



Just a sweet transvestite

The Rocky Horror Show moves up north this month. **Brendan van Rhyn**, the former flight attendant who plays the inimitable Dr Frank-N-Furter, chats to **Eugene Yiga** about doing the time warp over and over again.

Eugene Yiga: This is the second time you've played the role of mad scientist Frank-N-Furter. What drew you to the character (and the show) in the first place?

Brendan van Rhyn: Frank is probably the most sought-after male role in musical theatre. I wasn't about to let go of the opportunity to strut my stuff in six-inch heels and transform myself with all the make-up. *The Rocky Horror Show* is unlike any other musical out there, with many attractive reasons why one would die to be part of it. Forty years on it is still drawing the crowds and this current Fugard Theatre production will undoubtedly be remembered as one, if not the best, the world has ever seen.

EY: And how did you balance the need to stay true to Tim Curry's original Dr Frank-N-Furter, while still making the iconic role your own?

BvR: Look, Tim Curry's shoes are hard to fill, but never did I want to wear his. I had my own pair and I was going to fill them *my way*. I never wanted to be known as a clone or to be accused of copying this great actor. Brendan was going to add his bit of magic in the best or only way he knew. It is the most wonderful compliment when people say that I have made it my own. I'd like to think I have my own stamp of approval.

EY: You've performed the current production for a year and a half, but you are still going strong. How do you keep up the stamina?

BvR: By being responsible. This is a huge role which demands physical and vocal stamina. I eat, sleep and drink *Rocky Horror*. There isn't much time for anything else – no going out after the show or killing myself before an evening's performance.

Healthy living and exercise are key to ensuring that I stay at the top of my game. No man was meant to walk in heels, so my weekly massage is a bonus!

EY: And how does this role compare with your other memorable roles on stage?

BvR: I don't really want to compare as each role holds a special uniqueness, but I can say that between Frank and Cathy Specific (who enjoyed a two-and-a-half-year residency as the leading lady at Madame Zingara), my head space is rather occupied. Now and then the two give way for Brendan to come out and play! ■

The Rocky Horror Show is at Cape Town's Fugard Theatre until Sunday 2 November and Pieter Toerien's Main Theatre at Montecasino in Johannesburg from 14 November to 1 February 2015.