

## **Theatre: Afrikaaps**

*Fiona Gordon*

04/21/2010 10:57:01

**Fiona Gordon:** Afrikaaps - that 'kitchen' version of Afrikaans, spoken 'in die Kaap', that sounds 'so bietjie gangster', or like the speaker needs speech therapy...

Just some of the connotations of this version of the language with its origins and influences in the combined demographics of multiple cultures, and so intricately interwoven with the history of our country. Through documentary video, and music, and dance, and the word - spoken, sung, written, rapped... this talented group of performers gives insightful voice to issues affecting them and their communities, as part of a 'bigger movement of efforts to reclaim the Afrikaans language for all who speak it'.

Strange then, perhaps, for me to be writing about this show in English. But it's all about expression in the way you feel comfortable doing so - about exploration of roots, and history, and what that means for today. About the rhythm and rhyme and sounds of language. About reading, and being read, between the spoken lines. It's about identity - as an individual, and as part of a culture, and within the groups within that broader culture. It's about being young, and trying to find your voice. And being older, and trying to make sense of its context.

The gaps in my understanding of the language(s) being spoken did not hamper my enjoyment of the experience, nor my ability to gain a more profound understanding of the 'bigger picture'. In the true spirit of 'edutainment', there is something to be gained by those from within the communities mirrored on stage, and those who are furthest removed from them; and a good time to be had by all in doing so. Although it had the requisite 'punch' to end on a high note, I did not find it to resolve satisfactorily, but it is, on the whole, a fantastic marriage of high-art philosophies, and accessibility; in one of the most passionate and excellently-produced productions I have seen in a while.

Directed by Catherine Henegan, and featuring Jitsvinger, Kyle Shepherd, Blaq Pearl, Emile Jansen, Shane Cooper, Moenier Adams, Bliksemstraal and Jethro Louw, Afrikaaps is showing at the Baxter Theatre until 24 April 2010, in association with The Baxter Theatre Centre, The Glasshouse, and the ABSA KKNK. Bookings can be made through Computicket.

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