

Artistic fireworks from talented duo

SAMEKOMS/KOPANI, presented by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, directed by Deon Opperman, with Laurika Rauch and Vusi Mahlasela (Opera House, until tonight).

ANYONE who imagines this is just another case of two singers merging their talents to produce a show is far off the mark.

Certainly, two singers of extraordinary ability have joined forces for this unique production, but this is no ordinary entertainment.

Where the formidable Laurika Rauch – that appealing *volksmoeder* of the *liedjie* – is involved artistic fireworks are assured. And when she teams up with singer/composer/guitarist Vusi Mahlasela, artistic fireworks are guaranteed.

And if that isn't enough this puissant couple is backed by three master



Opening
night
with

TERRY HERBST

craftsmen who are virtuosos in their own right.

With all this going for the company, the results have to be good – and good they are, to the point of excellence.

Their collective efforts provide an evening of stupendous entertainment with the accent on the beat of Africa, while this committed team goes about its business with an awesome discipline not often seen in today's theatrical endeavours.

Peter McLea's keyboard wizardry, John Beukes's percussion expertise and Louis Mhlanga's superior guitar accomplishments combine to give Rauch and Mahlasela support most performers can only dream about.

What we saw last night was a glimpse of the new South Africa – a group of people who are on the boards solely because of their talents.

No racial quotas here, Mr Tshwete – it's all done on merit and it works despite or, perhaps, because of Mr Tshwete's racist electioneering rhetoric that shames our Constitution.

From Mahlasela's electrifying opening number – *Tonkana* – to the closing *Hot Gates*, which earned the company a standing ovation, last night's receptive audience showed their obvious approval in a raucous, tangible manner. Rauch's *Stuur Groete Aan Mannekies Roux* predictably brought the house down, Mahlasela's *Woza* was hair-raising, and *Kinders Van Die Wind* was the cherry on the top of the best theatre can offer.