

TUESDAY APRIL 13 201

# Young, creative crew spin taal tales



ZANE HENRY

**AFRIKAAPS**

**DIRECTOR:** Catherine Henegan  
**CAST:** Jitsvinger, Moenier Adams, Blaq Pearl, Bliksemstraal, Emile Jansen, Kyle Shepard and Shane Cooper  
**VENUE:** Baxter Theatre  
**UNTIL:** April 23  
**RATING:** ★★★★★

**A**FRIKAANS has been big news of late for all kinds of reasons. Amongst all of the hullabaloo and fresh from its debut at the KKNK, *Afrikaaps* lands at the Baxter Theatre with a deep bass boom.

*Afrikaaps* is a stage documentary laying down the manifesto for the reclamation and re-appropriation of Afrikaans. It tracks the history of the language in the Cape and how it is used today. Contrary to the press release, it's not a hip hopera - whatever that is meant to be (damn you R Kelly).

There is no story and there are no clear characters. The young performers are themselves through and through. It's loud, wild and vital. It's very, very earnest, but it's also quite funny, so that's okay.

It's propelled by the conviction of its cast. They're all over the place, this cast. They sing, they rap, they breakdance and they play instruments.

Sama-nominated jazz pianist Kyle Shepherd and bassist Shane Cooper contribute the shifting musical backdrop.

Jitsvinger, aka Quintin Goliath, aka The Tallest MC in the Universe, is the *de facto* leader. He stalks the stage, looking like a deranged shaman in a suit made out of newspaper, weaving intricate narratives in beautiful *taal*.

Moenier Adams is the crowd favourite, winning them over irretrievably with his singing, rapping, dancing and guitar-

playing. Yep, he does all those things and he does them well. This guy is going to be a star, if he chooses it.

Blaq Pearl elicits goosebumps with her politicised rhymes and command of the stage.

Bliksemstraal has some sweet dance moves, rough ragga-rhymes and a smile that shines to the back of the auditorium.

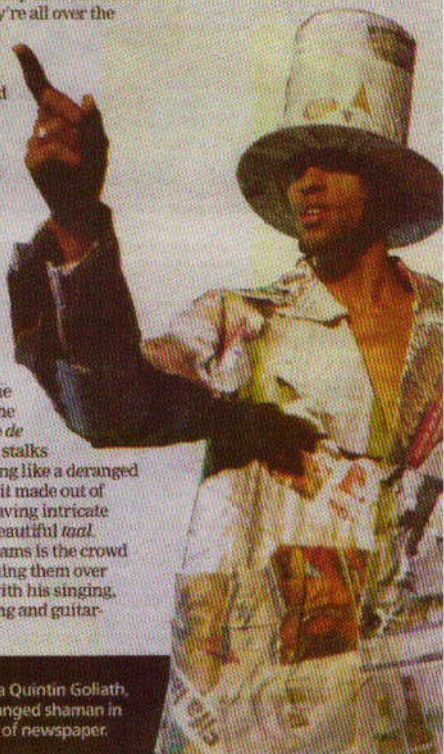
Emile "YX?" Jansen, of Black Noise, brings experience and hip hop pedigree to proceedings.

They perform on a bare stage with a video backdrop on which archival footage and interviews with academics play out. The show is not only for Afrikaans speakers' enjoyment. English speakers with a smattering of Afrikaans knowledge will enjoy it.

*Afrikaaps* has a clear message that is backed up by research and conviction. It does occasionally verge on pedagogy but is pulled back the next moment by the performers' humour and passion.

Songs start with traditional music before being remixed with a slamming beat. On this point, and here I run the risk of being *klapped* by Jitsvinger, slightly less worthy hip hop and slightly more sugary hip pop might seal the deal with school-kids. It's an un-holy compromise, but it just might be worth it.

It was tempting to write this review in Afrikaans vernacular, but the cold voice of restraint won out. Allow me to say, though, that *Afrikaaps* is *jas-gat*.



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