

# Blue Iris



By [Duan Wanty](#)

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We celebrate Athol's 80th birthday this year and, to add to the celebration, he has blessed us with a new piece of work that stays true to his legacy. It is exciting to see him adding work to his already reputable canon.



The Blue Iris is premiering at the National Arts Festival and I could not have been more satisfied with this. Everybody gets a chance to be part of the first group of people who will see a theatre piece that is definitely going to stand the test of time, as it will, because it is, after all, Fugard.

We are transported to the Karoo to the remains of a burnt-down farmhouse of two clearly defined, realistic characters with heart-warming stories. I get all tingly and childishly excited with knowing that I am about to be told a story that will pull at my heartstrings and, once again, make me experience the true soul of good theatre. The human element is particularly precise in this piece; you get to discover and walk a mile with the characters. Robert Hannay, played by Graham Weir, and Rieta Plaasman, played by Lee-Ann van Rooi, both share their deep secrets with each other and try to find peace with what they have lost, and try to grasp at what they can still gain when it feels like everything has burned to the ground.

## A heartfelt and warm story

Memories are an integral part of our journey on Earth and, whether we like it or not, they have great defining power on what was and what will be. This piece captures that beautifully. In today's world, we rarely get the chance to see people for who they truly are and this piece rekindles the idea of trying to connect more with people with whom we share our lives. Robert's character justifies that in his idea to get his late wife's ghost to rest, feeling the regret that he might not have done enough to understand her for who she really was.

It has to be said that simpler is sometimes better. I enjoyed this piece for what it was - a heartfelt and warm story about real people. It is good old traditional theatre that we don't see too often anymore. Sometimes there is no need for edgy effects, magical lighting and monstrous sets, not that this piece lacks any of that, but a well-written and directed play can sometimes move mountains, because, in the end, it's about telling a story to the audience.

This piece is a timeless classic; we will enjoy it for many years to come. If you like traditional theatre you are in for a treat, if you are not, you can't come to the festival and not watch the premiere of one of our most celebrated playwrights.

*For more on the the Grahamstown National Arts Festival (GNAF) go to [www.nafest.co.za](http://www.nafest.co.za).*

## ABOUT DUAN WANTY

Duan is an actor by profession, writer by passion and a website developer by trade. He currently resides in Johannesburg, loves the chase, the opportunities and the people. He is opinionated, positive and loves a good debate. You can connect with him on Twitter, @duwanty and you can also check out [www.onlinenerds.com](http://www.onlinenerds.com) while you are at it. View my profile and articles...

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