

REVIEWS SEVEN TIMES ME:

Edinburgh Fringe festival reviews 2007:SEVEN TIMES ME

THREE WEEKS

This autobiographical performance combines storytelling, poetry and dance, to deliver a poignant representation of a woman's life. Kat François universalises her stories of growing up with a large family and abusive step-father, without letting the show degenerate into cliché. François' personality shines through her performance; honest, open, funny, yet also often angry or hurt, she never shies away from any aspect of her life, good or bad, and this openness serves her well. Kat is a gifted performer who offers a unique and original show of interest to anyone who appreciates skilful use of the English language.

4 STAR REVIEW

SKINNY FEST

The diversity of this year's poetry events, while not exactly breaching the gap between the book-before-bedtime and the competitive slam, go some way towards arresting the complexities of the word 'poetry'. Kat François's Seven Times Me is a mad assortment – slam poetry, dance, comedy – and all performed by one woman. All very Fringe – but the words, sometimes rapped, sometimes melodic, are more subtle than the detractors of competitive slam would have it. Her work is sexually frank and politically poised, and as self-biography it is the most defiant statement of self I have seen on the circuit. She is also very funny.

Thomas Hutchunson

WRITE OUT LOUD

This was a show shining with personality. However, it is not one for the faint-hearted. Kat François structures it around her childhood - happy except for her relationship with her step-father, and does not shy away from addressing the worst sides of human nature...However, overall the show's message is life-enhancing and against bitterness...

Kat mixes dance (having trained herself as a dancer) with dramatic narrative, powerful visual effects, music and, of course, poetry. She weaves in and out of these elements seamlessly. We come away knowing her and very pleased to have met her. The poetry is particularly effective, when it slips or sometimes storms in, after a long passage of prose. Everything is punctuated with

humour. I have never seen a demonstration of the trials and tribulations of an adolescent girl trying to insert a tampon, on stage before. There are moments of romance, followed by the inevitable let-down - 'Finally, I get the call. You know the call.' We all did and the audience was with her all the way. Where Kat excels is in building up towards emotional moments in her performance, showing her strength and then suddenly revealing a hidden vulnerability, with which the audience could not help but empathise.

Four stars for a colourful show, full of movement, drama and poetry.

Helen Shay, Four Stars

ADELAIDE FRINGE FESTIVAL REVIEWS 2008:SEVEN TIMES ME

THE THEATRE GUIDE

Kat Francois tells her story of being one of seven siblings, a black kid growing up in the 70s and 80s in London. Through prose, poetry and dance, the gritty tale unfolds as she deals with her mother's remarriage, the move to a sprawling council estate, a brutal stepfather and the grueling, final episode that brings her story to a climax.

Through it all, her courage shines. This is not a serious show – it has humour aplenty and some great dancing, but I defy anyone with a heart to sit through it dry-eyed and not be moved by her determination, dignity and soul. See this show Maggie Moore

Rating: 4 stars (out of 5)

THE ADVERTISER

KAT Francois's hour long lyrical soliloquy tells of her life as one of seven children of West Indian descent growing up in England. The performance poet is charming as she evokes herself as a naughty young girl, progressing through to her first love as a teenager and taking a darker turn in more recent history as the spectre of racism and police brutality enters the frame. François, who was the world slam poetry champion in 2005, combines her smoothly flowing monologue with dance and is energetic and charismatic on the stage. François trusts the audience with some very personal information, and thanks to her glowing presence and passion, it is difficult not to be drawn in by her story.

THE INDEPENDENT WEEKLY

Billed as the World Slam Poetry Champion for 2005, much was expected of Kat Francois. Fortunately she rose to the occasion. *Seven Times Me* brings Francois's autobiography to life: her childhood upbringing as one of seven in an impoverished and abusive but lively home, her first love and the pain of rejection, her struggles with a British establishment as a black woman. What began as a playful, overly conscious monologue transformed into pure entertainment backed with laughter as Francois's personality exploded alongside her words. In the end, the mood was political, taking the overall experience of the performance somewhere unexpected and making the audience feel a part of something much bigger than a joyride. Rhyming poetry and song-like lines slipped in and out so seamlessly at times it was easy to focus on her talent and instinct and forget just how practiced the routine was. Francois's fighting energy is infectious. You leave wanting to be her friend.

Heather Taylor Johnson

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

"Absoloutely fantastic, keep on keeping on."

Jaye London, **Adelaide**

"Thank you Kat, Great"

B.H

"Excellent, very moving."

"Had not booked, for this show, but thoroughly enjoyed the performance,

intense and captivating."

"Kat, you are an inspiration to all races. Your courageous life was a wonderful tale."

Barb Culfrey

"So brave and strong, thank you."

Unknown

"Loved the poetry and the sensitively of the whole show, 5 stars for sure."

Kraig

"Kat, well done, great feat of memory, lovely changes and shifts of tone. Thank you for connecting your circumstances to those of the indigenous peoples."

RICHARD

"Kat thanks for the great energy and the gift of your word, a great end to week in Adelaide."

Unknown