

## **Review on Scheherazade by Geraldine Colson, published in the Melbourne Observer 11 Dec 2014**

At the Footscray Community Arts Centre last week, a unique combination of theatrical companies performed a very complex series of interweaving stories underlining the serious theme of violence towards women. The Uprising Theatre (Richmond), Phoenix Youth Theatre (Footscray), North Geelong and Braybrook Youth Theatres and the Footscray Edge Ensemble each wrote their own take on identity and gender and blended their stories into a humorous yet macabre wedding day scenario between "The Man" and Scheherazade.

Different acts took place in separate parts of the overall theatre space, with the audience guided through sets showing great inventiveness and ingenuity. The large cast managed the transitions without losing the intensity of performance. Their enjoyment and commitment shone through and their professionalism was remarkable considering the very young age of most of the performers. The scene within the marquee featuring a mythical story of power and cruelty was particularly affecting.

Much credit should go to the Director, Dave Kelman (North Geelong) and his co-writer, Dave Cuong Nguyen (Director, Uprising and Braybrook) writing in association with Jo Trevathan (Director/Writer Phoenix), and Tariro Mavondo (Director Edge), and also to the Designer, Katherine Branch.

The dance sequence and overall musical accompaniment were excellent with Music Composition and Performance by Callum Watson, Rexson Pelman and Achai Deng and Choreography by Jacinda Richards inspiring the young performers to excel. Costumes by Jane Rafe and Lighting (Matt Fabris) complemented the extremely difficult Production by Lloyd Press and Stage Management by Joel Evans, who managed to transform the props and sets with lightning speed.

Congratulations to the young performers and to the many, many people working cooperatively to fund and assist these fabulous theatre groups to achieve such a high standard and a thoroughly enjoyable performance.