

TODAY

Drummer and mime play a new kind of African jazz

No easy walk

By Adrienne Sichel

The Star, Johannesburg

ONE of the gems on the angst-ridden Fringe is No Easy Walk - a history in mime and music by the Mouthpeace Company.

Last year's controversial Young Artist Andrew Buckland (whose theatrepiece Pas de Deux was both booed and cheered) has teamed up with percussionist Maciek Schejbal.

For close on a magical hour Buckland and his finely trained body and Schejbal, playing drums, bells, a metronome, mbira, xylophone, new-look marimba, cymbals et al take the audience on a journey. An audio-visual portrait (without the benefit of the required fancy light-

ing) of Pan as a frustrated artist in search of artistic and territorial freedom.

No Easy Walk, which features the percussionist in traditional white face and the mime without make-up, is deliciously funny, intelligent and wildly entertaining. Above all it's a tour, de force of collaborate skills and artistry.

The final Festival performance is this morning at Canterbury Hall at 10.30 am.

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The Star TONIGHT

But the most fascinating aspect of the Buckland and Schejbal performance is the way they use music to create an unseen, multi-faceted and distinct character. The music becomes part muse, part commentator, part guardian angel - guiding man through his turmoils and, in one sequence, preventing him from committing suicide by a reminder of challenges still to be overcome.

Schejbal's masterly adaptation of a wide range of classical music (particularly that of Bach) to drums, castanets, cymbals, vibraphone, kalimba and marimba is magnetic. At times he produces the effect of a full orchestra - then just individually encapsulated sounds.

This is a show which should not be missed. The season is very short.

DEPTH IN BLEND OF MIME AND MUSIC

NO EASY WALK with Andrew Buckland and Maciek Schejbal (The Barn):

ANDREW Buckland and Maciek Schejbal last night presented an admirably entertaining display of talent. Their show achieves depth in the complementing of one medium by another with imaginative skill. Together the parts are greater than the whole.

Excellent actor, Andrew Buckland uses mime for a sustained narrative of life before birth, through joyful babyhood, rough childhood, frustrated youth, to rebellious adulthood... It has touches of humour and pathos.

The music raises it to novelty by sensitively articulating the mime and providing changes of mood. Maciek Schejbal gives a virtuoso performance. He uses a great range of instruments, from a sophisticated xylophone and two marimbas to dramatic drums and cymbals.

Using four hammers, two hammers, sticks and brushes, he varies infinitely the elements of pitch, rhythm and texture.

- R R W Nixon

THE CRITICS

A glorious tribute to the human spirit

Ordinarily, mime is not your everyday entertainment for the man in the street.

At least, it hasn't been in the past, but the show mounted by actor Andrew Buckland and musician Maciek Schejbal crosses many boundaries of consciousness and brings to the fore many recognisable memories with a simplicity which appeals strongly.

Together they have created a variation of the art form which can be enjoyed by everyone in the theatregoing family.

Sub-titled "a history in mime and music", the production takes us through a life from the moment an infant is re-

THEATRE... by GARALT MacLIAM

PLAY: No Easy Walk (Laager at the Market)

PLAYERS: Andrew Buckland and Maciek Schejbal

DIRECTOR: Soli Phlander

bellling against the confinement of the womb, searching for an entrance to the world, until the present day.

The show's graphic depiction of the child's dependency on the parent for life and the parent's need to express love is a glorious tribute to humanity, wondrously shown by Buckland and Schejbal.

The subtle directorial hand of Soli Phlander can also be seen in this memorable sequence.

That life is not a bowl of cherries could well

be the theme of the show.

Buckland's mime tells us how we strive and fall and rise and fall and rise again.

Schejbal suggests through his music on xylophone, drums, cymbals and snatches from Bach, Chopin, and Mozart on a whole variety of other percussion instruments that hope is just around the corner and that the human spirit is unconquerable.

Together they take their audience on a trip through all the ages of

man and they do this with delightful humour and wonderful understanding of nature.

In this production it is the musician who is given the clown's white face, the mime artist who is without make-up, and that contradiction of tradition becomes the norm for the show.

It explodes with ideas and gives small surprising pleasures at the most unexpected moments, just as life gives its pleasures and surprises without warning.

The combination of the two artists' talents broadens our horizons and demonstrates that we need not impose limitations on our own abilities.

This is what I would think was intended.

It's funny, it's serious, it's subtle and always pleasurable enjoyable. It's a new experience and the performers have created an excellent partnership, between themselves and with director Soli Phlander.

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Tonight