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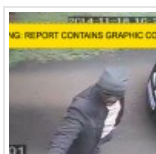
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Theatre review: The Sound of Music

OPINION Thursday 10 April 2014 - 5:04pm

by Benita Enoch



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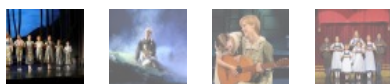
Tenuous parliament truce broken, all deals off



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MEDIA GALLERY



JOHANNESBURG - If Julie Andrews is the consummate Maria Rainer, then South African actress Bethany Dickson is a better Julie Andrews, than even Julie Andrews can manage.

Showing at the Teatro Montecasino until June is The Sound of Music, starring an all-South African cast.

Let me say this, we should stop marvelling at South African artists with such gobsmacked awe. We should expect excellence – international excellence – from each actor because that is exactly what so many of them deliver.

The cast of The Sound of Music, directed by Jeremy Sams, choreographed by Arlene Philips and Jonny Bowles and dressed by Robert Jones more than delivered in their

objective to bring the screen hit to life on the stage.

For those who read the book or watched the Disney movie, seeing the theatre performance is likely to leave you immersed in Maria's world for days after the curtains have closed and the cast has taken their bow.

Each song in the two act, 14 scene play is so expertly sung, so powerfully interpreted and so intimately captured that it's hard to imagine that any audience member would remain seated when the curtains draw. And, let me assure you, those chairs were empty at the end of the performance.

Special ovation went to Jenelle Visagie who played Mother Abbess. Her voice cut crisply through the theatre air and settled in my heart where all my childhood memories of The Sound of Music once lay dormant. I challenge die-hard fans not to bat away tears at her rendition of Climb Ev'ry Mountain.

Captain von Trapp was played by Andre Schwartz, but while his performance wasn't as strong as Dickson's was, he still did well to capture the stiff and starchy nature of a man too delicate on the inside to let the world know.

James Borthwick (*Scoop in Scoop Schoombie, Ron in Rythym City*) brought effervesce to the already lively character of Max Detweiler. Look out for a cheeky, yet gleeful reference in his dialogue which he delivered with only the comedic timing of a master.

The Von Trapp children were extremely well cast with their combination of delivering lines and singing a truly impressive feat.

In all, this play is more than just a reminder of the rich culture of stories some of us were exposed to as children. For a first-time audience, this play will transport them into a world where it's easy to believe in a wonderful reprieve from unspeakable hardship and sorrow. That might sound too deep and philosophical for a musical, but consider the era the work was set in and the determination of one man to not only follow his heart but to open it up again. Then, tell me if The Sound of Music was not easily a story that could sit with you forever.

This play deserves the full five stars. An exquisite set, extravagance in the costumes and sincerity in the characters made it a delight to watch. That it was cast with South Africans, made it so special that only rating stars would suffice to convey the sentiment.

Take the family to see it. You won't regret your decision.

Rating: 5/5

Director: Jeremy Sams. Associate Director:

Lead cast: Bethany Dickson as Maria Rainer and Andre Schwartz as Captain Georg von Trapp

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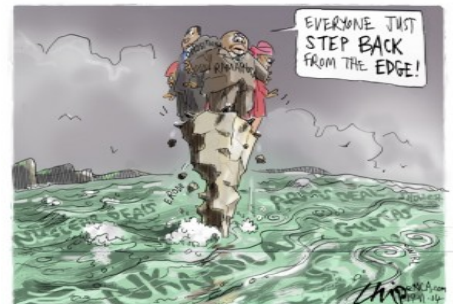


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