

national arts festival makhanda SPOTLIGHT

27 JUNE
— TO —
07 JULY
TWENTY NINETEEN



Image from: Birthing Nureyev – leftfoot productions



How to plan for AMAZ!NG

We look forward to welcoming you to 11 Amazing Days of the richest and most entertaining arts and culture experience SA can offer.

Here are a few tips to make sure you get the most out of your visit:

WHAT TO SEE

Choose the Browse function on the Festival website www.nationalartsfestival.co.za to see what's on offer every day of the Festival.

With so much in the line-up, it can feel a bit overwhelming, so we suggest you book a couple of shows, leaving time between performances to take in the visual art exhibitions, the crafts at the Village Green or a bite to eat.

First performances are generally at 10am, ending with late, late-night jazz at the Standard Bank Jazz Café.

Prefer to browse the printed version of the programme? See the sidebar for information on where to get it.

BOOK TICKETS

Once you've decided what to see, get your tickets online on the website, or from the Box Office. Call them on 0860-002-004 or e-mail boxoffice@nationalartsfestival.co.za.

WHERE TO STAY

So many options in Makhandla – from upmarket guesthouses to camping on a field.

All accommodation is operated independently of the Festival, so we suggest you contact Makana Tourism (www.grahamstown.co.za) or the Grahamstown Accommodation Guild (www.grahamstown-accommodation.co.za).

GETTING AROUND

There is a free Festival Shuttle bus that travels between the Monument, Rhodes University Theatre and the Village Green throughout the day, and well into the night.

There are also affordable call-a-cab services, tuk-tuk rides, taxis, the occasional (SPCA-sanctioned) donkey cart ride, bike hire and, of course, your own two feet!



what's the difference

between the Main & Fringe?

The Main Programme comprises work contracted by the National Arts Festival.

Artists are required to submit their exciting ideas, with our Artistic Committee then selecting works.

In between the Main and the Fringe is the Arena programme, which showcases award-winning shows from previous Festivals or international Fringe platforms.

The Fringe is the biggest slice of the Festival cake. It's completely open access (there's no selection) and ticket income from Fringe shows goes directly to the performers. But Fringe artists don't get any Festival funding so need ticket sales to cover their costs.

FESTIVAL VIBE: The Village Green is a great place to explore and be entertained
Picture: JAN POTGIETER

We've got this!

A message from Festival CEO Tony Lankester

As we gear up for the 2019 Festival, excitement levels are high and we're looking forward to welcoming you to Makhandla in June.

Many who live in the Eastern Cape know we are faced with many challenges relating to water supply in our city, both related to a severe drought in the region and to a largely inadequate and poorly-maintained municipal infrastructure.

But our team has been working incredibly hard on plans and innovations to ensure all visitors to the Festival are both safe and comfortable, and are not a burden on the limited supply.

My message during this time is simple – we've got this.

Some of the measures we have

put in place include:

- A borehole at the Monument, sunk in partnership with the Gift of the Givers, that provides 100,000 litres a day.
- Drinking stations at all main venues.
- Partnerships with local guesthouses and Rhodes' residences to ensure there is enough water for our visitors' basic needs, and to drink.

● Increasing water capacity in the townships so that residents do not experience a shortfall.

Makhandla has some big challenges ahead of it and we're glad that issues of service delivery are getting the attention they deserve.

Meanwhile, we're seeing an amazing "all hands on deck" attitude from our 70,000 residents as we prepare for the Festival influx.



features

- **browse shows**
deciding what to see? browse by genre, date, venue and find your next moment of amazing!
- **book tickets**
beat the queue! book tickets on the app and collect them from our self-service terminals.
- **stay on top of things**
find out about the award winners first; get the latest news and reviews.
- **be organised**
whether you have booked your tickets online or on the app, see them all in one place.
- **find your way**
see our handy venue maps or track the progress of our hoppers to get around town easily.

follow us on:

- facebook.com/nationalartsfestival
- twitter.com/artsfestival
- instagram.com/nationalartsfestival
- www.nationalartsfestival.co.za

festPROGRAMME

‘Artists are our eyes in the dark and ears on the ground’

The 2019 programme grapples with and reflects what is happening in SA today.

My office window shows me an enviable view of Makhan-da, a city I get to work in every day.

I'm filled with gratitude to the citizens of this city for allowing a festival of this magnitude to invade their homes and lives for 11 days every year, and to the people of the greater Eastern Cape for embracing this amazing event as part of their heritage.

While we can't reciprocate

A word from: NOBESUTHU RAYI



CANNOT WAIT: Acting Executive Producer Nobesuthu Rayi

cate all the love and appreciation they show us, their unwavering support reassures us that we have a whole village behind us.

The 2019 programme induces emotions beyond words. It is a beautifully layered, variably textured and differently themed product of collaboration with artists.

One could be easily overwhelmed by being spoilt for choice on what to see and what to miss out on.

Artists capture themes

that creep up in our dinner discussions and elsewhere.

The common message for me is *Ndimameleni* (listen to me) and *Ndiboneni* (see me), a clarion call by our artists as social commentators, taking up the historical role of *iimbongi* (praise signers), who are the eyes in the dark and ears on the ground for *iinkosi neekumkani* (chiefs) to understand what the masses are saying.

In our productions there

will be dancing, crying, singing, ululating, moaning and mourning, all the time reflecting.

I cannot wait to welcome all our artists, media, dignitaries and Festival patrons to Makhanda to experience *ubumnandi* and engage on issues that an exhibition or production, lecture or comedy, triggers in our minds. Our Festival patrons, young and old, are in for an AMAZING treat.

WHY WE LOVE THE FESTIVAL

TABISA BOOI

● Foundation Phase teacher, Rhodes student and mother, Makhanda

Why do you come to the National Arts Festival?

I have never missed a single NAF as I was born and raised in Makhanda. Even when I relocated to East

London, I was always in Makhanda during Festival time. I initially enjoyed the shopping and the spirit of carnival that filled the town. As I grew older I was introduced to the productions. Being a lover of arts, current affairs and the combination thereof, I always thoroughly enjoy what's on offer.

What are your favourite things to do while in Makhanda?

I try to see as many productions as possible and I never miss shopping at the Village Green.

What are you looking forward to at this year's Festival?

I am looking forward to acts such as Mafikizolo, Freshlyground and Ladysmith Black Mambazo. And, of course, to Rhodes University Drama Department's production, *SALT*.

