

## Prize Fighter @ La Boite Review

Written by Amanda Starkey for SCENESTR. 10 September 2015



Pacharo Mzembe Images © Dylan Evans

**They say there is a story in each of us that needs to be told to the world.**

'Prize Fighter', written by [Future D. Fidel](#), is a story that will shock you, make you laugh and, at times, cry.

During the late 1990s the Democratic Republic of Congo was at war. This war saw thousands of people killed, raped and clinging to life in refugee camps. Child soldiers roamed in packs on drug-fuelled killing sprees in a country that was in turmoil. It's a dark patch in Africa's history and one not many are aware ever happened.

Through the eyes of Isa (Pacharo Mzembe) the audience see the young fighter preparing for the biggest fight of his life and a chance at fame and fortune. As Isa fights his opponents he also fights the demons in his head.

Through a series of tableaux Isa remembers the brutal murder of his family, his enlistment as a child soldier and his eventual escape to Australia to become a boxer.

The question is, can Isa fight both his demons and opponents to rise above and become the prize fighter he is destined to be?

The semi-autobiographical play is at times confronting and uncomfortably honest – qualities which makes the story set in a boxing arena so brilliant. There is no Hollywood-style sugar

coating and glossing of the truth. It's a story that needs to be told in all its honesty, and Future D. Fidel has done a magnificent job in doing so. Once again, Director Todd MacDonald has brought together an exceptional cast to bring this story to life.

Rather than use a large cast, MacDonald keeps things simple with actors Sophia Emberson-Bain, Margi Brown-Ash, Thuso Lekwape and Gideon Mzembe switching between roles with relative ease and a simple costume change. Representing multiple characters in one performance is no easy task, yet all of the cast do so flawlessly.

'Prize Fighter' is the tale of one man's ability to rise above and beyond his past to become a true champion. It is a gut-wrenching, emotive story that will have you cheering on Isa ringside in the battle of his life. An emotionally honest story that will stay with you long after the gloves are off.