

Drama showcase offers good variety

TONIGHT REPORTER

THE PROGRAMME for this year's Artscape Spring Drama Season includes something old and something new.

Now in its ninth year, the season is part of Artscape's New Writing Programme which is devoted to the professional writing and production of South African plays.

The programme receives more than 50 unsolicited scripts annually from people writing in English and Afrikaans (Xhosa work is also considered). Plays identified as promising are rewritten through the writing programme and sometimes given either a showcase performance or performed reading and, if successful, considered for a full production in the season.

Roy Sargeant, Artscape's drama consultant and the director of the Artscape New Writing Programme, says they have changed tack this year because they have been impressed by the courage and commitment of young theatre professionals who produce plays at their own expense.

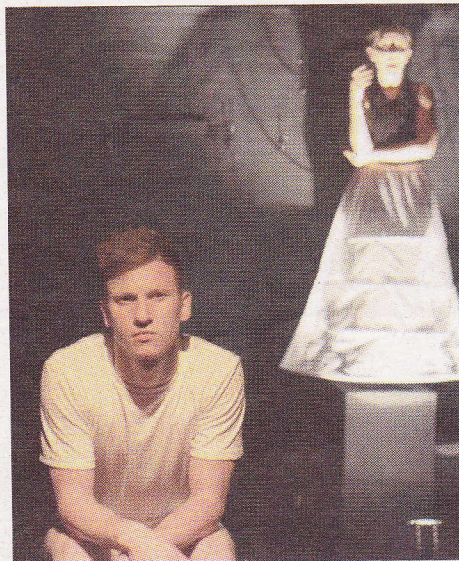
So, they are introducing a Play It Again scheme with a production of Philip Rademeyer's *The View*.

"The other plays are new plays, while the Paul Slabolepszy play has also only had one limited outing," said Sargeant.

This year's Spring Drama Season plays on Artscape's Arena stage:

- *The View*, written and directed by Philip Rademeyer, starring Gideon Lombard and Ella Gabriel. The multi-award-winning play tells the story of a young man sitting in a prison in outer space, contemplating his life. Through a series of imagined conversations with people he knew, we come to understand why he has been imprisoned. October 21 to November 9.

- *iSystem* was last year's Showcase Production. Written by Anele Russi – who was mentored by Fatima Dike and Roy Sargeant through the Artscape Black Playwrights' Forum – the play confronts issues of police corruption. Directed by Fatima Dike, it features Sizwe Msutu, Thembani Luzipho, Riaan Visman, Zondwa Njokweni and Stefan Erasmus, with designs by Willem Breyl. November 11 to 30.



RETURN: Ella Gabriel and Gideon Lombard will reprise their Fleur du Cap-nominated roles in *The View*, which forms part of this year's Artscape Spring Drama Season.

- This year's Showcase Production is *The Garage Sale* by Rafiek Mammon. The playwright has had previous success through the Artscape New Writing Programme with *Seashells* in 2011 and 2012.

Siblings Avril and Mike Williams give us a dark but funny look at Cape Town suburbia alongside pizza deliveryman Flip, in *The Garage Sale*, which will be directed by Geoffrey Hyland. December 13 and 15.

- *My Low-Fat, Almost Italian Wedding* was written by Paul Slabolepszy and will be directed by Roy Sargeant. It tells the story of the marriage of Victoria, daughter of Salvatore and Maria, in 1994.

The day is turning into wild comic chaos as chef Alpheus tries to take over Salvatore's ristorante to sell *pap en vleis* and everything is up in the air.

Graham Hopkins, Anthea Thompson, Hannah Borthwick, Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, James Cairns, Mark Elderkin and Murray Steyn will star in the production, with designs by Alfred Rietmann. December 16 to January 4.