PAUL BANNISTER

● Management consultant and NAF board member, Cape Town

Why do you come to the National Arts Festival?

It is my annual 'fill' of arts and culture – all in one deliciously compact place. We've been to about 20

Festivals, beginning

We asked a few of our favourite NAF regulars what keeps bringing them back to this annual feast of arts and culture

ning in the early 1990s.

Any Festival tips?

Walk! Find a good place to stay that is close to High Street and most of the venues. Never miss an issue of *Spotlight*, the Festival newspaper. Find a late-night music venue that is consistently good.

What are you looking forward to?

I always look out for the Standard Bank Young Artists and Gemma Kahn.

RYAN PILLAY

● Sociologist, Port Elizabeth

Why do you come to the National Arts Festival?

I get to see incredible talent, I see life come alive through various art forms – theatre, dance, performance art, visual art, comedy. I see life portrayed in many different forms. As a sociologist, I get to see how people are dealing with social issues. You get to delve deeper, both historically and into current topics. It's a form of escapism – my time to press pause.

What are your favourite things to do in Makhanda?

Port Elizabeth is close, so we usually do two trips and take in both weekends. Over the first, we usually catch international productions and the second weekend is all about jazz. I download the PDF and take my time working out what to see before booking tickets on the website. I recommend using the NAF app, which has a map that helps finding your way around.

What are you looking forward to?

Amy Jephtha's *All Who Pass*, as it talks to current issues in South Africa; works by the other Standard Bank Young Artists, especially Kitty Phetla and Nduduzo Makhathini's *Going Back to the Truth of Space*; *G7: Okwe-Bokhwe*.

NOKUPHUMLA BAZI

● Mother to a seven-month-old, East London

Why do you come to the National Arts Festival?

I have been to three Festivals. I come for the variety of shows and entertainment and for the 'vibe' that takes over Makhanda the during Festival time. And, I come because we're all accommodated – from my 75-year-old mom to my 8-year-old nephew.

What are your favourite things to do while in Makhanda?

Walking around is the best as you get to be the part of the culture. I also love watching one or two Ovation award-winning shows. Street or outdoor shows are also the best because the kids aren't restricted to a dark room, where they have to be still and quiet.

What are you looking forward to?

I'm looking forward to the outing with the family, it's fulfilling to see them excited about going to the Festival. I'm going to let the Festival surprise me with its offerings. I know they'll be one or two shows I'll certainly enjoy.

JEAN VAN ELDEN

● Drama teacher at Eden College, Durban

Why do you come to the National Arts Festival?

I have been coming to the Festival since 1995 and have only missed two Festivals along the way.

I have been bringing groups of school-going students to perform on the Fringe. I am a drama teacher and enjoy watching our students as they absorb the creative energy. For myself, I use the Festival as an inspirational refuelling session.

Any Festival tips?

I love popping in to the Cathedral for a quiet moment. Have a look for the three wooden carved mice and the Cross of Nails. The Observatory tour is fascinating. Kids love it. The Victorian Camera Obscura is worth a visit.

What are you looking forward to?

I am looking forward to seeing *DEURNis*. A one-on-one experience with one actor and one audience member. It sounds really daunting but I can't miss it.

JOHN LOMBARDO

● Founder and executive director of ArtWorks for Youth, Port Elizabeth

Why do you come to the National Arts Festival?

I have been to the Festival every year since 2011. I attend because there are so few opportunities to see performing arts in PE ... I also like to bring my students, who see

very little art of any kind.

What are your favourite things to do while in Makhanda? Any Festival tips?

I love the crafts and individual and group shows. I am pleased with how much student work is on view and hope there will be even more in the future.

What are you looking forward to at this year's Festival?

I am looking forward to seeing if there is anything new and I have heard some good things about this year's theatre.

LUCKY DLAMINI

● WWF Communications Intern, Joburg/Makhanda

Why do you come to the National Arts Festival?

This year will be my fourth year at the Festival. It's a vibrant time for me to enjoy myself as a young person. A big motivator has always been the overwhelming amount of shows that one can choose from.

What are your favourite things to do while in Makhanda?

I enjoy experimenting with the different cuisines – from the Village Green to nights at the Long Table. Consider walking around town – this will give you a much more complete Festival experience.

What are you looking forward to at this year's Festival??

I'm particularly looking forward to *The Very Big Comedy Show 7*, featuring the likes of Khanyisa Bunu and Tats Nkonzo (my favourites), the iconic Ladysmith Black Mambazo (it will be a dream come true) and my old-time favourite, Freshlyground!

Mining the past

to explore new territories of the present

Entanglements of lingering traumas and spiritual excavations meet with wilful grit to undo, celebrate and innovate, writes **Kgomotso Moncho-Maripane**

As art does not function outside of humanity, but with it, artists are more than social commentators.

They work to explore, understand and reflect the human condition.

The themes that emerge from the Main Programme of the National Arts Festival are often indicators of personal and the political status quos.

Selected works reveal certain societal “zeitgeists” that are then captured and reflected on the National Arts Festival platforms.

