

It's enough to make you catch your breath

 By [Debbie Hathway](#)

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It's amazing how artists can challenge and inspire each other to create work that, in turn, inspires and challenges their audiences - and be thanked for it. iKapa Dance Theatre's collaboration with Afropolitan Explosiv does just that in their season entitled Inhale/Exhale, on at Artscape's Arena Theatre until 4 August.



It's a piece that creates such a tangible level of discomfort among the audience members that you can't help but feel relieved that opening night's post-performance question-and-answer session revealed more compliments than queries for the artists.

Accent on the ugliness

I'm inclined to label it physical theatre, because of its contemporary dance content and style of telling a story through largely physical means. The music? Arguably the most challenging of all - and, for many in the audience, that's the beauty of it. The accent on the ugliness (read discordant in the musical delivery), which makes the dance more attractive. It's a good point.

Dancers Theo Ndindwa and Sibahle Tshibika are accompanied by Thokozani Mhlambi and Nobuntu Mqulwana as they "draw on mind, body and soul connections to visualise and translate how emotions affect breath, and therefore movement". One of the most memorable segments was when the rear wall became an inanimate partner in the dance, prompting one audience member to ask: "Was it SpiderMan or was it ballet?" Such was the level of athleticism displayed that it made him rethink his initial reaction to the work and change it from rejection to admiration.

Comedy or loneliness and pain?

One audience member saw comedy in some sequences while another found loneliness and pain, identifying what might have been a therapeutic process for others in the making and watching of it.

The performers' conscious juxtaposition of sound and dance in a particular way to create this composition challenges the idea of performance for entertainment's sake. The musical accompaniment adds another dimension to it and doesn't necessarily resound in response to the physical action. It's simply interaction - with each other, with the movement, on their own journey.

While the piece is not necessarily a combination of personal experiences performed by the dancers, there are certainly references that many people will be able to identify with and relate to. The stories are open to interpretation. Modern dance creator Isadora Duncan said it all when asked to explain the meaning of one of her dances: "If I could tell you that, I wouldn't have to dance it."

Tickets are R100 or R50 for concessions. Book at Computicket outlets, www.computicket.com or by calling 0861 915 8000 or Artscape Dial-a-Seat on +27 (0)21 421 7695. There will be a question-and-answer session after each performance and no interval.

ABOUT DEBBIE HATHWAY

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