

# The peculiar House of Usher

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#) 4 Jun 2012

Malady is insanely entertaining in the ferocious and explosive House Of Usher that is now on at The Little Theatre and causing a stir on the theatre front. Cunningly adapted from Edgar Allan Poe's gothic tale The Fall Of The House Of Usher, and conceptualised, directed and designed by Christopher Weare, with music and lyrics by Graham Weir, this lethal fusion of thought and expression offers a weird and wonderful theatre experience.



In the House Of Usher you will find the styles of absurdist, abstract and surreal theatre, as well as realism, dark comedy, tragedy, melodrama and music drama boldly blended into theatre that is not different for the sake of being different, but challenges and provokes the imagination not only to see theatre another way, but to see theatre for what it is meant to be - individual expression that offers a communal experience.

## An important function of theatre

It successfully fulfils an important function of theatre - to stimulate debate, dialogue and the sharing of different points of view that reflect the human condition and expose the fascinating different facets of human nature. This is shape-shifting theatre in which action, live performance, filmed live performance, and a montage of cleverly edited images morph into strange and peculiar universe that is rarely seen on stage.

Also, blending the music of a live band, a relaxed and laid-back jam session, with singing, drama and melodrama, vividly contrasted and pulled out of shape by the lighting design; takes the audience on a wild trip where reality and fiction skilfully bleed into the narrative.

The House Of Usher is a band led by the ghastly Roderick Usher, who lives with his freakish sister in a creepy house where they are visited by a perplexed ex-band member.

## Eerie brother and sinister sister



This is Rocky Horror and Ken Russell meet Poe, with Andrew Laubscher and Mikkie-Dene Le Roux as the eerie brother and sinister sister (reminding strongly of Magenta and Riff Raff in Rocky Horror), and Gideon Lombard as the "visitor". (Lombard also takes charge of the musical direction and arrangement.)

It bashfully explores egotism, addiction, obscenity and passion, delving deep into the mystery of its fatal attraction, peeling away layers of sub-textual and thematic intonations that ultimately reveals the secrets that devour the fragile characters.

Although the characters might seem odd and bizarre, they are familiar reflections of ourselves; in them we find the obsessive lover, the caring loved one, the monstrous abuser, the concerned friend and the fearful loner whose isolation becomes a prison of torment and disillusionment. The performances of the trio are raw and rough, sometimes poetic, and sometimes gentle and endearing, blending in with the overall vision and surreal perspective.

The House Of Usher is theatre that almost redefines weird; it's excessively provocative and alluring, imaginatively breaking boundaries and unhinging conventionality.

### **Stimulates the intellect**

It is a show that stimulates the intellect and causes an emotional response with its rebellious nature and raucous exposition; no matter what your response is, there's a sensibility in its raving lunacy and undeniable enchantment in its vibrant energy. Imagine how boring theatre would be if there wasn't a troupe like The Mechanicals, whose bold approach and passionate exploration awakens awareness in the audience.

It allows you to escape from the humdrum existence of everyday life into the enthralling enchantment of its rebellious rapture. It's a show that might not cater for everyone, but definitely worth exploring.

If ever you felt like breaking away from usual and conventional theatre, and plunging into an extreme and exuberant realm, make sure to throw yourself into the House Of Usher; it's an experience that will rock your boat and inject your sensibility with an exciting freshness.

*House of Usher at the Little Theatre, 37 Orange Street, Gardens until 16 June, nightly at 8pm. Booking through Luke Ellenbogen on +27 (0)21 480 7128 or e-mail:[themechanicals.rep@gmail.com](mailto:themechanicals.rep@gmail.com)*

*Rating: 4/5*

Read more about The House of Usher at [www.writingstudio.co.za/page1746.html](http://www.writingstudio.co.za/page1746.html)

*Photography by taken by Jesse Kramer*

## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and the journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co](http://www.writingstudio.co) View my profile and articles...

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