



Theatre

A Woman in Waiting ★★★★★

Assembly Rooms

Thembi Mtshali was born in a storm. Not just literally born "on the day the rains came"; she grew up in South Africa, suffering the indignities, injustices and inequities of being a black woman living under

Trials under apartheid... A Woman in Waiting

apartheid. All are related exquisitely in this exemplary, autobiographical one-woman show.

From her earliest years, counting the moons until Christmas when she could see her mother, through the ache of waiting to see her own daughter as she cared for other people's children, to the terror of night raids, *A Woman in Waiting* tells the story of many South African women – and of South Africa itself.

The story's ending is quite apparent – Mtshali is now one of South Africa's most celebrated artists – and as a result the piece suffers slightly from the problem of sustaining tension. But the relish with which the story of her life is told – from the undulating rhythms that permeate the piece; the themes of heritage, time and belonging that underpin it; and the sheer beauty of the language, which echoes around the simplest, sparest of sets – is exhilarating, moving and, above all, life-affirming.

Garath McLean

Till August 28. Box office: 0131-220 2420.