



A truly dark comedy but the message is a very real one

ANOTHER ONE'S BREAD

DIRECTOR: Pamela Nomvete

WRITER: Mike van Graan

STARRING: Faniswa Yisa, Chuma Sopotela, Motlati Ditodi and Awethu Hleli

RUNNING TIME: 90 mins

RATING: ★★★★★☆

FOOD, funerals and feeding schemes take centre stage in this dark comedy currently showing at the Market Theatre. After a successful run at Artscape in Cape Town, the production is taking audiences on an emotional roller coaster while also trying to highlight the very important issues of food security by following four women who are professionals during the week, and mourners come the weekend. The Substitutes, as they are known, provide a unique funeral service – they mourn on demand. We are introduced to the three women in an opening scene where they are at a funeral and they happen to get the identity of the deceased wrong.

Leading up to seeing the production, my main worry was how this would pan out. But upon watching it, my fears were put to rest.

The women are women we all have in our communities. Sis Pumla (Faniswa Yisa) is the community builder. She is the retired teacher who uses the mourning to make extra money, but also collects food at the funerals for the local school's feeding scheme. Karabo (Chuma Sopotela) is the struggling creative with a beautiful mind, Andiswa (Motlatji Ditodi) is the ambitious estate agent who'd love nothing more than to leave the township in search of a better life, and the talented, yet troubled young woman Brenda (Awethu Hleli), is the last of the four. She's rough around the edges, but with good intentions,

which has got her into trouble in the past. Their characters are carefully developed, with each character revealing what made them what they are.

The show has its preachy moments, especially when the subject matter of food and the politics of environmental activism are brought up. But, being armed with the knowledge that the production was commissioned by the Centre for Excellence in Food Security, makes this understandable.

In the mourning scenes, the women deliver synchronised performances, like swimming would be. This is where we witness the work of Jacqueline Kehilwe Manyapelo.

The production explores the issue of apartheid spatial planning and its impact on the lives of people simply by its being based in Khayelitsha. Lifestyle related illnesses also get some air play with Sis Pumla being portrayed as living with Type 2 Diabetes.

Brenda, we learn, did a stint in prison for stealing sanitary towels to give to her friends. The issue also gets thrust into the spotlight because of this storyline, while the overarching issue of food security comes through in the dialogue and their actions.

It has some side-splitting moments, but the story allows you to empathise with the characters as they are so relatable. The production makes use mostly of traditional funeral hymns, particularly those sung in Xhosa communities. The set is simple, with a round table and four chairs on either side of the stage. Wardrobe changes are simple and happen mostly on stage.

Did I mention that besides the writer, the show is by black women?

Another One's Bread is a strong production, with an even stronger message. – **Masego Panyane**

