

Arts Review

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Review: Headshots

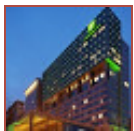
12 November 2009

Written by: Allison Foat, Cape Town



On Sunday night I attended the Cape Academy of Performing Arts' final performance of *Headshots* at Artscape. This was the academy's first musical theatre production, devised and directed by Anton Luitingh and Duane Alexander, and it blew me away! The academy's commitment to the living language of dance and theatre; and their clear understanding that dance and theatre continually evolves through new ideas, approaches and thought processes; ensures that each student is exposed to an unsurpassed standard of pedagogy. This performance's excellence is proof that the academy's efforts have not gone to waste.

Headshots lets the audience experience what it takes for a dancer, singer or actress to push through various challenges to get to the stage. There was loads of humour as we were given insight into the dancers' humanity through their hopes and dreams, physical and emotional pain and driving ambitions. The entire cast showed tremendous promise and I particularly enjoyed dancers Mila de Biaggi, Ipeleng Merafe and Sarah-Lee Chapman and the outstanding vocal delivery by Margaux Fouche, Peter Johnson and Will Esau. As the *Headshots* programme explained, the headshot photograph has become a vital image used by all performers auditioning for roles in dance shows. After seeing hundreds trying out for one role after another, the headshot is what remains with the producers as the reference point when making the final cut and choosing the cast.



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One of the main reasons for my enthusiasm in writing this review is that I hadn't seen these dancers perform in quite

some time and so was amazed and delighted to see how they have all grown as artists. Their individual personalities were distinct and their love for the stage and their craft came across loud and clear. It was totally infectious. They have all been exceptionally well-trained in the triple threat genre, that is, as the ultimate performers who can sing, dance and act, equally fabulously, which is quite an achievement but hardly a surprise considering they were trained by some of the best the industry has to offer.

Anton Luitingh and Duane Alexander are both seasoned musical theatre performers who have starred in several top productions in SA and abroad. Amongst their many other roles, Anton has most recently played the Beast in Hazel Feldman and Pieter Toerien's acclaimed *Beauty and the Beast* and Duane was the lead actor Mark in Feldman's *Rent*.

Headshots has longevity and can hold its own anywhere in the world. Of course their involvement would not have been possible without CAPA's director, Debbie Turner, giving them the opportunity to produce *Headshots* and her vision and leadership of what must be one of the country's top performing arts institution, is to be highly commended.

My advice to theatre lovers is to keep a close eye on whatever Ms. Turner and her team have up their collective sleeves and I personally can't wait to see these talented artists hit the big time on local and international stages. Viva CAPA and bring on your next inspiring event!

The performance took place at Artscape theatre from 4 to 8 November.