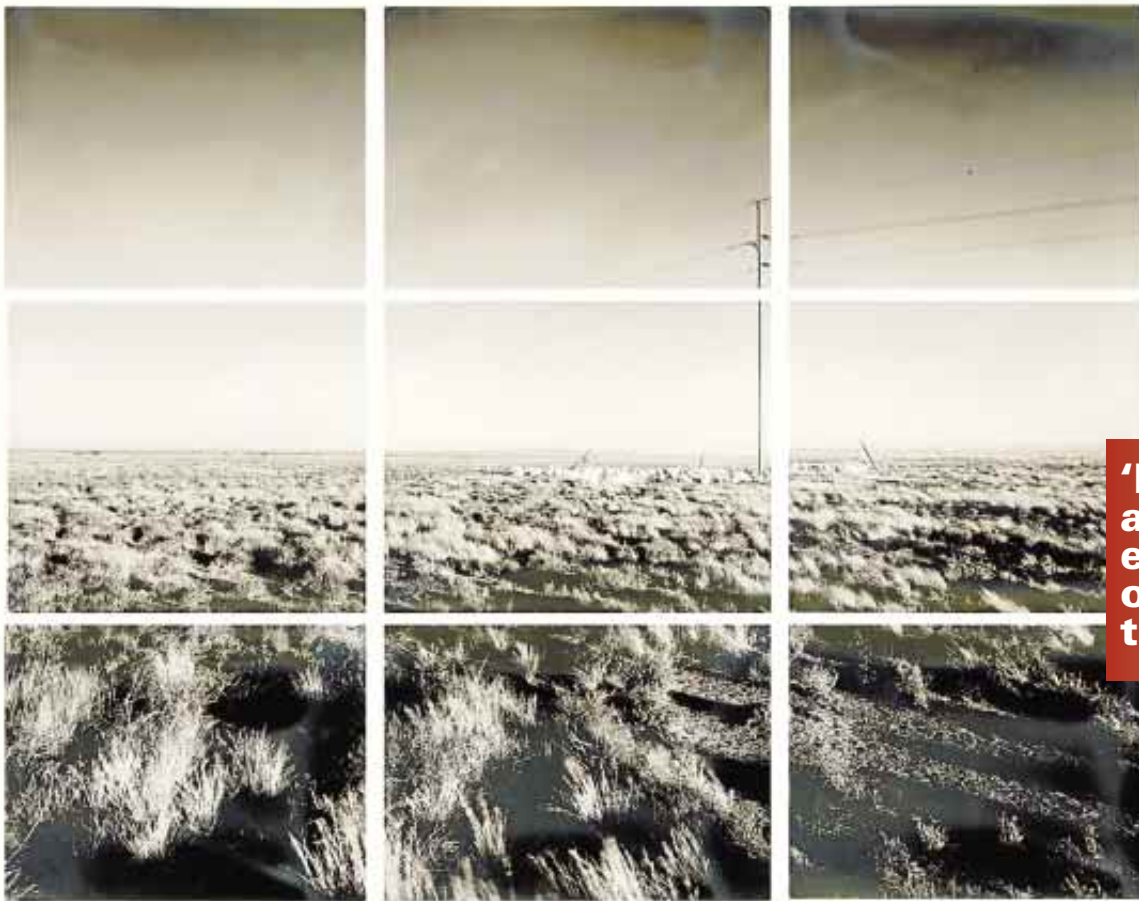
A significant part of the Main Programme is curated by the Festival’s Artistic Committee, chaired by Brett Bailey, which selects high-calibre work from interesting and established artists.

The Festival’s Acting Executive Producer, Nobesuthu Rayi, who constantly reviews all submissions, says there is an evolution of theatre and performance under way, with the bending of genres.

“The lines between performance art, public art, theatre and visual art are starting to get blurred as artists redefine their craft and resist conforming to convention.”

The reinvention of performance and exploration of alternative spaces is exemplified by Gavin Krastin’s *Arcade*, a collection of live art performances by interdisciplinary artists in a maze-like space that agitates the content and forms of performance.

It can also be seen in the *DEURNis*



FRACKING WAR: Luke Kaplan’s ‘Hinterland’ highlights current environmental issues

project of fresh immersive theatre, made up of solo, site-specific plays for a single audience member at a time.

Thematically, conversations on colonialism and decolonisation resound as Africans negotiate equalising identities and reclaim their truth from historical distortions.

As Zimbabwean author and filmmaker Tsitsi Dangarembga asserts,

there is no way for Africa to return to a pre-colonial state. Instead, she says, Africans celebrating their daily lives and themselves in literature and art is a decolonising practice.

And, as the works on the Main Programme attest, this is what some artists are doing now.

In *Spirit Child*, Nigerian dancer-choreographer Qudus Onikeku discusses conflicting localities and pro-

poses the idea of alternative realities. With Themba Mbuli’s *The Boat* and Luyanda Sidiya’s *Amawethu*, the dancer-choreographers aim to restore lost heritages, customs and the spiritual wealth of their ancestors and Africans in the diaspora.

Land, with its issues of belonging, identity and intergenerational inheritances, is a central issue in the decolonisation conversation in SA.

Part of “getting the land back” is Africans “getting themselves back”, and art articulates this profoundly.

In Standard Bank Young Artist for Theatre Amy Jephta’s *All Who Pass*, the devastating effects of the forced removals of District Six illuminate how ghosts of the past haunt the present.

The intercontinental work *Red Soil/Brown Soil*, which brings together theatre makers from Norway, Sweden and SA, examines the relationship we have to the land we walk on.

‘It’s an evolution of theatre’

Performance artist Thania Petersen’s *Between Land and a Raised Foot* explores “the healing potential of walking, as bodies, minds and spirits connect with land”.

Luke Kaplan’s *Hinterland* responds to the environmental threat posed by extractive mining in the Karoo.

Magnet Theatre’s *G7: Okwe-Bokhwe* reviews SA’s difficult past and the considered failed attempt at reconciliation.

The continuing plight of women due to displacement because of migration, war, trafficking and rape make up the profound contexts of dancer-choreographer Bailey Snyman’s *Gas Lands*, as well as Standard Bank Young Artist for Visual Art Gabrielle Goliath’s *This Song is For...*

five shows NOT TO MISS

Acting Executive Producer Nobesuthu Rayi shares her personal must-see shows

“What a mammoth task I have been given to choose my top five from such a well put-together programme for 2019 that gives one space to experience it all in 11 Days of Amazing,” says Nobesuthu Rayi, the Festival’s associate producer.

1. INGOMA KA TIYO SOGA

I look forward to experiencing an exhibition by visual artist Skhumbuzo Makandula with singer-songwriter Mthwakazi, who will be showcasing the work of Tiyo Soga, the first black South African to be ordained.

2. AMAWETHU

This is one production that defines

many beings in SA, where one’s mere existence is considered by some as a curse.

Amawethu tells a human story that seeks to rectify or, rather, to reclaim who we are as a people from our culture and customs – and to correct the distortions that pre-date the African slave trade and led us to believe African spirituality had a demonic, barbaric and godless origin.

3. WANDERER

Hannah Ma, a German-Chinese choreographer, will treat us to a contemporary dance production that is about the search for home and the longing for rituals that transcend cultural boundaries.

This reminds me of how we tend to forget in our search of how different we are that “the blood that runs is our veins in red”.

4. CELEBRATING AFRICAN SONG

The Festival is rooted in the Eastern Cape, so what a way to celebrate its own by having baritone Dumza Maswana paying homage to two of our songbirds, Mama Madosini and Mama Nofinishi Dywili.

