



AUSTRALIA // THEATRE

PRIZE FIGHTER

La Boite Theatre

Take a ringside seat for a boxing match that will leave you reeling.

Future D. Fidel's *Prize Fighter* tells a story similar to his own, of Isa, a Congolese boy who comes to Australia as a refugee escaping a brutal civil war and unspeakable horrors. Settling in Brisbane, he finds a passion and discipline in boxing. With Pacharo Mzembe bringing his own hard-earned boxing skills to the role of Isa, *Prize Fighter* is adrenaline-pumping, full-contact theatre at its best.

On the line is a national title and the promise of fame and riches beyond Isa's wildest dreams. Gearing up for the fight, he soon discovers it's not just his opponents he has to outdo, but the demons from his tortuous past as a boy soldier.

Prize Fighter is the debut play of Fidel, a refugee who was forced to flee the DRC as a child following the civil war in 1996. After eight years in a Tanzanian refugee camp, Fidel and his siblings were granted refugee status in Australia. *Prize Fighter* is inspired by his own story and those of people he has known. Pacharo Mzembe (*The Mountaintop*, *Underbelly*, *Gwen in Purgatory*) performs alongside his brother, Gideon Mzembe.

Both brothers have sporting backgrounds with Pacharo bringing years of boxing training to the stage and Gideon previously being a professional rugby player with the Brisbane Broncos and Manly Sea Eagles.

This is knockout theatre in every sense. From fight choreography so visceral you'll feel every blow to writing

that packs an emotional punch, *Prize Fighter* ducks and weaves with astonishing grace.

Melbourne Festival Artistic Director Jonathan Holloway said: '*Prize Fighter* is an incredible story told in the most thrilling and visceral of ways. Staged as a boxing match right in front of you, this is Fidel's debut play tells a story with elements we know really well, but also that surprise. The work is muscular and casts out all of the reservations people have of the arts, putting theatre into a boxing ring: the smell, the sound, the sight.'

'Prize Fighter is, in every respect, theatre that matters.'
– ABC Arts

'The most perfectly structured, brilliantly produced and best-acted new play...Stunning blow from one-time boy soldier.' - The Australian

'The cast is superb, generating an electrifying physical energy that catches fire in the audience, who cheer throughout, just as they might in a stadium, unless they are rendered absolutely silent by one of its moments of theatrical beauty.' ABC News

'Prize Fighter punches above its weight with the story of a former boy fighter.' – The Sydney Morning Herald.

Presented in association with Darebin Arts Speakeasy.

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Northcote Town Hall

Tue 9 – Sun 14 Oct, Tue 16 – Sat 20 Oct

Tue – Sat 8pm / Sun 6pm

\$25 - \$38

festival.melbourne

Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183

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