

# KING KONG

## Our Knot of Time and Music

by Pat Williams

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“An extraordinary memoir of the first ever South African musical, which has since acquired mythical proportions. Essential reading for anyone who loves our country – and, of course, its music.”

– **Athol Fugard**

“Honest, unflinching, beautifully written with immaculate taste, the genesis of King Kong is fascinating ... and more, it is a portrait of a bygone age that feels painfully fresh, and a constantly touching, universal tale of emotional wounding and recovery ... A triumph.”

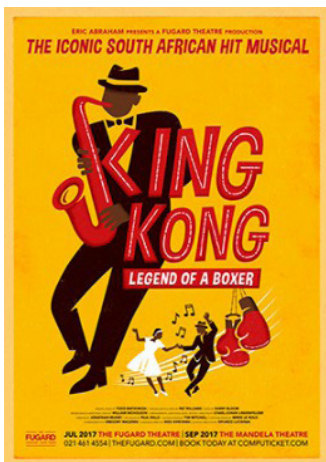
– **William Nicholson**

On 2 February 1959, a musical about the life and times of heavyweight boxing star Ezekiel Dhlamini (known as ‘King Kong’) opened in Johannesburg to a packed audience that included Nelson Mandela. King Kong was not just South Africa’s first ever musical, but one that grew out of a collaboration between black people and white, and showcased an all-black cast. It was an instant hit, bursting through the barriers of apartheid and eventually playing to 200,000 South Africans of every colour before transferring to London’s West End.

Pat Williams, the show’s lyricist, was at the time an apolitical young woman trying to free herself from the controls and prejudices of the genteel white society in which she lived. Here she recounts her experience of growing up in a divided South Africa, her involvement in the musical, and its lasting impact both on herself and on the show’s cast, many of whom went on to find international fame, like South African jazz legends Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela. Her memoir takes the story up to the present day. It is both a vivid evocation of a troubled time and place as well as a celebration of a joyous production, in which a group of young people came together in South Africa’s dark times – to create a show which still lives on today.

The release of *King Kong: Our Knot of Time and Music* coincides with The Fugard Theatre’s upcoming brand new production of the legendary musical KING KONG.

For more information on the production – running from 25 July to 2 September at The Fugard Theatre in Cape Town and from 12 September to 8 October at The Nelson Mandela Theatre in Johannesburg – visit: [www.thefugard.com](http://www.thefugard.com) and [www.kingkongstagemusical.com](http://www.kingkongstagemusical.com)



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