

Watch this face

 By [Terry Levin](#)

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Khayaletu Anthony is the writer and one-man performer of *The Champion*, the [Zabalaza Theatre Festival's](#) Best Production award winner, currently running at the Baxter Theatre's Golden Arrow Studio. The play has also won awards for Best Script and Most Outstanding Artist.

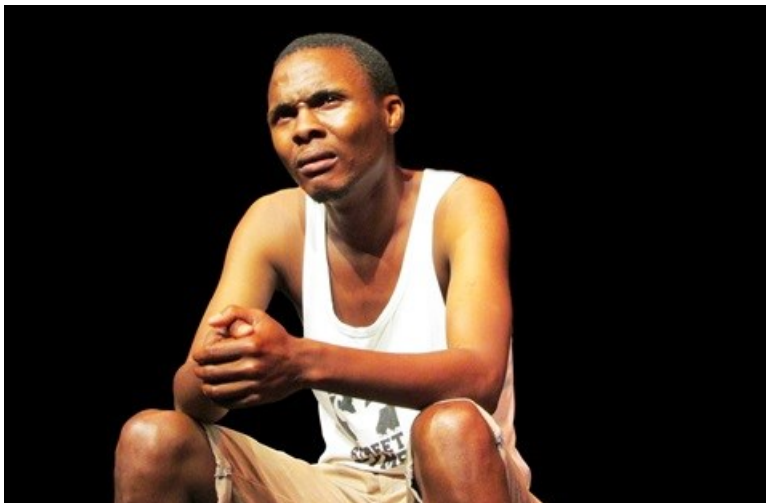


Anthony has already earned his stripes in the theatre world, garnering the Best Newcomer (Brett Goldin Award) for his role in Baxter Theatre director, Lara Foot's play, *Solomon & Marion*, along with Dame Janet Suzman - which went on to perform at the Birmingham Rep and the Edinburgh Festivals and also won best new South African play at the 2012 Fleur du Cap Awards. He also holds the honour of having been nominated for best actor award in the same category as another Anthony - Sir Anthony Sher.

The Champion sees him performing his own intelligent and high energy script - offering a masterful emotional range in the best theatrical traditions of Tennessee Williams or Athol Fugard (although demonstrating more humour than either) and inviting the audience the opportunity to participate in their unique cultural milieux and experiences. In the case of *The Champion*, a voyeuristic glimpse into the emotional impact of South African township family life, the story of a boy, who in a series of events, loses his only positive role model, his mother's boyfriend, who has taught him how to be a boxing champion.

Highlighting the need for role models and mentors for SA's youth, the play also inadvertently offers uncomfortable comment on love, relationships and gender roles in South African contemporary urban life.

The script seamlessly blends in vernacular Xhosa, which adds to the authenticity and pace of the storytelling.



Credit must go to the director Khayaletu Mofu (who is also an awarded actor) for impressive choreography, particularly of the boxing sequences and to Luyanda Somkhence, a computer scientist by profession, who is credited with having been responsible for the lighting, staging, set design and production management of this and most of Zabalaza Theatre Festival's many stagings.

For those of you numbed out by series and DSTV programming, get off the couch and catch the new wave of theatrical excellence and the powerful new voices rising on SA's theatrical fringe.

The Zabalaza Festival which will celebrate its fifth year in 2015, invites participation in all genres, from poetry and hip-hop to dance, puppetry, musical theatre, drama, comedy, physical theatre, storytelling and children's theatre.

Email baxterzabalaza@uct.ac.za or bongilemantsai@gmail.com for more information about this or next year's festival or call Zabalaza Office on (021) 680 3980.

The Champion runs at the Baxter Golden Arrow Studio until 8 October at 7pm nightly, with matinee performances at 2pm on 4 October. There is an age restriction of 14 years.

ABOUT TERRY LEVIN

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