

A ground breaking production of Pictures of You

 By [Riccardo Spagni](#)

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When I went to see Pictures of You, I had no idea what to expect. I am unabashedly lazy and I will gladly admit that I did no research on it. So I was pleasantly intrigued when a little speech was given before the show started and we were given a bit of background. Also mention worthy was the fact that Premier Helen Zille was in the audience. As I have no interest in politics, I didn't know what she looked like, otherwise I would probably have tried to wangle a prosperity shot with her afterwards!



Pictures of You is one of those plays that is worth watching purely because it is different in the purest way. It is a play written to be enjoyed by both deaf and hearing theatre-goers. This may seem an odd concept, as much of the theatre we are accustomed to has, well, people speaking or singing. The opposite side of the coin, of course, is how do you include those that aren't deaf without making them feel lost or maligned? Pictures of You scores on both aspects.

Caricature-like masks

All the emotion, and every aspect in the intriguing story, is conveyed through the acting, lighting, and clever props. Whilst there are only two thespians in the play, they both have odd caricature-like masks that they wear throughout. This means that there is no lip movement or facial expression, and it leads to the purest form of theatre I have seen in a while. It was obvious by much excited gesticulating that the deaf members of the audience were thoroughly captivated by the play and that they truly enjoyed it.

What of those of us who have not had much exposure to the deaf community? Well, in many ways, watching Pictures of You is like watching a ballet. The story is conveyed through a non-traditional medium (dance or acting) that is accompanied by a soundtrack, but does not rely on the sound. Ballet is perhaps more tightly married to the music and I can't honestly imagine having watched Pictures of You without hearing Rien de Rien in the background.

Ground-breaking

The show is somewhat surreal. There are scenes that are a little hair-raising. But there is little doubt of its theatrical value; this is a show that you have to watch if you have only a the tiniest bit of respect for the performing arts. It is ground-breaking in the truest possible sense. Get yourself to the Baxter and catch it during its run - it will be well worth your time, and your money will go towards supporting the deaf community in South Africa.

Pictures of You runs in the Baxter Golden Arrow Studio Monday- Saturday at 20h15 from 1 to 13 February 2010. Ticket prices are R75 Tuesday - Thursday and R95 on Friday and Saturdays.

Photo by Toast Coetzer

ABOUT RICCARDO SPAGNI

After serving his time in Namibia, Riccardo got bored of Johannesburg and moved to Cape Town to become one with the mountain. He spends his days trawling biscuit factories hoping to discover the Next Big Cookie Flavour and writing reviews for the BizLounge that he traditionally delivers four or five days after deadline.

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