

Punchy Champ

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#) 15 Apr 2013

There's a new buffed-up Champ on the block and, in its new incarnation, its devilish and infectious spontaneity offers entertainment with a punch! The three frisky bears have now found a new home at the Fugard Theatre and, even if you have seen it during the Artscape Spring Season last year, this is one furry encounter you simply cannot miss.

Louis Viljoen's deliciously wicked and hilariously insane Champ will change your perceptions about the innocence of the child, and the juvenile delinquency of adults. Poking fun at what it takes to be (or not to be) an actor and cunningly scrutinising the tormented psyche, fragility and conceit of three actors who take on a job that seems harmless, but turns out to be their worst nightmare, this is first-rate entertainment.

Cute and cuddly bears



Dressing up as cute and cuddly bears, and amusing kids for charity with characters like Snow White, Goldilocks and chickens may seem like a fun job to foot the bill, but when the spawn of Satan, in the form of a malevolent six-year-old Rodney, turns mall-heaven into the pit of hell, joy spirals into agonising torture for the furry trio. To spill the beans on what Rodney does to the bears (and vice versa), and how their riotous fury escalates into hilarious chaos will definitely spoil the fun of this amusing journey.

Great comedy truly comes to life when action, reaction and interaction, as well as causality collide head on resulting in the ultimate reward of entertaining and exciting theatre; a payoff that leaves you craving for more. Director Greg Karvellas skilfully employs all these elements and returns with a refreshing and finely tuned revision of Viljoen's crackling script.

Returning for more fun and equally as brilliant, are Mark Elderin and Nicholas Pauling, whose chemistry is electrifying. The new bear cub is stand-up comedian Oliver Booth who graduated from the University of Cape Town last year, and completes the trio with pride and dignity. Pierre Malherbe's is charming as the on-the-wall Waldo, with Jenny Stead in top form as Miss Bossy Boots.

A special treat



The heavenly cast allows the vibrant characters to explode. You are in for a special treat that will have you roaring with laughter. It is difficult for comedy to be genuinely funny. The craft of comedy is serious business and with *Champ*, everything falls neatly into place with meticulous timing and hilarious exposition. What's really funny about *Champ* is that the characters are serious about what they are doing; their dedicated commitment and motivated action result in hilarious mayhem. To be funny, really funny, you have to be serious, and seriously hilarious laugh-out-loud comedy is a definite stress buster that allows its audience to have fun and really enjoy the laugh-a-minute marathon.

Champ is very much like the six-year-old devilish boy: it tinkles profoundly on elitist establishments, precious moral values, and human dignity. Offence is championed by defence and when you leave the theatre you feel good about laughing at all the wrong things with meaning and intent. Comedy satires like *Champ* are much needed to make us realise that there is a need to escape from morbid news headlines and break away from societal shackles that imprison.

Be warned: animals and children are treated roughly in *Champ* and the play is peppered with colourful language and provocative profanity that fortunately never becomes offensive.

For more information on *Champ*, go to www.writingstudio.co.za/page4561.html

*Tickets, ranging from R100 to R140, are available at the Fugard Theatre box office on +27 (0)21 461 4554 or [Computicket](#). Friends of the Fugard benefit from the usual, excellent discounts. Due to explicit and graphic language *Champ* carries a strict no under-18 age restriction.*

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.za View my profile and articles...

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