

Biography



Michael Omoke¹ is a pioneering entrepreneur, playwright, theatre producer, actor, and the Artistic director of ACT: New Nordic Voices, Denmark's premiere transnational theatre company². Upon settling in Denmark in 2011, he devoted the years 2014-2015 to establishing and creating his theatre company, driven by a vision for transcending cultural boundaries through the performing arts. With the guiding vision of *multiple cultures sharing a stage*, ACT has, since its inception, engaged more than 150 artists from 46 different nationalities in various

productions³.

In 2016, the company made its debut, with Michael delivering an impressive Danish premiere as both the producer and leading actor, portraying Shylock in William Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" for ACT's inaugural performance at Baltoppen LIVE. This production was a genuine testament to diversity, as it brought together 20 actors from 11 different nationalities, all living in Denmark, to share the stage.

In 2017, Michael co-produced a three-day intensive workshop in Malmö, Sweden working in collaboration with theatre companies across Sweden, and Oslo, Norway. The workshop and seminar brought together actors from these three countries and culminated in the "Share Experience Conference" on the fourth day, engaging a broader audience. That same year, Michael produced an Arthur Miller adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's classic, "An Enemy of the People," at Baltoppen LIVE in Ballerup, Denmark. Featuring a diverse cast from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, the production highlighted the lasting relevance of Ibsen's work.

In 2018, Michael conceived the idea of 'New Nordic Voices' and developed it in collaboration with cultural institutions from Stockholm, Sweden and Helsinki, Finland. This project showcases classic theatre productions that highlight both Nordic and global icons, featuring a diverse ensemble of performing artists from various ethnic backgrounds who reside in the Nordic countries.

In 2019, Michael had the distinction of being the first to stage Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf" in the Nordic countries. This groundbreaking production came 44 years after the play's original Broadway debut. This play marked the inaugural installment of the "New Nordic Voices" series. The production premiered in Helsinki on International Women's Day and later toured Denmark and Stockholm, Sweden. Impressively, it was re-invited to Helsinki for a special performance at the Nordic Culture Point, further solidifying Michael's dedication to fostering cultural exchange through theatre within the Nordic region. Following the success of "for colored girls," Michael, in collaboration with the company's Management Board, chose to rebrand the company as ACT: New Nordic Voices to accentuate the commitment to showcasing diverse voices and narratives from the Nordic region and beyond.

¹ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michaelscreativeproductions/>

² www.thespians.dk

³ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ACThespians>

In 1888, the legendary Swedish playwright August Strindberg, a luminary in the realm of literature, crafted the trailblazing play *Miss Julie* while residing in Denmark. Renowned for its audacious depiction of class conflict, the play encountered bans throughout Europe. Nevertheless, it eventually premiered on Swedish stages in 1906 at the People's Theatre (Folkteatern) in Stockholm. Inspired by this enduring classic, Michael Omoke embarked on a creative journey in **2020** amidst the global pandemic to reimagine *Miss Julie*. His efforts culminated in the critically acclaimed reimagination, "*Miss Julie's Happy Valley*," which ingeniously transposed the story to colonial-era Kenya during Karen Blixen's time.

In 2021, Michael made an impressive Nordic debut as a playwright with his captivating reimagination, *Miss Julie's Happy Valley*. Demonstrating his versatility, he not only served as the producer but also took on the lead role as the actor playing Jean, bringing his unique vision of August Strindberg's classic *Miss Julie* to life on stage. His play was one of only two works awarded the prestigious 100,000 Euros (745,695.00 Danish Kroner) grant from the Nordic Culture Point, a distinguished foundation operating under the Nordic Council of Ministers, selected from a staggering 153 submissions from applicants across the Nordic countries. Additional funding came from the Royal Swedish and Norwegian embassies in Denmark, the Danish Embassy in Helsinki, Nordic Culture Fund and Svensk - Danska Kulturfonden. The Icelandic House in Copenhagen generously contributed their facilities for the play's development and Karen Blixen Museum Denmark and Corrsing borders also partnered with the project. In total, Michael raised 1,347,455.00 DKK, marking another landmark achievement for him as a producer.

"*Miss Julie's Happy Valley*" premiered at the esteemed Folketeatret in Copenhagen on August 25th, 2021, to rave reviews⁴; this remarkable achievement marked Michael as the first African playwright to have a work produced at this historic Danish regional theatre. With a rich history dating back to 1847, the Folketeatret has long been a bastion of theatrical excellence, and Michael's groundbreaking accomplishment adds another layer of diversity and innovation to its storied legacy.

