

Brel performed by people who understand his music

DIANE DE BEER

VETERAN performers Jannie du Toit and Laurika Rauch are the perfect combo to recapture the magic of the brilliant Jacques Brel's music. Both singers have performed his songs through the years. Rauch even made a stunning Brel album and the time's right for them to be on stage together again.

With Du Toit's sweet notes (even though his voice has grown darker with age) complimenting Rauch's dark-brown honeyed tones, they're the ideal mix to blend sweet Brel memories as they run through the repertoire both familiar and some not quite, which is always a bonus.

Brel's lyrics have been translated over and over again and they work well as the duo flip from Afrikaans to English to French and Flemish, sometimes using two languages in one song.

What it proves again is how easily Brel's music plays with your emotions on a totally different level to his often piercing lyrics.

There are some songs that one never tires of and Brel has written more than a few.

South African stages were saturated with his songs in especially the 1980s and as we have some of the best interpreters of his music, you have to be careful who you choose to listen to.

But this experienced band of performers from the advisor to the artists and musicians, know their stuff.

They understand that Brel is best done without frills and frippery, they get that it is all about the songs and the interpretations and what we need is arrangements with soul teamed with voices that exude passion.

All of that is there with the nostalgic sounds of the accordion adding to the melancholy and light touch of Steyn's accompaniment on piano.

Yet, ultimately, it is in the way Rauch cuts to the bone with her classic



BREL IN BROOKLYN

CAST: Jannie du Toit and Laurika Rauch

MUSICIANS: Christa Steyn (piano), Sergio Zampolli (accordion)

VENUE: Brooklyn Theatre Pretoria

UNTIL: August 1

RATING: ★★★★★



Marieke and *Ne Me Quitte Pas* and Du Toit gets the rough and tumble of Brel's *Amsterdam* and infiltrates the memories of *Il Neige sur Liege*. And when they wave goodbye with the heartwrenching *If We Only Had Love*, they can simply turn back and do it all over again.

I suspect this is one for the older folk rather than young, but it's a good place to start if you want to catch this Belgian songwriter at his best.