



feedback

HOUSE OF THE HOLY AFRO

Beck's Music Box, Perth

26/2/09

Coming out the other side of a *House Of The Holy Afro* gig is a bit like waking from a cultural lobotomy. An onslaught of club, camp and hip hop culture blended with traditional gospel and Sangoma songs, the performance is a collaboration between theatre troupe Third World Bunfight, performance poet Odidi Mfenyana and popular South African DJ Dino Moran.

The show kicked off deceptively austere; with African women in turbans chanting solemnly as men danced, tribal-style, about them. But the tranquility was short lived. Punching a fist in the air, DJ Moran dropped a bustle of house beats to which a buxom afro-haired woman strutted on stage with "I'm taking you back to South Africa!" Pop culture references flew thick and fast as she borrowed lines from Dylan, Dusty Springfield and The Stones. The dancefloor filled quickly, with punters 'shaking booty' as per their instructions. The embodiment of contemporary Africa, House Of The Holy Afro reached its political climax through a passage of spoken word by Odidi. "The Afro needs no definition, no explanation, no declaration...for it is what it is." The crowd erupted with cheers as he announced, "Most of all, [the afro] is Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela!" Had there been a roof over Beck's Music Box, it would probably be floating somewhere in the Swan right now.

JESSICA MATTHEWS