

Fasterlouder.com.au

House of the Holy Afro @ Becks Music Box(26/02/09)

Gig Reviews by nicowen, 2nd March, 2009



There was a high level of anticipation from the crowd as the masses flocked to the second **House of the Holy Afro** show on its debut visit to Western Australia. Combining the critically acclaimed performance ensemble **Third World Bunfight** under controversial artistic director **Brett Bailey** and the famous South African progressive / house DJ export **Dino Moran**, there was a great degree of interest from a variety of punters.

With no support act; the trend at Becks Music Box, House of the Holy Afro kicked straight in with an enchanting bird song. Vibrantly dressed performers prowled the stage until a flamboyantly clad 'ghetto girl' strutted out with a large boom box on her shoulder. She twisted and turned knobs until it was tuned to the iconic Ibiza 'thump thump' and a spectacle of cast members flocked the stage one by one singing beautiful African harmonies over the electronic beat.

Amongst the hymns was an amalgamation of contemporary pop verses including *Son of a Preacher Man* and *Stairway to Heaven*. Dressed in traditional African attire, charismatic performers hyped up the crowd, encouraging heavy dancing and booty shaking, indicating that this wasn't going to be your typical stage show. With red masked dancers, afro shaking disco queens and percussive breaks from dancing drummers, House of the Holy Afro was indeed the visual spectacular people had been raving about.

African harmonies, word poetry from **Odidi Mfenyana** and visual imagery of old and new African cultures were just some of the ingredients in the vast pot. The continuous house beat however, soon started to feel monotonous since there weren't any other instruments to compliment the vocal

harmonies. It felt like something was missing apart from the few times that basslines and melody breaks were introduced into Moran's mix making the performance feel complete again.

The standout moment was when the beat stopped and a beautiful solo hymn was performed by a character carrying a smoking bowl and swigging gulps from a vodka bottle. It was filled with sadness reflecting some of the darker aspects of their country. The exquisite harmonies that accompanied the soloist were well complimented by sweeping musical soundscapes.

When the songs, percussion and house beat aligned successfully, the performance was breathtaking, unfortunately, this didn't happen as often as it should. Whether it was their self confessed jet lag or just a conspicuous clash of genres, The House of the Holy Afro still had a few holes to fill, in time for their sold out performance at Becks the following day.