

The Godfrey Johnson Showcase

 By [Michael Britton](#)

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Do not expect the show I describe to be the same as the one that you see when you go to the delightful Kalk Bay Theatre to see the Godfrey Johnson Showcase. This extraordinary performing artist will present a different selection of songs from his repertoire for each of the four nights that the show runs. Yes, it's sad that it is a short run, but it remains a show that sparkles with humour as Johnson brings his unique touch of genius to songs that you thought you knew.



Fever, that classic jazz/R&B number, is an old favourite of mine, (has been ever since I heard the Otis Waygood Blues Band perform it at a Saturday night session in Bulawayo in 1968) but Johnson gives it a twist that, at first, had me saying: "No, Godfrey, no, don't do this." But he did and had me laughing as he sent it up in his inimitable style. He did the same to My Shattered Illusions, using the song to parody the lengths to which we go in order to appear attractive to the opposite sex. Part of the fun was trying to picture Johnson as a sexy redhead, as he asked us to do.

An emotional journey

Throughout the show, Johnson interacted well with the appreciative audience, lifting and carrying us on an emotional journey. It wasn't all laughter and fun, though. Songs that did not get a light-hearted treatment included Bob Geldorf's I Don't Like Mondays, Jacques Brel's If You Go Away and Port of Amsterdam, my personal favourite from Johnson's vast Jacques Brel repertoire. These songs are delivered with the same theatrical verve that Johnson brings to all of his performances, but with a touch of anguished pathos that gave me goose bumps and left a lump in my throat.

One last special mention must go to Cell Block Tango (He Had It Coming) from the musical Chicago. This number is given a special South African flavour, but enough said. You need to hear it for yourself.

Godfrey Johnson delivers a stunning performance, using his expressive and mobile features to good effect while contorting his body into positions that make playing the piano near impossible, but he hardly misses a beat. You don't need to know your Coward from Porter, or your Brel from Geldorf, to enjoy this show. My two young companions, both in their early 20s, were as blown away as I was.

Johnson has performed more than 20 one-man shows nationally and internationally. He has worked with Pieter-Dirk Uys in his various cabarets, won the 2007 Fleur du Cap award for Best Performance in a Cabaret for his work in Kissed by Brel and his many other performances include shows such as Uncut, Flirting with Coward, Behind Every Man, Season in The Sun, The Shadow of Brel, Stories of Crimes and Passion, The Minnie and Johnson Show and Coward & Cole.

The Godfrey Johnson Showcase will be performed till the 23 February at 8.30pm. Tickets for the show only cost R75. Tickets for the show plus a two-course meal are R225 and the show with a three-course meal costs R275. To book, go to www.kbt.co.za.

ABOUT MICHAEL BRITTON

Comfortably curious writer and editor and project manager. Constantly creative thought processes and habitually questioning attitudes are my guide.

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