

'KING KONG' IS MOST EXCITING SHOW SEEN IN YEARS

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"KING KONG" is by far the most exciting show I have seen in years. It is not surprising that it has K.O.'d audiences throughout South Africa and captured the imagination of overseas producers. Actors and orchestra well deserved the applause they received last night from an audience which packed the Durban City Hall.

Here are all the ingredients required for good entertainment — music and lyrics that are refreshingly new, drama, pathos and laughter. Set against a background of shanty-town life, the whole becomes a production that has a peculiar flavour of its own and which is always vitally alive.

But the magic which makes this jazz opera comes from the players themselves. They are completely uninhibited.

Every movement, every gesture of this all-African cast is as natural as sleeping or eating; they do not walk, they move to rhythm; when they dance their feet seem scarcely to touch the boards and, when they sing, notes flow from them with effortless ease.

CLEAR AND RICH

And how clear and rich and warm are the voices which, however, would be heard to greater and better effect if something could be done to improve the acoustics in the City Hall.

Time and again last night dialogue was lost in its vastness despite the fact that the stage was wired for microphones. It says a great deal for the power and drama of "King Kong" that this fault did not detract from overall enjoyment.

The two leads, Nathan Mdllele as "King Kong" and Miriam Makeba as Joyce were well chosen — each compliments the other and both have charming voices as well as acting ability.

HUGE CAST

There is not a single misfit in the huge cast which surrounds them. All contribute to a production which begins a new era in South African theatre history and which at last gives the African an opportunity for artistic expression in the right setting. A great deal of thanks must go to the small group of people whose perception made this possible. Thanks too to those who designed the gay costumes and the clever decor.

But why, oh why, even though the cause was just, did that brilliant producer, Mr. Leon Gluckman, last night have to spoil his own show and the la-

dramatic, poignant moments which left the audience in a hushed daze of admiration by a long speech?

Surely there was some other way of getting his points across.

At home, I put on the "King Kong" record to recapture magical moments and went to sleep to the thread of music that starts and ends the story — the Little Kong tune played on a penny whistle.

"R."