Subsequently, on October 26th, 2021, "*Miss Julie's Happy Valley*" embarked on a tour to Finland, premiering at the esteemed University of the Arts Helsinki. This renowned institution offers top-tier education in music, fine arts, theatre, and dance in the country. The performance attracted a select audience, comprising the university's theatre professors, directors, dramaturges, and students, who enthusiastically appreciated and engaged with this innovative interpretation of a classic tale. Even more, the institution became both financial and strategic partners offering substantial in-kind finances. Michael's new play continued to garner praise and recognition, further solidifying his status as a trailblazer in the world of theatre. The extensive project, "*Miss Julie's Out of Africa*," encompassed a series of workshops and seminars that formed the framework for the entire endeavour.

On **August 23rd, 2022**, Michael was honoured to receive an invitation from the Danish National School of Performing Arts to give a master-class lecture to their students. In this session, he shared insights into his creative journey and the pioneering vision behind his company, ACT: New Nordic Voices. The lecture offered an invaluable opportunity for aspiring artists and performers to learn from Michael's experiences and gain a deeper understanding of his innovative approach to theatre, which has successfully bridged cultural and artistic boundaries.

In 2023, Michael Omoke spearheaded the groundbreaking *Silenced No More* project, a bold initiative funded by the European Union, the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, and the Embassy of Denmark in Kenya. The project, launched during the 16 Days of Activism Against

⁴ <https://cphpost.dk/2021-08-29/news/culture/performance-review-michael-omoke-cuts-deep-with-racially-charged-reimagining-of-miss-julie/>

Gender-Based Violence (GBV), was driven by the vision of using the arts to address critical issues such as Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Through *ACT: New Nordic Voices*, in partnership with the Embassy of Denmark and the European Union in Kenya, *Silenced No More* aimed to leverage the arts to combat social injustices.

The centerpiece of the project was the staging of Ntozake Shange's play *For Colored Girls...*, which took place across Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa. These performances attracted over 3,000 attendees, primarily youth, and sparked significant campaigns, debates, advocacy, and in-depth discussions at universities, theatres, and political platforms. The events ignited robust public dialogue on SGBV and FGM, highlighting the power of the arts in driving social change. In total, the project raised Ksh 11,183,837.92, demonstrating Michael's exceptional ability as a producer.

The initiative involved more than 40 team members, including artists and activists from key organizations such as Stretchers Youth Organization (Mombasa), Badili Africa (Nairobi), and CSO Kisumu, further showcasing the collaborative effort. Additionally, the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces funded the commissioning of a new original play focused on combating human rights violations, particularly FGM, expanding the reach of *Silenced No More* and solidifying its impact.

Silenced No More: For Colored Girls 2023 Kenyan Production - Key Links and Media

1. European Union Ambassadors supporting the vision "Silenced No More"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGyshnvcfb8>

2. Short promotional trailer for the 2023 Kenyan production of For Colored Girls

https://youtu.be/V_7TJHf7b9Y?si=vK7jt5IZJ7jvjrdm

3. For Colored Girls Kisumu Show

<https://youtu.be/abDafnSRkrQ?si=Amn14MZLJC5PAOmd>

4. For Colored Girls Mombasa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdqbiUgl7SU>

5. For Colored Girls Nairobi University

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HATRIJmT7bo>

6. Silenced No More - Live Online Discussion

<https://www.youtube.com/live/80TY6iWZge8?si=m9Q8dPI0wgPdEy03>

In December 2024, Michael Omoke embarked on a defining journey to the United States, where he expanded the international vision of *Nordic Classics Reimagined*, a project supported by the Nordic Culture Fund. Over seven transformative days in New York and Washington, D.C., Michael secured the Danish Consulate General in New York as an official partner, confirmed *Miss Julie's Happy Valley* as the pilot production, and opened vital dialogues with leading cultural institutions such as HERE Arts Center and St. Ann's Warehouse. With a two-year implementation plan set for 2026–2028, his journey laid new transatlantic pathways for the reimagining of Nordic classics through the prism of global diversity.

March 2025, amid this creative surge, Michael unveiled a bold new chapter: *Seven Gothic Tales: A Literary Return to America*. Reimagining Karen Blixen’s legendary debut through immersive, multisensory installations across seven American states, the project defies traditional theatre, instead crafting living, breathing encounters with story, scent, sound, and landscape. It transforms Blixen’s gothic visions into a cultural expedition—a bridge between continents at a time of political uncertainty. Embraced by Danish cultural diplomats in both New York and Washington, D.C., *Seven Gothic Tales* positions ACT: New Nordic Voices at the forefront of a new kind of soft power—where artistry becomes diplomacy, and where storytelling reclaims its ancient role as a force of unity across the divides of nations.

