



The bohemians of District Six

- LIFE
- Sunday 1 May 2016 - 11:38am

“La Bohème with a South African twist”: Giacomo Puccini’s classic set in District Six is showing its final performance on Sunday, 01 May.

CAPE TOWN – Another re-imagining of a classic opera? Hmm, I am not sure. “La Bohème with a South African twist”: Giacomo Puccini’s classic set in [District Six](#) ... okay, I will be there ... I am a gambling woman after all, and hope is always the last thing to go.

I am not ashamed to say that I always feel a little flushed when I hear the words “opera ... with a twist”. Not (only) because I am a crusty old traditionalist, but because I want so badly for it to work. And it never quite lives up to its promise, always feeling like a bit of a compromise.

Before this, it always seemed that there was something about opera, whether tackling the most sinister of power games or even the sweetest of seductions, that demanded more than a nod to tradition.

Africa Arts’ production of [La Bohème in District Six](#) blows that apart quite spectacularly. What a perfect fit this beautiful, tragic story is for the bohemians of District Six. How lovely that nothing seems lost in translation. There is nothing missing in this show set among a community that is.

It seems very poignant that, like Jo’burg’s Sophiatown, District Six’s artistic legacy keeps on delivering 50 years after the bulldozers ploughed through it. The show also confirmed the abundance of talent on these shores – there are at least six sensational opera singers in our little village! Ululating in unison seemed a perfect response to this glorious storytelling.

One last performance is on Sunday May 1 at 3.30pm. Tickets available at Computicket.

Africa News Agency

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