

unusual gem

By PENNY MORGAN

A FASCINATING little gem under the title *Tokolosh* is currently showing, until Saturday, at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown.

This mix of solo acting and video props plus a video-taped additional character as well as electronic sound and storytelling does not fall comfortably into any particular category of art-form.

Actress and writer Tanya Sprong performs with an animated video as the backdrop creating a set. However, there are also a few physical props.

Just as Sprong is the physical actress, Biellie-Dee Luewis is an additional character that appears on the screen and interacts with Sprong.

Directed by Grainne Delaney, the 55-minute show is unusual entertainment to say the least. Sprong concedes that the show does not seem to have captured the imagination of festinos – it has been playing to very small audiences at the Memory Hall at St Andrew's Prep.

Sprong is perplexed about the lack of audience support, citing the position of the venue, another show with a similar name and the fact that she is an "unknown" as possible reasons for the thin audiences.

Another view is that the promotional poster for the show lacks pulling power and is obscure.

Sprong was born and schooled in South Africa but moved to London after matriculating from Ixopo High School in KwaZulu-Natal.

She studied at the Academy of Live and Recorded Art and took specialised storytelling techniques courses at the London School of Journalism.

She eventually moved to Holland, where she wrote *Tokolosh*.

It could be that the show is just too different or that the promotional material is outshone by those from lesser performances.

But *Tokolosh* is well worth the walk up the hill to Memory Hall.