

Gg14 - new realities 8, 9 and 10 october 2014 paradijs theatre koninklijke schouwburg the hague



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GG 14 - New Realities 8, 9 and 10 October 2014

Review by [Eva Laszlo](#) 13 October 2014

To me, the performances of the Guildhall Graduates in The Hague are a sweet duty and a legitimate addiction of the highest order. They allow me to witness a unique moment: actors in their first edition, freshly churned out of the creamery of excellence that Guildhall stands for, performing at a crossroads in their careers when everything is still possible and the sky is the limit.

When coming to The Hague, the young graduates bring their own words, sounds and director's notes to the stage, releasing them into the lions' den, to us: the public. As always, we are lucky to be anglophiles and thespians in The Hague - in London, New York or Berlin, such performances would certainly lack the intimacy of the Paradijs at the Koninklijke Schouwburg, there would be no easy face-to-face with the actors post festem and, yeah, I'm not so sure I could afford attending. A big thank you to the relentless efforts of STET, as they spoil us with the crème de la crème of acting.

This year's crop was Robbie Carpenter in *The Phoenix* or *r u*, Ceri-Lyn Cissone in *Unveiled*, Kaffe Keating in *4 Hours and 37 Minutes* and Simon Haines in *Animals and Children*.

When Robbie took the floor, ahem ...the stage, with a chair and nothing else as a prop, one might have thought that this is a really nice lad, telling a really nice story from his childhood. He softly guided us along the meanders of his Gro's and Nan's patio, the grapefruit groves, the heart-breaking and surreal wonder of stroking the furry back of bumblebees ("be gentle to the bumblebees" says silver side-burned Gro to the little boy) until the sweetness of memory is overcome by the pain of the adult narrator, addressed in real time as "young man" and "cab driver" by the same grandpa, on their way home, or better - to "homehome". Whilst the indicator of the car is "ticking like a metronome", in a sad reversal of roles and

responsibilities so full of grace, the grandson realises: “ if you forget everything, it is as if you have never existed. “And yet, “when all is burned, new life emerges...they see the ashes in everyone else’s eyes.”

Ceri-Lyn lifted the spirits in an amazing cascade of sharp wit and classy insults, morphing from wounded woman to angry friend to bitch with an itch; reverting from subject, object, victim and analyst of human relationships to discouraged single beauty worthy of better times and better men - there was no time left to take notes of her concentrated, brilliant text, cause it was a maelstrom of double entendres and perfect mime. However, the giggles and baffled, hollering laughs of her audience clearly showed that she was the boss of it.

Kaffe seemed almost too fragile for his soulful story - and this is why he is soooo good in it. The text is beautifully crafted, framed by the metaphor of the average time it takes to run a marathon....and it takes a while till it dawns on us: this marathon of a little life conceived by strangers is not going to end well. Kudos, Kaffe - rarely have I seen sorrow so deep, rendered in such a frugal economy of words, sentiments and gestures.

And then, there was Simon. His was not a linear narrative, but a first-class whodunit, which raised all hairs at the back of my neck. It takes great courage and mastery to voluntarily cast yourself a creep, and the flawless embodiment did not help appease the discomfort of watching him give it all to his complex and ambiguous character. Well, it wasn’t meant to. No easy answers at the end, no cathartic awwwws served with a smile, but even more hints and questions coming from the dark side of humanity, to take home and ponder on. Or not.

Compared to earlier GGs, this year’s edition was also remarkable inasmuch as the performances all addressed timeless, Very Big Issues. In this respect, it was not youthful, but mature and grown-up to an extent that left me wondering: where will we see them again, these beautiful, powerful, already accomplished young old souls ?

Some audience comments:

It was truly an awesome experience. Sad, lovely, shocking, frightening. Really enjoyed it, thank you so much ;D - Ama Nyarko Appiah

..... It was riveting..... George Hansel

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