5. DRAKENSBERG BOYS CHOIR

This is one of those feel-good shows that I know will remind me of how beautiful our country could be if only we would allow it to be so. I cannot wait to be taken on a melodic, harmonious journey by these young people paying tribute to many of our South African musicians.



VISUAL TREAT: ‘Ingoma Ka Tiyo Soga’ with visual artist Skhumbuzo Makandula

CARRYING THE POWER OF THE PERSONAL

Melvyn Minnaar

Award-winning visual artist **Berni Searle** is the 2019 Featured Artist

The two screens on which *Snow White* was projected as a diptych, had a stitch-in-time discord that enhanced the edginess and theatricality of the ritual performance on view.

In the video, the performer, enveloped in darkness, is seen from the front and vertically from above as a white veil of fine flour sifts from above onto the dark nude female body.

After a shower of water rinses the white, the figure starts to move and mix the flour into dough.

Crowds attending the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001 were transfixed by this dramatic and beautiful conceptual piece.

At once rooted in southern Africa, issues of gender, race and history were reaching out to the international audience at the 17th palazzo.

Part of a group show, *Authentic/Ex-centric: Conceptualism in Contemporary African Art*, the artwork was riveting, and the performer was the artist herself.

It was Berni Searle's first video artwork – a medium that she would own in an extraordinary conceptual manner.

It brought her world-wide acknowledgment and has influenced several other artists who staked their own claims in the medium. If 2001 was the year Searle entered the global art world with a



mesmerising presence, her ground-work had been solid.

A dedicated, inventive student at Cape Town's Michaelis School of Art, where she has been director for the past two years, she initially worked in sculpture, taught high school art, and obtained a MFA from UCT in 1995 with the thesis, *Illusions of Identity Notions of Nationhood*.

Searle, who turns 55 on the last day of the Festival, has since made many video pieces, often accompanied by exquisite prints.

She remains the anonymous performer in many, yet the often striking visual message carries all the power of the personal.

Visitors to the Festival will not only get to see *Snow White* (fittingly

at the Rhodes School of Fine Art), but also get a solid overview of Searle's remarkable career.

What makes it particularly interesting is that the videos will be shown in diverse public spaces.

Her deeply-moving *Interlaced* (2011), filmed in Bruges, Belgium, for example, will exude all the ambience of its mystery shown in the

St Michael and St George's Cathedral. The work was originally commissioned for a retrospective by the Cultuurcentrum Brugge and two other European museums.

In a new work commissioned for Makhandla, *A Place in the Sun* (Gallery in the Round, Monument), a dilapidated swimming pool becomes a source of contemplation about those very issues that have held her attention since the start of her illustrious career.



COMMENTARY: Some of the works on display in the Visual Art line-up, from left, *Fixed Flux* by Hemali Koosal, *Congo Fever* by Norman Catherine and *Social Reflections*

SOAK UP AN ART WALKABOUT

Guided tours with artists and curators give visitors deeper insight into the works on display

Visitors can take a guided tour through the art exhibitions and installations at the National Arts Festival in the company of the artists, curators or visual art experts on an hour-long Art Walkabout.

The 2019 Visual Art line-up is stronger than ever, with Berni Searle as Featured Artist, the first time such an accolade has been given to a visual artist. Searle is presenting six installations at the Festival, four

of which include art walkabouts: *A Place in the Sun*, *Snow White*, *Black Smoke Rising*, and *Spirit of '76*.

Standard Bank Young Artist for Visual Art Gabrielle Goliath presents her installation *This Song is For ...* comprising six dedication songs selected by survivors of rape, and re-performed by collaborating, women-led musical ensembles.

Award-winning artist and composer Mira Calix, who is based in the

UK, bases her installation *In Situ* on two audiovisual artworks that use data to inform musical composition in situ, while Thania Petersen's *Between Land and a Raised Foot* "explores the healing potential of walking, as bodies, minds and spirits connect with land".

Land is at the heart of artist and photographer Luke Kaplan's *Hinterland*, which is, in part, a response to the environmental threat posed by

extractive mining in the Karoo.

In *Social Reflections*, Eastern Cape artists respond to historical, political and social pressures in local communities. Opera singer Mthwakazi (Bongiwe Lusizi), who hails from Mdantsane, collaborates with Sikhumbuzo Makandula, a visual and performance artist based in Cape Town, to pay tribute to pioneering composer and evangelist Tiyo Soga (1829-1871) in *Ingoma ka*

Tiyo Soga. The best of South African art will be shown in *Continuing Conversations*, consisting of about 40 paintings from the collections of the University of Johannesburg and MTN. *Five Photographers: A Tribute to David Goldblatt*, takes a look at a new generation of African photographers, personally selected by the world-renowned photographer.

● Tickets for Art Walkabouts must be reserved in advance. Cost is R50.

MEET SA'S BRIGHTEST

Stars



NEW PIONEERS: Standard Bank Young Artist Awards recipients, from left, Mandla Mlangeni (jazz), Megan-Geoffrey Prins (music), Gabrielle Goliath (visual art), Amy Jephta (theatre) and Kitty Phetla (dance)

Arts innovators on the cusp of greatness make creative bonfire

Since their inception in 1981, the Standard Bank Young Artist Awards have come to be regarded as the ultimate accolade for young South African arts innovators on the cusp of greatness. This year's exceptional winners prove the creative fire that fuelled their predecessors in the 1980s, burns just as fiercely in the current generation of arts pioneers.

AMY JEPHTA – THEATRE

Amy Jephta is a playwright who has also built a reputation as a filmmaker, activist and academic. A champion of theatre by and for women, she has been a driving force in local and global initiatives promoting opportunities for female playwrights.

"I've been waiting a long time to stage *All Who Pass*, a work I wrote in 2013 and the Festival is an ideal opportunity and platform for the play.

"I chose to set it in District Six as it is close to my family's history, to my own history, and of course to my identity as a South African.

"It's a painful wound and one that has festered year after year. The pace of restitution for families who were dispossessed from that land, is still alarmingly slow.

"I'm always afraid that the stories of those former residents will be forgotten; subsumed by the passing of time, by the news cycle, by the next political emergency.



"I wanted this play to be a reminder. The Land Areas Act did not just change single families, but affected generations afterwards."

