

Devotion at the Baxter

The Irish production, *Devotion*, written by Leo Butler and directed by John Breen will be coming Cape Town's Baxter Theatre, for one night only, on Thursday, September 10, 2009.



TEAM Educational Theatre Company, the Irish Theatre-in-Education group, will present its production of *Devotion* by Leo Butler to South Africa for a limited tour, funded by Culture Ireland, at the Baxter Concert Hall for one night only on Friday, September 10, 2009 at 7pm.

Devotion, by Leo Butler, is a gritty, humorous and provocative piece of theatre about conflict and its impact on the lives of young children. In a landscape devastated by war, two children are refugees in their hometown. The enemy has no face and the children have no knowledge of how the conflict started or when it will all end. On the brink of maturity, they are caught in confusions of gender, faith and identity. The play explores the notion of devotion to a cause bigger than ourselves, a need that can be more profound than the need for companionship. As Dzongsar Khyentse has said, "if we are not to go to pieces or wither away, we must have some purpose in life; for no man can live for himself alone".

War-torn experiences

Written in the wake of 9/11, and just prior to the American-led invasion of Iraq, the play draws on imagery from war-torn countries such as East Timor, Vietnam, Bosnia, Rwanda, Northern Ireland, and also the First and Second World Wars. Its style is not realistic or cinematic, but rather reflects the influences of Ionesco and Beckett, creating through fluid stage imagery the nature of a world where the certainties of the past no longer seem quite so certain; a world that has become senseless, even meaningless.

The play's focus on gender identity seems particularly topical now, as controversy rages around our young heroine of the athletic track, Caster Semenya. The play reflects on questions of whether it is within the female psyche to go to war, and reflects the differences in how men and women deal with conflict.

Touring to high schools

Devotion is produced by TEAM, in association with Assitej South Africa, and is touring to selected high schools in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Two public performances at the Baxter Concert Hall and Joburg Theatre, respectively, will allow a wider audience access to this work.

The performance is followed by a public forum on the interactivity between theatre and education, giving anyone interested in youth development an opportunity to exchange ideas about the role of theatre in education.

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