

Penetrating optic on life and society

THE VIEW

DIRECTOR: Philip Rademeyer
CAST: Gideon Lombard, Ella Gabriel
VENUE: Artscape Arena,
UNTIL: November 9
RATING: ★★★★★

BEVERLEY BROMMERT

IT IS almost a year since this engrossing drama by Philip Rademeyer had its Cape Town première, and like wine of character, it has matured with distinction.

The venue is different, more spacious, but still suitably intimate; the cast is the same, but performing with greater assurance and stamping their personae with the authority born of experience; and the script is subtly updated with topical references, but essentially unchanged.



The main character is tersely styled Boy, which gives the role an archetypal resonance: this young male adult is confined in a hermetically sealed container in space, floating above the world.

His crime? He is homosexual, so not likely to assist in perpetuating the human species. His sequestration is intended to prevent him from contaminating others by example, and the condition gives him the opportunity to view Mother Earth with physical detachment; but he is still emotionally bonded to the planet of his birth.

He requests a video-cassette through which he can revisit relationships from his past, and the show evolves into a collage of interviews immortalised on that archaic instrument.

Enter the other protagonist, titled Actor; this role entails serial impersonations of the people and beings influential in Boy's existence.

Gideon Lombard gives a

sensitive, luminous reading of Boy, addressing the audience with disconcerting intensity, while Ella Gabriel, as Actor, shows enviable versatility in her portrayal of a wide range of characters; male, female, young, old, and each differentiated by diverse accents.

With the exception of Boy's father, whom Gabriel does not capture convincingly, all the other individuals are depicted by her with economy and brilliance.

A clever directorial touch is the growing accumulation of costumes left on stage in the wake of each interview – a reminder of the complexity of influences shaping Boy's life.

From the rumble of apocalyptic music that prefaces the action, to the triumphant crescendo of sound signalling ultimate liberation, *The View* encompasses many a penetrating optic on life and society. Above all, it provokes thought while it entertains, in the best tradition of intelligent theatre.