

I, Claudia is bitter sweet

Susan Danford plays all four characters in this bitter-sweet story of a pubescent girl coming to terms with the changes in her life. The emotional issues of adolescence are complicated by external events, such as the divorce of her parents, her discovery that her father has a girlfriend, and school projects that are affected by fickle and transient friendships.



By [Michael Britton](#) 22 Oct 2010



The story is told, for the most part, by Claudia, a role in which Danford excels, perfectly capturing the awkward body postures and giggling uncertainty of young Claudia. Unique insights are given by the three subsidiary characters: the immigrant school janitor, Claudia's grandfather, and her father's girlfriend. For each character Danford dons a different mask, which means that all expression is conveyed by vocal tone and pitch, by body posture and movement, and, more importantly for me, by her ever-busy hands. You never see more than Danford's mouth and jaw beneath the mask, so I found myself watching her hands - particularly when she played the part of Claudia.

Susan Danford is an energetic and forceful presence on stage, even during the brief transitions from one character to the next. In a matter of seconds, one layer of clothing comes off to reveal a new outfit, the next mask is slipped into place, a deep breath as she straightens up and the next character is ready to draw you ever deeper into the story.

The intimacy of Kalk Bay Theatre is a perfect setting for this quirky and well-paced play, which deserves to run to full houses. *I, Claudia* is both amusing and sad, and captured me so completely that I was taken by surprise when it ended. My left cheek was still damp from a tear track when the last mask came off, leaving me feeling like I had just lost a wonderful friend.

I, Claudia runs at Kalk Bay Theatre, Wednesday to Saturday, from 20 October to 13 November, 2010.

The show starts at 8.30pm, but patrons are welcome to arrive any time after 6pm for drinks or a meal from the vegetarian-friendly menu.

Tickets for the show only are R100. For bookings phone +27 (0)73 220 5430.

Photo by: Cue Pix/Sian Cohen

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