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BLOG

BAXTER DANCE FEST PROGRAMME 1: 'SJOE. THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL'

Posted by admin on October 4, 2013

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Programme One (3 and 4 October, Baxter Theatre, 8pm)

There are many who believe that dance has the ability to unite and heal communities - something which seems to have eluded the South African dance fraternity and particularly in Cape Town.



However, at the launch of the Baxter Theatre Centre's 9th annual dance festival there was a refreshingly different sense of this. For the first time there was a palpably positive energy in the air mainly due to the diverse opening night programming by Artistic Director Nicolette Moses.

Abeedah Medell's *When we Fall*, performed by the EOAN Group Theatre Company, set the tone for the evening. Gentle and gracious, twelve female dancers dressed in black chiffon dresses with slits down the sides glide across the stage in unison, to create an organic flow throughout this mesmerising, gentle fusion of Cape Town and Asian textures. One of the dancers carries a white umbrella to further enhance the ethereal nature of this meditative experience.



South African-born, New York-based dancer/choreographer Bradley Shelver uses Louisa Talbot and Grant van Ster from Cape Dance Company to depict the highly-charged emotions between a couple in *Pas de Deux - Extract*. The two dancers are well suited together technically and visually as they battle out their choreographed relationship. Van Ster lets out a loud scream in the dark which would add to the drama but felt as if it was taken out of context.



Seeing Debbie Goodman-Bhyatt (formerly of Jazzart and Jagged Dance) back on stage after 15 years in *Blood of the Young* by Alfred Hinkel and John Linden from their two-year-old Garage in O'kiep was a delight and a great choice for this narrative which craftily interweaves the personal stories of the three dancers.

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The two young guns Adelaide Majoor and Byron Klassen are two performers to watch as they keep it real on stage. Quirky and honest they speak in Afrikaans as they playfully juxtapose their biographies with that of the 'older' woman. This is a first offering of work-in-progress and it will be exciting to see how this evolves into a full-length work.



Mziyanda Mancam's *Unlimited* immediately connects the audience with the internal and external emotions of a dancer. He uses nine male dancers from Jazzart Dance Theatre Company to explore this theme. Masculine yet unaggressive these guys are energetic and acrobatic with fashion flair as they sometimes parade as if they were on a runway. There are powerful moments to this piece with a stunning ending in which the dancers are trapped in slow motion as they hinge back into memory.



Ending the evening with Canadian-born Joshua Beamish's faun-like *Pierced* was the perfect choice. This guest performer now based in New York, brought the house down with his abstract solo work. It is evident that he is equally well trained in classical and contemporary dance techniques. His precision, focus and prowess added up to a flawless performance. You could hear a pin drop when he stepped on to the stage as the appreciatively vocal audience slipped into a concentrated silence throughout.



Slowly the lights fade on his final, mythical, pose and a man in the audience member breaks the silence exclaiming, "Sjoe! That was beautiful."

FLASH FORWARD: Catch all the flavas of the Off Main Programme on Saturday, 5 October, at 5pm in the Baxter Theatre.

Students, studios and groups from all over the Western Cape share the same stage in a mix of modern, contemporary, jazz, hip-hop, pantsula, classical ballet, physical theatre, Spanish and Indian folk dance.

The 14 choreographers are from Khayelitsha, Wynberg, Strand, Claremont, Athlone, Plumstead, Nyanga, Gatesville, Sybrand Park, Constantia, Newlands and Rondebosch.

Off Main Programme - Saturday, 5 October 2012 at 17:00 Adriana Jamisse and cast (UCT School of Dance) -

Forgotten Simplicity Ahneesh Valodia (Taare) - Rang Rasiya

Bruno Wani (Dance For All) - Slavery

Dianne Ross (Hip Hop Collective) - Insanitorium

Jolanda de Jager (Zest Dance Connexion) - Breaking Free

Julia Ruzyczka de Rosenwerth (And Co.) - Vantage Point

Janine Booyens - One Way
Mandla Sibeko & Buyile Narwele (Tata-Khona Dance Project) - "SE-PHARAPHARA"
Leticia Dennis (EOAN Group School of Performing Arts) - It was that but now it's this
Lize Agulhas (New Africa Theatre Academy) - Woman
Mandisi Sindo (Theatre4Change) - The Widow
Nadine Buys (Neo Dance Art) - Mind Noise
Rosana Maya (Teatro Flamenco Wilvan) Mas Tiento
Silumko Koyana (UCT School of Dance) - Charleston and Lindy Hop

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