

# Cock & Bull Story packs all the right punches

By  Daniel Derksen

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Macho bravura and male bonding clash head-on in the provocative Cock & Bull Story, which enjoys its second round at the Alexander Upstairs Theatre on 2, 3 and 4 December at 9pm.

This not-to-be-missed battle of brawn versus brains is set in the confines of the locker room of Trav, an up-and-coming boxer on the verge of the big time, who prepares for battle in the fight that could make his lifelong dreams a reality.

Jackie, his friend and coach, psyches him into fitness with grand illusions of a world of endless bodily pleasures and material spoils. Trav's zealous drive for power and glory leads to questionable conduct in the boxing ring, delivering a serious blow to Jackie's conscience and their friendship.



## The fighter and lover in all of us

What's great about Cock & Bull Story is that it is not simply the story of a spirited young boxer who goes for Gold, but, ultimately, is the story about the fighter and lover in all of us. It movingly reflects what happens when we allow our emotions to drown our desires and use brute force to eradicate and contest passion.

What makes Cock & Bull Story an exceptional two-hander is its rich text, crackling with witty banter and loaded with physical and emotional conflict that motivates the actions of two men trying their best to save a friendship that means more than winning the game.



The intimate setting perceptively draws us further into the emotional mindscape of the characters; this intimate arena becomes a war zone between two buddies, whose friendship, world view and lives are challenged to the extreme, forcing them to reveal the dark secrets they hide with fear and trepidation. Originally written, directed and performed by Richard Zajdlc and Richard Crowe in 1985, this staging has fittingly been reworked by the cast and director to suit a South African context.

It resonates well, particularly with the high-energy performances delivered by Rowan Studti and Dylan Skews under direction of Michael Kirch. Studti brilliantly captures the bruised ego of a young warrior, perfectly balancing the emotional turmoil of Trav with physical strength. It's a difficult role to pull off, but one that Studti handles effortlessly, allowing us to fully immerse ourselves in his rage, fury and fervour. Skews is equally mesmerising as Jackie, allowing us to penetrate the veneer of a roguish bully, revealing his sensitive nature.



## Guaranteed to break your heart

The powerful interaction and emotional turmoil between Studti and Skews will leave you breathless and is guaranteed to break your heart. Kirch never imposes himself on the text or performances, amplifying the drama, giving it a raw edge that cuts deep. With *Cock & Bull Story* we are reminded of how difficult it is to bravely embrace our humanness with sincere honesty.

Constantly battling the two sides of our personality that divides our true intentions, *Cock & Bull Story* exposes the strengths and weaknesses that challenge our humanity. It also shows how the fear we mask can become our own worst enemy and what happens is this fear awakens dormant desires. If you are looking for intelligent theatre with punch and vigour, *Cock & Bull Story* is just what you need. It's only one for three exclusive performances, so make sure to book your seats now.

*Book securely online with a credit card for any show at Alexander Upstairs by going to [alexanderbar.co.za/show/cockandbullstory](http://alexanderbar.co.za/show/cockandbullstory). You can also purchase tickets in person at the bar anytime during our regular opening hours (Monday to Saturday, 11am to 1am). For telephone bookings and enquires: +27 (0)21 300 1652. There is an age restriction of PG 16.*

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## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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