

Children's theatre at its best

 By [Frances Aron](#)

3 Dec 2015

Today marked the opening of the Magnet Theatre's first Early Years Theatre Festival, which will run for nine days. David Kramer declared it open and cut the ribbon with flourish. As Magnet co-founder Jennie Reznek put it: "We have put together three little triumphs." These productions are Scoop, Ekhaya and Knock! Scoop is a first in the South African arena, a show for babies as young as a few weeks.

"Research has shown that theatre as a means of intensive communication can stimulate babies' neural pathways, which are being formed at this young age. It's a moment of concentrated interaction, delicately and carefully crafted for the mums and their babes, and suggests how rich the connection and conversation can be, even with the smallest of babies," says Reznek.



I had the privilege of seeing the first performance of Ekhaya, a show recommended for children aged three to seven. This interactive show captivated the entire audience of kids and, may I say, all grown-ups present too. The talented performers communicate with simple words and concepts, catchy original songs and colourful visual images, while drawing on the three main languages spoken in the Western Cape: English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. The show is utterly delightful from start to finish, and full of engaging smiles from its performers.

Talented young theatre makers

The performers in the Early Years Theatre Company are five talented young theatre makers: Koleka Putuma, Jason Jacobs, Indalo Stofile, Nolufefe Ntshuntshe, and Sivuyile Dunjwa, each of whom has received considerable training in the area of Early Childhood Development Theatre. The aim of the company is not only to train theatre-makers for this particular genre, but also to grow local South African stories, to create indigenous theatre for everyone and to take it to young audiences across the country. In other words, the Early Years Theatre Company challenges typical storytelling for children in South Africa, which tends to be largely American and European influenced.

The project, which resulted in these three productions being brought to life, has been made possible by a flagship grant from the National Arts Council of South Africa with contributions from the Goethe-Institut and the SA-UK Seasons 2014 and 2015.

This is children's theatre at its best! Don't miss out on this special opportunity to share the magic of live engaging performances with your little ones.

The Early Years Theatre Festival takes place from 2 to 12 December daily (except Sundays). Scoop: Kitchen Play for Mums and Babes (ages two weeks to 12 months) will be performed at 10am; Ekhaya, (ages three to seven) at 11.30am, and Knock!n (ages three to seven) at 2.30pm.

Tickets for Ekhaya and Knock! cost R50 for adults and R30 for children. Tickets for Scoop: Kitchen Play for Mums and Babes cost R50 for one mum or dad and one baby.

Tickets are available at www.webtickets.co.za

For group inquiries and further information, contact Chim on +27 (0)21 448 3436 or email earlyyears@magnettheatre.co.za

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