

At Keens-Douglas tent...

Audience enjoys a good talking-to

MICHELLE LOUBON

A WINDING walk through Toco, brief stops at Trinidad's hospitals, a trek through the city, an impromptu show in Boboville and a visit to the 1920s and 1930s featured prominently among the rib-tickling fare at Paul Keens Douglas Talk Tent 2005.

But despite the excellent entertainment, there were more empty chairs than patrons at Queen's Hall, Port-of-Spain, on Thursday night.

The poor turnout prompted the usually upbeat Keens Douglas to complain about the lack of support.

"It is a pity that such a good show does not get the full support of the people who should take it to the schools. This is a good, clean show for the children. The sponsorship is sorely lacking," he said.

Luckily, the poor turnout didn't dampen the spirits of the entertainers.

Against the simple backdrop of colourful batik and a bunting of flags sprouting from two large vases, a slew of performers used the beauty of the spoken word to entertain, inform, educate and, in some cases, criticise and compliment.

Kuch Kuch Hota Hai actress Farida Chapman pushed on stage in a wheelchair, rose to her feet and launched into a humorous yet scathing attack on the health institutions.

An excerpt from

Paul Keens-Douglas' Sweet T&T

*There's the stately Banyan trees
The cool and gentle breeze
The Scarlet Ibis flying by with ease*

*There's the magic of the dawn
When a tropic day is born
The distant sound of surf and tumbling sea*

*There's the many different faces
Of many different races
Of many people mixed harmoniously*

That's sweet T&T, my sweet T&T

*There's the way we handle strife
The joys and pains of life
And all those things that go
To make one free*

*There's the pride we take in doing
The simple act of caring
That tells me this is where I ought to be*

That's sweet T&T, my sweet T&T

Your sweet T&T

She said:

"You ever went to San Fernando hospital?

Well, chile I went to see my cousin Naresh

I thought I was in Bangladesh

If you see them ward

Bed chook up here/ Bed chook up there

Bed in corridor

Ah man tell me

Just now patients will have to sleep on the floor.

Baby dead in your belly

But they say is not emergency.

They always sending you to some expensive clinic

But is them self who own it."

Her well-received performance was followed by the Talk Tent's artistic director Paul Keens Douglas.

In a patriotic vein, he reminded the audience about the redeeming qualities of Sweet T&T.

He noted in Sweet T&T, M&M did not mean chocolates but marketing and mamaguy, since these were the days when: "you have to take a mortgage to go to a fete. They offering free this, free that. Is how much food and drink you could give somebody? Ah here at some of the fetes, they were even offering free prostate examinations."

Far from the madding crowd at the fetes, Keens Douglas said he went in search of a house and ended up doing a show in Boboville.

In short, Boboville is a place where even God don't know where it is and where Tarzan and Jane afraid to go. And while they were sorting out things backstage, a little girl decided to do a recitation. Rat-a-tat, and she buss. The audience start to boo. She mother come cuss the audience and take way her daughter.

Next, a character by the name of Silky Sam started to sing Sweet Chariot. They found when he went down, he stayed down too long on the note.

The next thing is "he knee cap buss." It was Keens Douglas still at his funniest best.

Following on Douglas' heels was Short Pants, decked in long



Actress **WENDY BREWSTER** delivers a thought-provoking piece on abortion.

PHOTOS: ANTHONY HARRIS

trousers, he appealed to the authorities to Save The City, where “vagrants/junkies were fighting with stray dogs for something to eat and where taxis make an art of double parking.”

He asked: “How could we show progress?

If the capital is in a mess?”

The calypsonian also paid special tribute to deceased Lord Blakie with Ramgoat Baptism.

Then, Short Pants, the proud father of TUCO’s political commentary winner Heather MacIntosh, recited his daughter’s winning composition Keith’s Technique.

Amid the hurling of saucers and teacups, Mc Intosh said he did not discriminate and embraced all genres.

He recited soca artiste Iwer’s Ease D Tension. Then, he strode offstage to a lusty round of applause.

Other members of the cast included Pierrot Grenade Felix Edinborough, storyteller Miguel Browne and MC David Bereaux, who sang a medley of vintage kaiso.



DAVID BERAUX takes the spotlight.