

Tokolosh terror

Hi-tech kids' show entrances parents too

TERESA SMITH

GRAHAMSTOWN is currently festooned with posters - some good, some bad - but the cleverest one thus far is the little speech bubble sticker the *Tokolosh* production people have been sticking on to all the posters they can reach.

The strategically placed speech bubble makes the figure in any poster utter the words "I'd rather go and see 'TOKOLOSH!'" in the best tradition of ambush marketing.

Of course the children's adventure story *Tokolosh* is not to be confused with the Fringe comedy show *Tokoloshe Come and Go*, which has actually been profiting out of Tanya Sprong's marketing.

Sprong is the writer/director of *Tokolosh*, which has been having a problem attracting audiences despite being a pretty good production.

For something that is meant to be children's theatre, *Tokolosh* uses sophisticated technology to create a fast-paced adventure story where animation meets live action.

Written and directed by Sprong, the one-woman play uses video projection to create a changing background and at one stage she even interacts with a person on the screen.

Using a multi-media format makes the production immediately accessible to today's average 8-year-old who is constantly



Tokolosh a children theatre production written and performed by Tanya Sprong. A fast paced fantasy fuelled adventure where animation meets live action. 030706 Pic: Neo NtsomaReport: Theresa Smith

exposed to computer generated images. Static two-dimensional backgrounds are so last century ...

Sprong plays several different characters, including the protagonist, young Serena Bailey, who has been sent to boarding school where she is served camel snot for breakfast and has to collect snails as a punishment.

Not only does she have prob-

lems with the school bully (who refuses to turn on the light so Serena can simply go to the loo at night) but a tokolosh seems to have moved in under her bed. In addition to the bed on stage, the big screen completes the stage.

Serena's forays into the night through the long grass and up to the forbidding (in the moonlight) laundry where the snails hang out are believably

handled since she interacts with an animated scenery.

While the play may be aimed at children, Sprong's believable performance as a child is entrancing enough to capture the parents accompanying their sprogs to the theatre as well. Her timing is excellent, especially since she has to keep the pace exactly right because the video projection is timed.

Not that there were many

people of any age at the performance at the Memory Hall at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown this past week.

Poor PR means very few people know about this Dutch production, which brings the world of theatre and film that much closer to each other, which is too bad, since this production is world class, and that's not just because it's from another country.