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THE WORLD IS GERALD LANGIRI'S STAGE



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THIS ACTOR IS NOT AVERSE TO TAKING BIG RISKS AND DREAMING BIG, WRITES SAM KIRANGA

You may know him from his roles as Don the company lawyer in *Mali* and Wakili Langiri in *Mash-taka*. Serious on the set but funny and friendly in person, Gerald Langiri is a face to watch out for in the new wave of Kenyan film.

This ambitious young man made a bold move by stepping into acting from a professional background that was not quite as artsy. Langiri left a full-time IT management job he had held for close to seven years to "pursue my dream of discovering the exceptional actor I felt I was always destined to become".

Gerald's acting prowess was first developed during his childhood when he would participate in school plays and church skits.

In his adult years, his return to acting began with a search for elusive acting opportunities. He was fortunate enough to land a role in the legal drama series *Mashtaka* after a friend informed him about the auditions.

A year later, he has surpassed expectations to act in big budget productions alongside famous names like Charles Ouda and Raymond Wafula. Evidently, we are dealing with a heavyweight here.

Despite the generally serious characters he has portrayed in different shows, Gerald claims to be more of a comedy lover.

"I intend to play some funnyman roles in the future as well," he says.

He admits that he prefers acting in TV shows as opposed to Kenyan movies since the small screen provides ample exposure for him and a chance for continual growth.

Eventually, he hopes that Hollywood will beckon him to star in A-listed movies like one Eddie Kimani, who acted as a red-eyed vampire in the blockbuster flick *Twilight*. When it comes to setting the bar, Nicholas Cage is Gerald's greatest role model and favourite actor.

In Gerald's view, the Kenyan film industry is steadily improving but there still remains a lot to be done in terms of opening avenues for new actors. He opened a site called actors.co.ke that specifically aims to promote Kenyan acting talent.

"Several actor profiles are featured on the site and this has made them more accessible to people who want to team up with them on new projects."

With a following of close to 1,000 readers a month, he feels that the site is going places. A large percentage of the visitors at actors.co.ke are from Kenya, US, and Norway. He believes that this kind of traffic is what will put Kenyan talent on the international map.

In future, Gerald expressed hope that more actors will take the initiative of marketing themselves instead of waiting for some kind of "superman" who will provide all the answers.

"It is not enough to be talented; you need to put yourself in front of the industry players and create a chance for yourself," he says.

He also challenged film crew professionals to open their own sites and team up with actors to form a united effort in getting their work noticed.

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