pretoria, the Swart family – “a typical bunch of white South Africans” – tries to hold itself together through the violent lurches of recent history. They have promised to give a small piece of land with a tiny house on it to Salome, the Sotho woman who has worked for them her whole life. A worthless property, but still, they will not give it up.

Are they cursed, or just unlucky? One by one, members of the family die, while everything around them changes and they try to stay the same. Only two siblings will eventually be left, facing each other over a great divide: Anton, the tormented older brother, and Amor, his strange younger sister.

In long days of discussion, Galgut and Strike agreed on a new physical language for the play, as well as a choral mode of narration, which is the approach they have taken to putting the work on its feet. A script penned by Galgut, which harnesses his novel in all its beauty and devastation, provides the raw material from which Strike will workshop and further develop the staged version of *The Promise* with her cast and creative team.

Strike is known for her directorial signature- her work on Beckett’s *Endgame*, the devised production of *Firefly*, Molière’s *Tartuffe*, and Sam Shepard’s *Curse of the Starving Class* to name but a few, relies on the poetry of the body. The razor sharp and exquisitely detailed physical transformations, vivid imagery, pathos and hilarity of her productions, remain in audience’s hearts long after a show has ended.

Similar in their emotive vision of the world and their profound understanding of human relationships, Galgut and Strike’s first collaboration promises to be unforgettable.

Funny, confrontational and powerful, this production gives the novel a whole new life. It will speak to South Africans in the most intimate way possible. Don’t miss one of the cultural events of the year.