

Flying the Black Flag

 By [Patricia Pieterse](#)

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The three terms I would use to describe Henry Rollins' sense of humour would be political, sometimes self-deprecating and eloquent. The former Black Flag vocalist performed his show, Frequent Flyer, in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town recently. This was his second trip to SA, but his first time in Pretoria.



The audience was mostly young people, with a handful of middle-aged folk. There were even some hecklers (grumble) but Henry put them in their place. I was shocked at the lack of marketing for his show, as I only heard about it by paging through a Computicket booklet.

Fit, middle-aged and passionate

He was not what I expected. He wasn't *far* from what I expected, but having watched a few YouTube clips, I expected a severe, square, angry man. Instead I saw a fit, middle-aged, passionate man.

His performances are officially called 'spoken word', but this one had a lot in common with stand-up comedy. It was humorous, spot-on social commentary but without the obvious gags.

A lasting impression from Rollins' show, besides the part where he put many South Africans to shame by reciting the beginning of our constitution from memory, was his energy. The man spoke non-stop at a great speed for three hours straight without a sip of water.

So much to say

He spoke at length about politics, society and travel among other things. He joked about his film and TV career, mentioned his distaste for being idle, explained the origins of his hatred of homophobia and... three hours later one got the impression he still had so much to say, but had to restrain himself out of consideration for the audience's derrières.

Not only was Rollins hilarious, but he left me with a warm fuzzy feeling after expressing his hatred for racism and homophobia and declaring that this century is ours to make great.

One of the best parts of Henry's performance, though, was when he said he wants to come back to SA. I can't wait to sit for another three hours in fascinated silence.

ABOUT PATRICIA PIETERSE

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