
ArtSpoken & Reviews

Cape Academy of Performing Arts

Fiona Gordon

11/10/2009 11:47:08

Fiona Gordon: The Cape Academy of Performing Arts had three shows on at the Artscape Theatre last week.

Yes - that's right - three separate programmes - out of one school...

I wrote about the Cape Dance Company, featuring students on their full time tertiary programme, in a separate review. But the output drawn from the whole school is showcased in two separate performances - one comprised primarily of different dance pieces, and the other a musical theatre masterpiece, devised and directed by industry heavyweights Anton Luitingh and Duane Alexander.

Diversity is clearly the name of this game, as the CAPA show presents a delightful programme which successfully showcases many ages and performance styles - from the tiny pink fluffy Candiflosses doing 'step-ball-change', to contemporary pieces by well-known local choreographers. A highlight is Michelle Reid's new work Blizzard, which sees 18 young girls in fluffy wigs and sparkly silver and white twirl and whirl and jump with energetic explosions and lots of "snow".

Els van Mol is just hysterical in her monologue entitled 'Fattitude', and I got goosebumps as the senior students sang extracts from the musical 'Les Miserables'. A tap finale features the full spectrum of participants - from members of the company to members of a development initiative in association with The City of Cape Town, and Oasis. With attention to detail an obvious feature of the production team, it comes together very well.

But the real theatrical achievement is the production of 'Headshots'. I loved it when I saw it at the Masque Theatre in June, but the larger stage, and use of head mics, and time which begets confidence in a role, makes it all the more worthy of the praise heaped upon it.

Using songs, or variations of songs, from shows of the musical theatre genre, this 16-strong cast presents a show workshopped and produced from their own experiences of the ambition, rejection, depression and attention associated with a life on the stage. And it really is brilliant! Simone Mann's rendition of 'Nothing' from 'A Chorus Line' is one of the most memorable for me, but to say so is almost a disservice to the many others who so obviously pour their souls into the heartfelt telling of their own tales, and do so with a quality of performance that makes it hard to imagine that this is not, strictly speaking, a professional production.

This is a show that needs be seen. Well done, well done, well done - to all involved!

Fiona Gordon

fiona@artslink.co.za