

# Hayani is where the heart is



By [Eugene Yiga](#)

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What does it really mean to be a South African? And what does it mean to call this country your home? These are the questions posed in Hayani (the Venda word for "home"), first presented at the National Arts Festival in 2009 and now at Cape Town's Baxter Theatre.



Written and performed by Fleur du Cap Theatre Award nominees Atandwa Kani and Nat Ramabulana, Hayani tells the story of two young black South African men who travel across the country to find their roots and discover who they are. "In essence we are reminding each other that we are all the same and we are all just vessels of memory and feeling, trying to make sense of the circumstances that we have been dealt with," Ramabulana said.

Given that a large chunk of the dialogue is not in English, some of the subtlety might be lost on those who don't understand the variety of local languages spoken on stage. And yet, given that much of what's described is a true account of what happened in their lives, the sincerity of their performances needs no translation. "It is really the voice of a generation nearly lost and forgotten, and which is yearning to be heard," Kani said. "For us, this is home-grown storytelling at its truest; a homecoming story that we hope will tug at raw heartstrings."

## A conversation long overdue in our country



The production features set design by graffiti artist Mak1One as well as live music composed and performed by Matthew Macfarlane. "Hayani is an act of hope, a play of healing, a conversation long overdue in our country," explained director Warren Nebe. "The play attempts to invite all South Africans into a conversation about home, identity, and the legacy of the failures of transformation. In a delicate, gentle mode of storytelling we create a homecoming - a space for audiences to reflect on the footsteps they have travelled in and the footsteps they have carved for future generations."

*Hayani (PG-13) is at Cape Town's [Baxter Theatre](#) until 31 August and at Joburg's [Market Theatre](#) from 18 September to 27 October. Tickets are available from [Computicket](#).*

## ABOUT EUGENE YIGA

Eugene graduated from the University of Cape Town with distinctions in financial accounting and classical piano. He then spent over two-and-a-half years working in branding and communications at two of South Africa's top market research companies. Eugene also spent over three-and-a-half years at an eLearning start-up, all while building his business as an award-winning writer. Visit [www.eugeneyiga.com](http://www.eugeneyiga.com), follow @eugeneyiga on Twitter, or email [hello@eugeneyiga.com](mailto:hello@eugeneyiga.com) to say, um, hello. View my profile and articles...

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