

7 Dec. Argus tonight

Celebrating differences

ONS KRUIS PAAIE

Reviewer: Rafiek Mammon

CAST: Frank Boeijen, Stef Bos, Denise Jannah, Koos Kombuis, David Kramer, Taliep Petersen, Ray Phiri, Laurika Rauch

VENUE: Oude Libertas Amphitheatre, Stellenbosch, until tomorrow

Imagine a beautiful Stellenbosch summer evening, under the stars.

Eight of the finest singers and songwriters from South Africa and the Netherlands march on to the stage. They start singing. "We are dreamers and seekers ... although the road may be long ... we will find that song at the place where our roads may cross."

Combinations of fine voices, of talents in a celebration of music, cultural identity and diversity. A night where music knows no language boundaries, no national borders, no racial segregation and no gender discrimination. And for about two hours one feels that the immortal words of John Lennon can actually be achieved in reality. One may indeed "imagine there is no heaven, no hell below us and above us, only sky".

The night was not just about cross-cultural exchange and finding common ground. It was about inter-cultural discourse and a celebration of differences. It was about a better understanding of that part of our history with Dutch colonisers and slavery and, through music, an exploration of delicate relationships so that life may continue to be lived in a forward motion.

In his introduction, Stefan Bos explains how he was in search of other cultures in order to understand his own and about discoveries being infinite. There are things about Holland's history that were not taught to him in school. Similarly, our history lessons omitted some vital information. The power of music and of collaboration instilled a sense of pride and hope and gently helped fill in some of the blank spaces. This production is a milestone in collaborative artistic efforts.

Any point of explorative concomitance will result in varying levels of compromise, of intersection and of differences. How one chooses to express this is an individual choice. These eight musicians have chosen to "see themselves in one another without getting lost inside of each other".

Instead, their convergence gives us glimmers of hope and gently reminds us we are not parallel lines never destined to meet. We are all dreamers on journeys of self-discovery and seekers on paths of knowledge. Our paths must eventually cross. The question is, what do we do when our turn comes to "kruis paaie?"