

POPart Theatre

Posted on July 8, 2013

08 July 2013



Hayleigh Evans, one of the founders of POPart Theatre, with DWR's Dave Whitehouse. With people craving a platform for unpretentious live performance spaces, whether theatre shows or live improvisation and poet evenings, the two year old POPart Theatre in down town Johannesburg fills the niche. DWR Distribution was pleased to assist the little theatre with a few second hand fixtures and delighted to ask one of its founders, Orly Shapiro, to supply a bit of background to its origins and purpose.



DWR: When did the POPART theatre open its doors?

Orly Shapiro: POPART Theatre was officially launched in May 2011. We started off in The Maboneng Precinct, in The Main Street Life Building and we're still here.

DWR: Who are the founders?

Orly Shapiro: POPART was founded by Hayleigh Evans, Shoki Mokgapa and Orly Shapiro – and we are all still banded strong together.

DWR: What led you to start the theatre?

Orly Shapiro: A mixture of frustration, a longing for entrepreneurship and being masters of our own destinies, led to us opening up POPART. All 3 of us studied acting together and the industry is not particularly kind nor polite, so waiting for people to create an opening or a gap for us was not really happening. So we decided to create a gap ourselves. When we first began, none of us realised the magnitude of the gap that we were/are filling.

DWR: What kind of acts do you put up?

Orly Shapiro: We host a plethora of shows. P.O.P Art stands for People Of Performing Art (as well as the well iconised POP Culture) The shows are fresh, independent, new stories packed with loads of cultural, social and emotional relevance. We have straight theatre shows, to monthly live improv, singer, singer writer evenings and Joburg's finest poets.



Dance classes held in the week at the POPart Theatre.

DWR: Who are the audience and how do people here about you?

Orly Shapiro: The audience ranges quite extraordinarily although we do have a good 'regular'

base that supports us. We do most of our marketing online, also known as below the line marketing. We send out tons of press and hope that someone in the print or radio industry find it interesting enough to do a piece on the show or on us.

DWR: What is the set up like, is it a conventional stage?

Orly Shapiro: We have been a very mobile venue in the past, but now with our raked seating the stage is much more set, although there is still room to accommodate the show specifically to their needs.

DWR: What lighting fixtures do you use?

Orly Shapiro: We use a couple of profiles, a few par cans and 4 fresnels. We have recently gotten our lights rigged to our ceiling.

DWR: What has the response been like?

Orly Shapiro: The response has been phenomenal. People seem dehydrated for fresh indie, unpretentious live performance spaces.

DWR: If you had one dream come true, what would it be?

Orly Shapiro: To get more Joburgers to come sit on our seats and bear witness to the incredible talent that walks through our doors. We'd love to get more audiences in from all areas of Joburg. And then there's so much more... one wish is so limiting!



A night with a songwriter **For more information:**

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