A turning point in 'changing generations'

By WANGUI GACHIE\

"Its going to be the world premier!"

James Faulkland said of

the opening gala night of the

Phoenix Players' musical *The*

*Changing Generations.*

The Christmas mood has began

to creep up again and its

*spit-and-polish* time at the

Phoenix.

The Christmas offering will be

different this year. This is the

first time that there has ever

been a totally Kenyan Christmas

musical.

Written by James Faulkland it

has the full score composed by

Suzanne Gachukia and Joy

Mboya of Musikly Speaking. It

also the single largest production

ever sponsored by the United

Nations Children. Fund (UNICEF),

locally.

The show will open with a Gala

night - which Director James

Faulkland has baptised *The*

*World Premier-* on Friday Night

with the Attorney General Amos

Wako being expected as the guest

of honour. It will run till December,

19, to resume on the 4th to

run till the 16th of January,1993.

In past Christmas productions

by the Phoenix like The Kenyan

Gondoliers, The Kenyan Mikado

there was a general move towards

making the musicals more Kenyan

in orientation .

The shows had rave reviews.

For once Kenyans could go to the

theatre and watch a great musical

that WaS spiced with the

humourous tinge drawn from local

circumstances and situations.

The tongue-in-cheek humour was,

richer, the jokes funnier. People

laughed but caught the message.

"After the success of the Gondoliers

and under the encouraging

influence of a couple of Vodo kas, Suzanne, Joy and I made a

pact that the next musical would

not be an adaptation but would

be our own, home grown Kenyan

product" James said.

This was the birth of the concept

that has grown to be the 30

cast production of *The Changing*

*Generations.*

. The thrust of the play is rich

and multi-layered. It is a sensitive,

gently-woven tapestry of the

concerns and issues that many

ordinary Kenyan people are having

to contend with everyday.

The theme of tribalism in Kenyan society is played out in a

warm and blossoming love staked

out between two cultures. There

are ominous warnings from the

older generation who believe that

love cannot be allowed to blossom

between Luo Josh (played by

Maurice Oyando) and Kikuyu

Wanja (played by Mercy

Wambugu).

The trials of love under seige

are played out with witty dialogue

that spills into song. There

are 25 different musical pieces in

the play that will take the audience

through all shades of emotion.

The play also addressed the

conflicts and crises that the Aids

puts on relationships as one of

the characters is diagnosed HIV

positive. In this way it is attempting

to spread an important

message to the audience through

the oral tradition .

The team has already been invited

to perform in South Africa,

Johannnesburg. The production

is being filmed by the East African

Films Ltd and a video version

will be circulated throughout

Africa.

Maurice Oyando and Mercy Watf1bui, who played as young lovers in *The Kenyan Gondoliers,*

will take part in *Changing Generations.*