

# Theatre message for man in the street

STREET theatre or "guerilla theatre", a commonplace cultural event overseas, made its first appearance in Durban, when speech and drama pupils of Orient Secondary School put on a playlet "in the street."

Mr K.T. Maistry, co-ordinator of the Durban Central Schools' Keep Durban Tidy Campaign stated: "We decided to contribute by way of a photographic exhibition and a playlet, by our first lot of speech and drama pupils."

The exhibition in Lockhat Arcade and the playlet aroused a favourable response from the public.

Local playwright Farouk Hoosain, creative director of the D.A.R.E. Theatre Company, and also a teacher on staff, commented: "Instead of letting the people come to the theatre to see the playlet, we decided to take theatre to the people."

"It's a fun playlet with audience participation, jumping and prancing by the young actors, song and dance, the whole spectrum of theatre magic."

Hoosain's playlet focuses on the need to work in harmony with the physical environment. The setting is a courtroom where a concerned environmentalist is being tried for being too

civic and environment-conscious.

Judge Garbage presides, with Prosecutor Dustbin representing the State, and pro-litter Jury hearing the evidence. Defence counsel Anti-Litter S.A. bravely fights the case for John Cleanman Public.

Starting evidence is revealed by the defence. Whilst John Cleanman

Public has started his reusable milk bottle factory, Judge Garbage has a disposable milk bottle factory and the city councillors have private business interests in a city clean-up company.

Furthermore, the question is raised why more money is spent in the posh middle class areas for cleaning-up yet the poorer working class

areas created by Smelly State remain unclean?

The Vigilante Press reports to a watchful world. An independent commission of inquiry finds John Cleanman Public not guilty and Smelly State changes hands with Good Government and everyone works towards a cleaner environment.

"The play would have been more muted; however, the boys insisted that if they were to do street theatre, they wanted to tell the truth. Many were angry that bins were provided on every pole in West Street yet Indian business men had to pay to install one outside their shops. Furthermore, many felt the slum problems were created by the City Fathers.

## STATEMENT

So, faced with their arguments, the play was written to channel their passion into a socially acceptable forum where they could creatively find expression whilst focusing on the problem of litter," asserted Mr Hoosain.

Yusuf Darsot, who played the defence lawyer, mused: "We felt we were in the pickle when we had to perform the playlet after school assembly, but the onion-on top was when we were requested to do it as street theatre. However, the exercise proved useful and the exposure has certainly boosted our confidence."



Speech and drama pupils of Orient Secondary take a breather during performances of their play focusing on anti-litter held in Durban's Lockat Arcade.