KITTY PHETLA – DANCE

Kitty Phetla is a senior soloist and choreographer at Joburg Ballet. She has toured and performed extensively on stages across the globe.

One of her most noteworthy recent performances was her Queen Modjadji-inspired *Rain Dance for Cape Town*, in the then-parched Theewaterskloof Dam.

"I'll be collaborating with (former Young Artist for Jazz) Nduduzo Makhathini on a new piece for the Festival.

"The idea of Standard Bank Young Artist Dance and Music genres crossing floors to collaborate has not been featured before at the Festival, especially not in the classical and jazz forms.

"I have been Nduduzo's fan for a long time and have been wanting to work with him for just as long.

"In *Going Back to the Truth of Space*, we join forces to offer a tribute to the divine lineage of souls,

who occupy, inform and influence the spaces of us as artists.

"We embrace the realm of the ancestors as an evolving space and draw together the existence between dream state and reality through music and dance."

GABRIELLE GOLIATH – VISUAL ART

Gabrielle Goliath is a multidisciplinary artist who is known for negotiating complex social concerns in her work, particularly relating to gender-based and sexual violence.

"In *This Song Is For ...*, I turn to the convention of the dedication song. This is a unique collection of dedication songs, each chosen by a survivor of rape and performed as a newly produced cover-version, in close collaboration with a group of women-led and/or gender-nonconforming ensembles.

"These are songs of personal significance to the survivors – songs that transport them back to a particular time and place, evoke a sensory world of memory and feeling.

"A sonic disruption is introduced at a point within each song; a recurring musical rupture. Presented in

this performed disruption, is an opportunity for listeners to effectively inhabit a contested space of traumatic recall – one in which the de-subjectifying violence of rape and its psychic afterlives becomes painfully entangled with personal and political claims to life, dignity, hope, faith, even joy."

MEGAN-GEOFFREY PRINS – MUSIC

Megan-Geoffrey Prins is a pianist whose prodigious talent was evident early on – he had performed with all South Africa's major orchestras by the age of 14.

Today, he traverses the world as solo performer and chamber musician, often returning home for concerts, teaching engagements and community outreach initiatives.

"In my Festival concert, *Metamorphosis: Reflections at the Piano*, I set out to explore the changing landscapes of Western classical music.

"I'll be playing a commissioned work by Stellenbosch-based composer Arthur Feder, Bussoni's transcription of JS Bach's *Chaconne in D minor* (originally written for violin), Rachmaninov's *Corelli Variations*, Carl Vine's piano sonata, some Debussy *Preludes*, and Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No 1*.

"I want the audience to experience the familiar (such as Debussy and Liszt) and the new (such as Carl

Vine), and I am particularly excited about premiering Arthur Feder's work. I think Feder's work is a testament to the ways in which Western art music can keep transforming and growing."

MANDLA MLANGENI – JAZZ

Mandla Mlangeni is a jazz trumpeter and composer who has become a popular fixture on local and international stages. A gifted bandleader, Mlangeni has carved out a name for himself with various bands and ensembles, including the Amandla Freedom Ensemble, with which he has released two albums.

"I will be bringing my two groups to the Festival – the Tune Recreation Committee and the Amandla Freedom Ensemble.

"We will be playing material from our released albums.

"I'm looking forward to the Festival as an opportunity to bring people into my world and hopefully chart new grounds with regards to forging new partnerships and connections.

"The Standard Bank National Schools' Big Band will also be playing music I wrote and arranged.

"It feels like I have come full circle from being in the ensemble almost 12 years ago and now being the recipient of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Jazz."

THE WORLD IN MAKHANDA



BE VOCAL: Swedish performance art and theatre group Sirquis Alfon's 'I Am Somebody' Picture: KIM NILLSON

“One of the things that sets the National Arts Festival apart from most other festivals in SA is how it attracts participation from artists around the world, giving our audiences the chance to see some amazingly special work,” says National Arts Festival CEO Tony Lankester.

“We have partnerships with embassies, other festivals and producers globally and are able to bring productions to Makhandanda with their support.

“Not only are we able to bring this great work to our stages for our audiences, but the intimate experience of the Festival and Makhandanda gives South African artists the rare opportunity to get a window into the work of their peers from other countries.

“It’s a win-win formula that contributes to the special and unique flavour of the National Arts Festival.”

“These visiting productions are world-class,” says Acting Executive producer Nobesuthu Rayi, “and continue to be vocal about the many societal issues that we find both in our country and worldwide”.

Issues around the LGBTIQ+ community are the focus of *PINK MONEY* (dance), a collaboration of artists from SA and Switzerland. “Pink money” is the currency with which you can “buy tolerance, provided you have the necessary cash”.

International acts give audiences the chance to experience world-class talent on our local stages

American storyteller Steven Fales brings *Confessions of a Mormon Boy* (theatre) – his journey from being a devoted, sixth-generation Mormon and father of two to coming out as gay and being excommunicated from his church.

Swedish theatre group Sirquis Alfon's *I Am Somebody* (performance art) combines magic, comedy and music in a unique hi-tech show for the internet generation (and everybody else).

The Bookbinder (family theatre) is an award-winning show presented by the Trick of the Light Company from New Zealand. This story spills from the pages, combining puppetry, story-telling and live action.

Representing Ireland is comedian Dylan Moran, who holds the record for the fastest-ever sold-out performances at NAF (2015).

He returns to town with a new work, *Dr Cosmos* (comedian), in which he will once again offer his unique take on love, politics, misery and the everyday absurdities of life, all served up with poetical panache.

German-Chinese choreographer Hannah Ma and her company of international dancers present two powerfully unapologetic productions – *Sylphides* (dance), a light-hearted, ironic, poetic interpretation of the romantic ballet *Les Sylphides*; and *Wanderer*

(dance), about the search for home. Nigerian dancer, choreographer and activist Qudus Onikeku presents *Spirit Child* (dance), inspired by Ben Okri's classic *The Famished Road*.

UK-based artist Mira Calix, who was born in SA, presents *In Situ* (music), for which she has transformed imaging data from specialists in ultrasound and interplanetary geology from the visual to the sonic.

There's an international presence on the Creativate Digital Arts Festival programme too, headlined by *Ersatz*, French director and performer Julien Mellano's freely fantasised projection of a future man.

