

African anthropologist explores Ontario jungles

Pity those who never see themselves from the outside, for theirs is a life un-lived and unexamined.

And so it takes a fictional African anthropologist visiting the counties of Lambton and Kent to mirror back to Canadians the image they leave in the minds of visitors.

Of course, acclaimed playwright Andre Alexis takes a rather tongue-in-cheek approach to how sleepy southern Ontario natives go on about their daily lives. The audience is cast into the role of the Nigerian Geographical Society, listening to the bizarre findings of anthropologist Dr. Katherine Mtubu.



**THEATRE
REVIEW**
BEA QUARRIE

And what a turn of roles this presents! One can't help but imagine how the turn of the century findings of white anthropologists visiting Africa might have got it all wrong!

Musing philosophically, Dr. Mtubu waxes poetic about the strange habit in Ontario villages of converting cow skulls to ashtrays, spittoons and rural mailbox embellishments. Her respectful conclusions are screamingly funny, touchingly earnest and always perceptive. She takes the audience on a dizzying roller coaster ride of villages via video to complement her authenticity.

To watch Yanna McIntosh as Dr. Mtubu is to watch poetry in motion.

Her economy of delivery, her gracefully spare movement, her lovingly crafted and beautifully understated dialect all become a fluid unfolding of the character. In a twinkling of an eye, she can mock Hamlet and the art of fly swatting. What joy to watch and listen to such beautifully executed whimsy.

How lucky that she has chosen to present this gem in Peterborough before taking it to Edinburgh's world renowned festival. Don't miss it.



Yanna McIntosh



Brian Mitolo

Doubling the night's billing is Peterborough's own Brian Mitolo's *Invisible Things*.

This is a brand new work is a multi-modal musing on discovery both in love and in research. Director Philip Oakley untangles this non-linear plot for us by placing performers in distinct playing areas that both separates and yet connects the piece. This is a workshop production featuring local actors Susan Spicer, Allie Hearn, Ryan Kerr and Brad Brackenridge.

As the play unfolds, we enter the complex world of two female researchers who both admire and envy and despise each other.

Played in a slice of life naturalistic manner, the story weaves the intricate web of interconnectedness in relationships. For everything concealed there is a revelation. Characters repeat the theme—Something either happens or it does not happen. We connect with the characters and because they play with compelling honesty, we want to learn more about them.

Mitolo has written an intriguing story that glimpses the intelligence behind the human eye, and for all that is revealed—the human need to connect and heal the wounds inflicted—we see more grey areas that need exploring.

What an enjoyable evening of stimulating theatre.

The mini-festival presented by Public Energy continues until Sunday at the Gordon Best Theatre.

Bea Quarrie is a theatre critic, director, adjudicator, producer, teacher and a freelance reviewer for The Examiner.