

Priscilla offers ultimate escapism



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

31 Mar 2017

Writer-director Stephen Elliot's cult film *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* made a world of difference in creating a profound awareness of the drag culture and same-sex sexuality when it was released 26 years ago. Now, the musical under direction of Simon Phillips and book by Allan Scott is spinning its own kind of magic, a magical feral and ferocious creation where exaggerated extravagance and ultra-spectacle thrills to the extreme.

Elliot's baby has grown up and is as naughty as hell, its iconic characters gloriously brought to life by David Dennis as the feisty transgender mother hen Bernadette, Daniel Buys as the genteel Tick/ Mitzi and Philip Schnetler as bombshell Adam/Felicia, turning what we thought we knew about *Priscilla* inside out and sprinkling it with a dose of delicious humour and delightful swagger.



Dennis meticulously crawls under the skin of Bernadette, his astounding comic timing results in delivering a performance that is filled with humour and lots of heart. Buys gently balances the duality of being a father and drag performer with ease and confidence, and Schnetler bursts out of his skin with an unforgettable performance as a young man whose outrageous exploration of his sexuality has tragi-comic results.



Devilish trio dynamics

If there's one reason to see the show, it's for the vibrant dynamics between the devilish trio, taking us into a world with no closet doors where being human and celebrating life has never been more rewarding.

Like the film, the musical is larger than life, framing its story contextually with three divine disco divas, suspended in mid-air, and sexy spirited go-go boys gyrating wickedly to the beat of classic disco favourites like It's Raining Men, Venus, Go West and I Will Survive – the lively choreography by Ross Coleman and Andrew Hallsworth is breathtaking, with musical director Bryan Schimmel and his musicians in top form.



What's interesting about the show is how its narrative has been restructured to deliver some great surprises for ardent Priscilla fans, offering a production that is refreshing and invigorating.

The show does what musicals do best, opening up the story to take us into a high-camp world where the sky is the limit, a rousing and rowdy rollercoaster ride that delivers what it promises, spectacular feel-good entertainment that provides ideal escapism for anyone that needs some time out.



Visceral delights

Be prepared for a feast of overwhelming visceral delights, with Tim Chappel and Lizzy Gardiner's jaw-dropping costume designs, Brian Thompson's production design that includes a bus that takes on a life of its own, and Nick Schlieper's dazzling lighting design – when the lights fade before curtain up and the spot hits a large glitter ball hanging above the audience, you know that it is going to be an evening you will remember long after disco-ing out of the theatre.



It has taken 10 years for the multi-award-winning musical to reach our shores after taking the world by storm. It's a great feat for South African producer Hazel Feldman's Showtime Management, who produced it with Australia's Lunchbox Theatrical Productions and Nullarbor Productions, bringing us a musical that has never been more relevant.

Nothing beats escaping into a musical sensation like Priscilla, it's a meaningful experience you can fully enjoy with friends and family and let your hair down.



The musical *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* is on at the [Artscape Opera](#) for a short run until 23 April before heading for the [Teatro at Montecasino](#) where it opens on 29 April, so make sure to book your seats now at [Computicket](#) or visit the website: www.priscillathemusical.com.

For the latest happenings on stage, visit www.writingstudio.co.za.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and

theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

- 3 new local films and more at cinemas this May - 29 Apr 2024
- Get ready for some great escapism in cinemas this April - 3 Apr 2024
- What to expect at the cinema this March - 27 Feb 2024
- Oscar fever brews: Here's what's at the cinemas this February - 29 Jan 2024
- Top 10 films of 2023 - 28 Dec 2023

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>