See page 11 for more about Creativate

Swedish trombonist Nils Lindgren, Kenya's Nairobi Horns, New York's “hippest band” Too Many Zooz and Italian jazz singer Susanna Stivali are just some of the international musicians on the line-up for 2019's Standard Bank Jazz Festival.

See page 14 for more about the Standard Bank Jazz Festival



Gobsmacking BUSKERS

Three international buskers join their South African counterparts on the 2019 Amazing Stages at the Standard Bank Village Green, which are open all day, every day of the Festival.

Australian JP Koala brings something different with medieval axes, cuddly koalas and comedy chaos, in a powerful display of skill and improvised comedy.

Enjoy JP's charm, wit and skill as he launches a cyclone of whips, axes and adorable marsupials – in a show worth seeing (at least) twice.

Argentinian Victor Rubilar isn't just another regular performer – he is a true international football freestyle star.

With 18 international awards under his belt, five Guinness World Records and shows in 52 countries, be prepared to be amazed with his jaw-dropping tricks.

Canada's Stickman combines chainsaws, a bed of nails, sword-swallowing and juggling – and the legendary ‘devil stick’ routine – in an interactive show that will wow audiences of all ages.

New shows start at the Village Green every hour, and although the performances are all free, tips are welcomed.



JAW-DROPPING: Australian J P Koala and, top, Argentinian Victor Rubilar

‘It’s a win-win formula that contributes to the special flavour of the Festival’

M Tune into the sounds of Mzansi

From super
Black Mamba
music line-up

Held in Makhanda over 11 days during the calm but cooler months of June and July, the National Arts Festival's place on Mzansi's cultural and musical calendar is unchallenged.

Brim-filled with activities in various media, from film to theatre to dance and in-between, undefined spaces, the Festival is a tried, tested and certified barometer of who is really moving and shaking the ground in their respective fields.

The programme strikes a delicate balance between mainstream acts, which are lauded countrywide, and more edgier acts whose following nevertheless enables them to make a meaningful impact.

An impressive variety of music is on offer for 2019.

It's possible to, for example, see continental stars Mafikizolo, crossover darlings Freshlyground, and generational greats Ladysmith Black Mambazo; and then take a hopeful plunge over to the Fringe side of life to discover the music of acts such as Ariel & Juana, a Mzansi-based jazz duo from Argentina, who explore themes concerning belonging.

"Between Two Worlds relates the story of someone who is looking for his own identity while submerged in a foreign culture.

"I came to South Africa in 2005 when I was only 17.

"Since then, I have performed with many local artists and have found a place within the jazz community.

"From Argentina in South America to Johannesburg in South Africa, this is our musical journey," says Ariel Zamonsky, whose inter-textural bass explorations provide a warm bed for partner Juana Pires Rafael's vocals.

Composer and cultural thinker Dr Thokozani Mhlambi's studied explorations on the cello forms the bedrock for him to explore legacies of the great Xhosa poet Ntsikana, of forthright leaders and cultural alchemists Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuka and more.

The duo of Dave Stark and Nish Pillay hold promise of a smooth journey to the outlying elements of folk and blues under their Duende moniker.

Elsewhere on the programme are Jeremiah Isis and his Baakahyaad band.

Hailing from the beatific lineage of roots reggae, the Kwa-Thema, Springs-based collective will share the East Rand's vibrant sound system culture with the Festival.

Included on the Main Stage programme is Samthing Soweto, a certified OG among his peers, what with him penning the infectious melodies that endeared many romantics to The Soil's smooth a capella offerings on their self-titled



THEO KGOSINKWE AND NHLANHLA NCIZA OF MAFIKIZOLO

maiden outing. Acclaimed rockers Springbok Nude Girls bring their brand of pre-millennial cool to the deck through post-apartheid combinations of rock'n roll, punk, metal, and any soundscape worthy of their legendary status.

The band's new album will be available after their appearance at the Monument.

A hidden Eastern Cape gem, Dumza Maswana, will present his show *Celebrating African Song*.

"We will be paying homage to fallen greats who have ensured the sounds and songs of years gone remain etched in our hearts and minds," says the composer and baritone vocalist, who brings with him a 10-piece band.

Expect transcendence into the animal-spirit realm as he interrogates, corrects, and re-invigorates the legacies of elders, abomam'khulu Madosini, uMam uNofinish Dywii, and other matriarchs who've worked tirelessly to bring the spirit of kwa-Xhosa to critical consciousness.

Elsewhere, the Drakensberg Boys' Choir; the Eastern Cape Divas; Eastern Cape Indigenous Music and Dance Ensemble, and many other gems remain to be discovered.

Lovers of classical music, too, won't be left behind, with the Eastern Cape Philharmonic Orchestra dishing out sonatas from classical composers in the most Mzansi way imaginable.

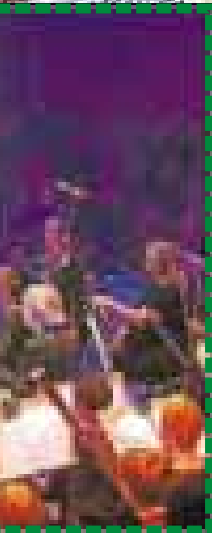


RICHARD COCK AND THE EASTERN CAPE PHILHARMONIC ORC

stars Mafikizolo and Ladysmith Mambazo to edgy Fringe acts, 2019's will be music to your ears, writes Tseliso Monaheng



FRESHLYGROUND



HESTRA

'The Festival is a tried, tested and certified barometer of who is really moving and shaking the ground'



LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO



NOMBASA MAQOKO – EASTERN CAPE DIVAS



SAMTHING SOWETO



SPRINGBOK NUDE GIRLS



DRAKENSBERG BOYS CHOIR

10

HOT TICKETS

Music you just can't miss

Make at least one of these a priority on your Festival itinerary:

1. Mafikizolo

For 22 years, this incredible band with its kwaito origins has transcended cultural barriers and consistently reinvented their sound to captivate audiences worldwide.

2. Ladysmith Black Mambazo

With five Grammy awards and 16 Grammy nominations since 1988, Ladysmith Black Mambazo is South Africa's premier musical group. Tick this experience off your bucket list.

3. Springbok Nude Girls

South African 1990's rock sensation the Springbok Nude Girls have reunited and will once again be tearing up the stage in Makhandla with unlimited energy, so come and soak it up. One night only!

4. Drakensberg Boys Choir

Live in Concert – Appearing for the first time at the Festival, this world-renowned choir performs a range of evocative and entertaining music.

