

Rob van Vuuren and the Three Little Pigs

 By [Eugene Yiga](#)

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Who's afraid of the big bad wolf? Certainly not Rob van Vuuren, co-writer and co-star of *Three Little Pigs*, a production described as a cross between *Animal Farm* and *Reservoir Dogs*. He chats to us about the concept, preparing for his role, and what's next for this gritty play.

Eugene Yiga: What is *Three Little Pigs* about?

Rob van Vuuren: It's a collaborative adaptation of the classic children's tale as a dark political comedy-thriller. It's a crime drama inspired by shows like *The Wire* and *The Sopranos*, but with a bit of an Orwellian twist, a dollop of hilarious physical comedy, and sprinkle of terror, which acts as brutal autopsy of the level of corruption in government and law enforcement in South Africa today.

EY: How did you guys come up with the idea?

RVV: Initially we just wanted to work together and weren't really bothered with what the subject matter would be. We had decided that we would premiere the show at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown and when those forms needed to be in we realised that we had to commit to something. Adaptation of an existing story seemed like a nice way of buying ourselves more time and the decision to use a children's story also meant we could really subvert, twist, and change it to suit our needs when we got down to the nitty gritty of theatre making. *The Three Little Pigs* just made sense and so it began.

The idea of pigs as policemen was an obvious jump and as soon as we started dealing with the material as a murder drama everything else started to fall into place. In the original versions of the fairy tale before Disney Disneyfied it, the first two brothers did not manage to escape and skip off to the clever little pig's house; those early versions are way more gruesome. As the idea of dealing with the show as a kind of dark comedic crime horror took hold, we became aware of how well the brutal trinity of South African crime, corruption, and law enforcement fitted into our world. The rest, as they say, is history.



EY: Could you tell us more about the references to South African politics and current affairs?

RVV: We got our hands on a copy of Killing Kebble by Mandy Weiner and Lolly Jackson: When Fantasy Becomes Reality by Karyn Maughan, Peter Piegler, and Sean Newman during the process and we devoured anything in the news concerning, in particular, Richard Mdluli and the Cato Manor Death Squads, and, in general, anything about corruption within the police. As a result, our play is peppered with references to actual events in our truly bizarre criminal underworld. Our Big Bad Wolf, for instance, is an amalgam of strip club owner Lolly Jackson and Czech crime kingpin, and Brett Kebble's self-confessed killers even make an appearance as Hyena bouncers at Wolfie's strip club. But that's only the tip of a tail that has a helluva twist.

Mad characters

EY: Could you tell us about your role?

RVV: I play a number of different roles: I am the last surviving little pig who is trying to avenge his brothers' deaths without being killed in the process. I also play a rabbit who is a grizzled gym owner called Bunsy as well a cat who is a super-sexy stripper named Sparkles. There are few more, but I don't want to give it all away. You'll have to come to the theatre to see the rest of the madness.

EY: Most people know you as a comedian. How do you prepare for a role as different as this?

RVV: I was doing this kind of stuff way before I became a comedian and where I'm most experienced as a performer so I'm loving it.

EY: If you could get the audience to come away from the production thinking or feeling just one thing, what would it be?

RVV: First and foremost they must have been thoroughly entertained; thereafter I hope that they come away with a radical new perspective on the moral dilemma that South Africa finds itself in at the moment. Mostly, however, I just want people to come out of the theatre feeling like they were transported to an extraordinary world full of intrigue and wonder (not too dissimilar to our own).

EY: What's next for the production?

RVV: 2013 is the Year of the Three Pigs. We finish our run at the Baxter in Cape Town on 9 February and then we hit The Fringe World Festival in Perth, and then it gets really crazy: Stellenbosch, Oudtshoorn, Grahamstown, Bloemfontein, New York, Amsterdam, London, Dublin, and Potchefstroom. No kidding. And that's just the start.

Three Little Pigs (PG13), written by Rob van Vuuren together with director Tara Notcutt and co-stars James Cairns and Albert Pretorius, is at Cape Town's [Baxter Theatre](#) until 9 February. Tickets are available from [Computicket](#).

ABOUT EUGENE YIGA

Eugene graduated from the University of Cape Town with distinctions in financial accounting and classical piano. He then spent over two-and-a-half years working in branding and communications at two of South Africa's top market research companies. Eugene also spent over three-and-a-half years at an eLearning start-up, all while building his business as an award-winning writer. Visit www.eugeneyiga.com, follow @eugeneyiga on Twitter, or email hello@eugeneyiga.com to say, um, hello. View my profile and articles...

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