

Sensational performances in Somewhere On The Border

By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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If you are looking for a hard core journey into the bleeding hearts and tortured souls of a group of young soldiers fighting for their dignity and individuality, make sure to see Anthony Akerman's powerful *Somewhere On The Border* at the Baxter Flipside before it ends its run on 17 March.

Laced with a wicked sense of humour, profound expose, sturdy performances from the stellar ensemble under the astute direction of Andrew Odendaal, Akerman's commanding drama provides a challenging and engaging trip to the theatre that leaves plenty of food for thought and opportunities for discussion, which guarantees a revisit and sharing with friends.

A play that deserves priority

There are plays and there are plays. *Somewhere On The Border* is one of those fundamental plays that deserve priority on your entertainment schedule.

It's set inside an army unit on active duty and tells the story of ordinary South Africans thrown together in a war to defend the state. The seasoned and passionate young actors (having performed the play at the Grahamstown Festival and Market Theatre, Joburg) give life to an unforgettable story that makes the old South Africa seem both foreign and familiar. After almost two decades of silence, the Border War has forced its way back into public discourse and this striking production is part of that essential dialogue.





Sensational performances

Charlie Bouguenon is sensational as the brutish and monstrous Bombardier Kotze, who makes mincemeat of the new troop's raw vulnerability; although Bouguenon is fearful and a force to be reckoned with, he is equally a clown who simply becomes the puppet of the system, as well as a loser who has nothing left but to do what he most probably hates. There's a lovable puppy dog inside that bull terrier whose bark is far worse than his bite!

The leader of the pack, Hennie Badenhorst, is played with finesse by Andrew Lotter, who perfectly captures the sexy attitude of a cocky and suave character whose ego bruises easily. Lotter is magnificent at playing the physical brute, yet contrasting it with an immense emotional likeability; he is naughty as hell and his sensual dance in his underwear is guaranteed to garner a few fans.

Dylan Horley will definitely break your heart as Dough Campbell, the rebellious outsider who detests the military and who is forced to make friends with a world of hatred and the monster who forced him to rape his convictions. Horley truly personifies the passive consoler who tries to unify his buddies peacefully; he understands the brutality that strips his friends of their humanity. You will share a tear with him as he confronts his inner torment, and share a laugh when he ridicules the absurdity of the situation they find themselves in.

In the role of David Levitt, Glen Biderman is powerful in never allowing the attacks against his Jewish faith to cause him to lose faith in his convictions, yet constantly lives on an edge of fear where there is no reason, only survival.

An evil malevolence

Kaz Mc Fadden is the unruly clown Mowbray, who perfectly captures the almost non-existence of his character and how he uses an evil malevolence as a weapon to become "one of the manne". He is the playful joker who is always at the brunt of the prank.

In his performance as the conservative Afrikaner boy Marais, Luan Jacobs is equally powerful. Jacobs magnetically draws you into the fragile defencelessness of his character, whose convictions become his armour against the brutal onslaught and emotional torment; his sensitive nature and honesty is heart rending.

Ndino Ndlula is fantastic as the unseen enemy, whose various roles in the play are applauded; Ndino shines as the shadow figure, the consciousness of the soldiers who reminds them of their plight and the sometime ridiculous world they have become a part of. In particular, he steals the scene in which he mocks the Bombardier when he puts his men through a rigorous and laughable training session.

Questions important issues

Somewhere On The Border poignantly takes us back to South Africa before the birth of the New South Africa, to a world in which idealistic dictatorship divided humanity and fascistic militants conquered human rights.

Somewhere on the Border runs until 17 March at the Baxter Theatre.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

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