5. Mandla Mlangeni

This year's Standard Bank Young Artist for Jazz has a distinct style informed by a deep interest in his African heritage, a passionate musical inquisitiveness, and a strong political awareness.

6. RoccoCocko

Sensational pianist Rocco de Villiers and conductor Richard Cock have put together a musical extravaganza that will deliver an astral explosion of music, fun and anecdotes about life.

7. Megan-Geoffrey Prins

The Standard Bank Young Artist for Music 2019 is just 28 years old, but is recognised for his technical prowess, imaginative interpretation, and keen sensitivity. Catch this talented pianist at one of six concerts, varying from solo to collaborative and orchestra appearances.

8. Freshlyground

Blending infectious kwela with traditions from SA, Zimbabwe and Mozambique and adding elements of pop, jazz, blues and indie rock, Freshlyground is a quintessential Mzansi experience.

9. Gala Concert

This year's *Gala Concert*, performed by the EC Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Richard Cock, presents a wide range of music – from Vangelis to Von Suppé, Mozart to a Mama Africa tribute.

10. Seasons: Dorothy Masuka Songbook in the style of Vivaldi

Passionate young Port Elizabeth-born violinist Neo Motsatse will play a compilation of Masuka's songbook according to the seasons of her life.



Finding your way through THE FRINGE

From magic to mayhem, comedy to drama, there are hundreds of shows on offer

The Fringe at the National Arts Festival is where the boldest of artists can showcase their works, with brand-new as well as well-known theatre makers risking it all for receptive audiences.

The Festival's open-access model of accepting any work by brave and passionate creatives is one that is modelled on the 70-year-old Edinburgh Fringe, which started because artists, who weren't selected for the main stages, broke away and staged their work on the "fringes".

Great storytelling ahead
Fresh from the Glastonbury and Ed-

inburgh festivals comes *The Adventures of Robert Moffat*, a fascinating look at the encounter between the Scottish missionary of the same name and Mzilikazi, who founded Matabeleland (now Zimbabwe).

Five-time Hollywood Fringe award-winner *Still* comes to the Festival from the international circuit. Gaëtan Schmid makes a comeback with *Zombie Attack*, in which he mimes an "odyssey of fear to a soundtrack of 101 movies".

An unmissable return to the Festival is also Tony Miyambo's *Kafka's Ape*, a metaphorical view on South African society.

Former Standard Bank Young Artist for Theatre (2017) Jade Bowers brings back *Black*, her play about truth and identity.

Overcoming challenges

The 2019 Fringe programme has a special focus on disability and works that explored this, were given concessions on their fees.

Bopha's producer and some of the cast members live with disabilities while *C-4-Cancer* is a play communicated through sign language.

Girl with the Magic Paintbrush and *Sound Word, A Woman in Prayer* are two of the works that look at blindness.

The South African Library for the Blind is celebrating its centenary year and have put together a show (*The Blind Date*) and exhibition (*The Catching Eye*).

Music, magic and laughter

As always, the Fringe is home to, magic and illusion with the talents of Brendon Peel, Stuart Lightbody, Greg Gelb, Li Lau, Andrew Klazinga, Roy Swann, Dr Stef and others.

Catch the stand-out stand-up comedy (see page 13) and endless musical talent (see pages 8 and 9).

Make a Stop at The Edge

The Edge creates a cosy and consistent home for excellent theatre productions at the Princess Alice Hall – many of these shows have earned their stripes with Standard Bank Oventions and other awards.

In 2019, the Edge presents the brilliantly performed *The Blue Period of Milton van der Spuy*, *Winging It*, *Artifice with Stuart Lightbody*, *A Place of Knowing*, *The Gospel According to Jan Coetzee*, *A Faint Patch of Light* and a remarkable performance from Billy Langa in *Tswalo*.

Visual art and spiritual journeys

Visual artists will take visitors on contemplative journeys in a series of group and deeply personal solo exhibitions, craft shows, studies of landscapes and narratives of the Eastern Cape and greater SA. Workshops are also on offer.

The SpiritFest programme focuses on the intersection of the arts and faith, with an eclectic programme of meditation, talks, music, visual art and, of course, prayer.

Artists watching other artists

Performers share what shows they're hoping to catch at #NAF2019

Dumza Maswana – Celebrating African Song

I'm looking forward to seeing [Standard Bank Young Artist for Music] Mandla Mlangeni perform. I have his two albums, but have never seen him doing his set live.

I'm also a fan of comedy, so I don't want to miss Khanyisa Bunu. I hope one day there will be a way for me to collaborate with the Kwa-Zulu-Natal Youth Orchestra, who I will definitely not miss.

Jemma Kahn – Cellist with Rabies

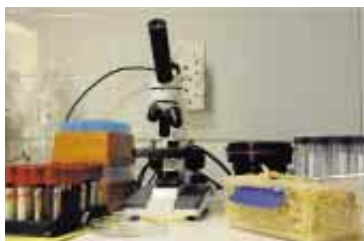
On the Main programme, I would love to see the work of all the Standard Bank Young Artists for the year, especially Gabriella Goliath.

In 2018, her piece *Eulogy* was the best thing I saw, so I'm excited to see *This Song is For...*

And then, of course, I would like to see fellow thespian Amy Jephta's



All Who Pass. On the Fringe, I look forward to *Kafka's Ape* again. *Rat Race* and *The Boy Who Cried Ninja* are children's theatre at its best.



Gavin Krastin – Arcade

As both a performance artist and a curator, I am interested in multi-disciplinary work and naturally gravitate towards the more experimental pieces, so I'm definitely going to see *Swarm Theory* and *Ingoma ka Tiyo Soga* on the Main programme.

I will also make a point of going to see the shows at the Creativate Digital Arts Festival as there are two pieces from international artists I am interested in – *Ersatz* and *Frogman*.

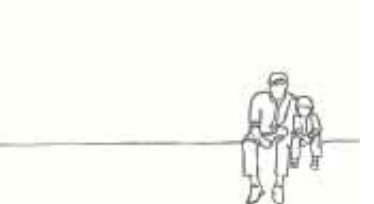


Gopala Davies – Moonless

I am looking forward to seeing *Frogman* by curious directive. My own work navigates the integration of technology in live performance and I am interested in seeing how they use VR to support their narrative.

