

In last fortnight of December, I was fortunate to watch a number of show-stopping musical shows with local artists that can easily rank amongst the best in the world.

The first show to send me into a jolly festive mood and shake off two years of depressing Covid blues was, "Just one night".

The show was a marvelous trip down memory lane, from back in the seventies to the 90's covering a wide range of genres of music, (ballads, Motown, rock, jazz). It was journey of sheer joy and delight to listen to the music and songs of Tina Turner, Gloria Gaynor, Diana Ross, the Manhattans, Engelbert Humperdinck and many great artists of that era, when music was music. The brilliant local artists,, Shudley and two female singers sang 62 hit songs in two hours, in a stellar performance, leaving their audience on the edge of their seats with their golden voices. The cherry on the top was, guest artist, a seventy year old Toya Abrahams, from the rockets, who didn't lose his touch. He swooned his audience with his rendition of Humperdinck's evergreen song,"the last waltz".

The next show was at the barnyard, "we are the champions". This was a sleek show by four outstanding singers in their fabulous costumes belting out songs from Queen, Elton John, Michael Jackson, Tina Turner and Cher, as good, if not

better than the original artists. They had their audience screaming for more after two hours of rivetting and energetic music.

Last night, I listened to Christmas music and songs at the Cape Town city hall with Cape Town's top and internationally famous Robin Petersen and Craig Lucas and their group of outstanding unknown talented singers to give us two and half hours of outstanding foot stomping music.

It was so nice to see the audience get right into the music and dance on the aisles, clapping, stomping and singing to their hearts' content, without a trace of the memory of Covid and its stupid lockdown restrictions.

We are truly fortunate to have local singers that can be ranked amongst the best in the world. What amazed me in these shows is that they had international appeal but in South Africa, the compositions of the audience is dictated, to a large extent, by race.

This to me is sad, terribly sad.

If the aging Humperdinck came to perform in South Africa, people of all races would flock pay a premium to see him struggling to reach the high notes, but when local artists

perform, singing his songs better than he can, at a fraction of a cost, the turnout will, firstly, be racial and secondly be very poor.

I can never understand why people will pay a whopping R 17,000 to listen to the vulgar Kevin Hart but have no interest in supporting local artists that give you absolute value for money.

I couldn't help wondering, if years of apartheid damaged us so much that we still have that abhorrent laarger mentality that is so embedded in our minds and genes that we only attend shows along racial lines .

Another brilliant show at the baxter that addressed gender violence and politics,"He had it coming " was poorly attended and again on racial lines. It was a show that every South African should have seen. I thoroughly enjoyed the show.

I only hope this racial mindset will disappear with the younger and newer generations. It's time we abandoned the apartheid enforced racial mentality and support our very talented local artists, dancers and singers, regardless of their race, and amalgamate into becoming one nation.

We may differ from one another culturally but most of us share the same common values, which should be the driving force and catalyst to keep us together.

I feel that the arts and culture department doesn't do enough to promote the arts.

Now, more than ever before, we must encourage and promote the arts and show-case the highly talented artists in this country to enable them to flourish on the international stages.

During Covid many artists lost their livelihoods and struggled to survive due to a lockdown that caused more harm than good. The isolation of the masses has done immense mental and psychological damage to them.

The arts can play a significant role to help people get together and heal their minds. Two hours of a good comedy show or vibrant music show can do more for a troubled mind than all the alcohol, drugs, anti-depressants and tons of sessions with a psychologist, which the majority cannot afford, and which are not covered by most medical aids, who have scant regard for people with mental illnesses.

I was most impressed to learn that a corporate company like MTM has decided to sponsor the arts in a big way.

It is a pity that our government and department of culture doesn't do enough to promote the arts in this country.

After two years of lockdowns and dreadful isolation, we must come out and join one another to break the efforts of the WEF to keep us apart.

Let's us hope that more big corporations like MTM will sponsor the arts, especially in the impoverished parts of our country, where addiction and gang violence is so prevalent, instead of only sponsoring sports like rugby and golf.

A nation that does not invest in the arts is destroying its soul.

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