



THEATRE

By Wayne Visser

~ Theatre is where we go to let others expose who we are ~

When last did you go to the theatre?
Why is a live performance so enjoyable?
What do you remember about your own dabbling with amateur dramatics - a school play or church nativity perhaps?

In one way or another, theatre is omnipresent in our lives.
This ancient tradition may very well be the oldest form of entertainment.
Long before Shakespeare unleashed his genius on the world, there were bushmen re-living the drama of a thrilling hunt around blazing African fires, and Greeks bringing their pantheon of gods to life in open-air amphitheatres.

Theatre has survived the ravages of time because it is a nexus for the arts - an explosive interaction of song and dance, a masterful blend of acting and storytelling, a creative fusion of design and fashion.

But these days, it faces stiff competition from numerous techno-entertainment prima donnas.
We are drawn like moths to a flame by the flickering allure of television and film, dazzlingly impressive with its gizmo special effects, yet still only a two dimensional facsimile of live theatre.
And we are turned zombie-like by the hypnotic blur of computer games, full of adrenaline-pumping action, in what amounts to digital sparring with pre-programmed phantoms.
These young pretenders are descendants of theatre and would do well to remember their ancestral roots.
Ancient wisdom runs deep.

The very simplicity of theatre is one of its mysterious powers.
Out of the murky chaos of life, theatre distils the pure essence of our human experience - the archetypes which pattern our behaviour, the myths which fire our imagination, the emotions which fuel our relationships.
In theatre, we know the props aren't real, and we know the actors are acting.
Yet the story echoes with truth and the characters are immediately recognisable in our daily lives.

Theatre is not about suspending our disbelief, but engaging with our beliefs.
It is not an escape into fantasy, it is a journey into reality.

Theatre is the mirror of exaggeration held up to help us notice things about ourselves.
To dramatise does not mean to mimic, but to make a point through emphasis.
Hyperbole is the lens through which theatre clarifies the world.
By making the script larger than life, theatre leaves us in no doubt about its messages.

Theatre not only entertains, but also instructs.
By shining the spotlight on the shadow parts of ourselves and the hidden recesses of our society, theatre can illuminate, even enlighten.





Theatre is an interactive experience - between actors and audience, narrative and understanding, stimulus and response.

Whether on stage or in our seats, we are active participants in theatre.

Theatre makes us laugh or cry, gasp or hold our breath, rage or swoon, boo or applaud.

Theatre touches us.

We go to theatre to feel alive, to be reminded that other people can move us.

We resonate with stage performance not only because of the skill of actors, but because we are all natural actors ourselves.

From the first moment, as infants, when we realised that different actions get different responses, we have been actors.

We learn to take on roles, to play our parts, changing our masks and varying our performance depending on the audience.

In fact, we are so good at personal theatre that we start to believe our own production.

We become our stage characters - caring mother, slick professional, rebellious teenager, tough manager.

And we start to mistake the props of life - the house, the car, the job - for life itself.

We should not forget to take time out, to let the curtain fall and turn up the lights, to hang up our costume and remove our makeup, to just be our authentic selves for a change.

Stop playing to the audience.

Stop living up to others' expectations.

Just be real.

Just be you.

Why not give it a try?

Give yourself a break.

Take off the mask for a few minutes today.

The show will go on without you.

And in any case, you'll be back on stage before you know it.



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