I'm always excited to explore novel ways of staging and *The Book-binder* by Trick of the Light Theatre combines puppetry, live performance and pop-up books. And I look forward to seeing how Brett Bailey's

Moonless



Samson tackles notions of "migration, bigotry, colonialism and oppressive capitalist policies".

James Cairns – Contagious Theatre

I'm involved with four shows this year. But if I do get a spare moment, I will make a point of supporting friends. I don't want to miss Rob van Vuuren as he celebrates 25 years at the Festival. I also hope to experience *Swarm Theory* directed by Daniel Buckland and Kyla Davis.

CURIOUS

All Creativate exhibitions, talks and workshops are free, but tickets need to be reserved. Book tickets at www.nationalartsfestival.co.za



Hear the power of the purr

His *Purr Room*, an immersive art installation that shares the meditative “triple purr” of his pet companion “Blackie” the Cat, has travelled

Baseman will offer a presentation that addresses how he transforms daily observations into boundary-crossing art that includes drawing, painting, photography, video, installation art, performance.

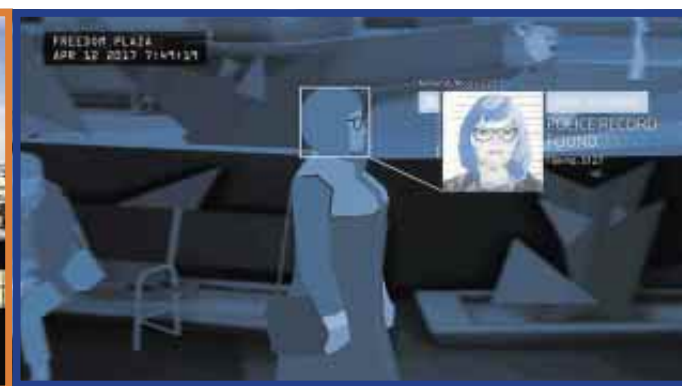
as well as fashion, toy design and social media. The Purr Room is but one example of what he terms his pervasive art. Through landscapes, characters, and objects that are deceptively cute, Baseman's work challenges viewers to reflect on the human condition, especially on themes of love, longing, and loss.



Be swept away by
FROGMAN

It forms part of the Creativate Digital Arts Festival programme.

CREATIVATE AT WORK



The Digital Revolution brought with it changes to the way we live and work. Wesley Swanepoel's *Googly Eyes* is commentary on a very real Orwellian 1984 situation – that is happening right now.

Theatres of wonder for kids and teens

Gasps of surprise, shrieks of delight, wide-eyed wonder – children at the 2019 Festival are warmly welcomed with an array of productions made just for them.

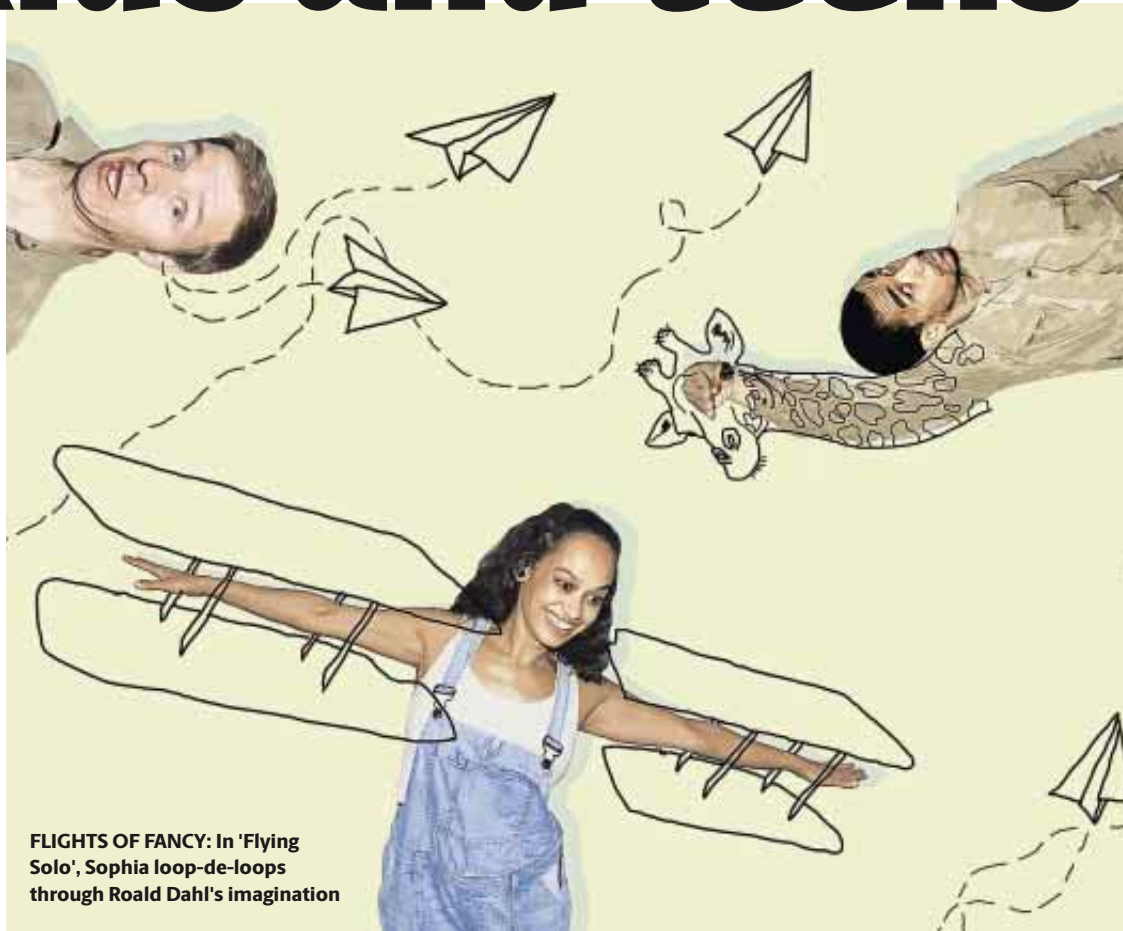
Starting with the tiny tots, Well Worn Theatre's *Rat Race* is designed for children aged 4 to 6 years and tells the "tail" of stressed-out city mouse Miles and easy-going farm mouse, Melissa. Well Worn Theatre also cater for 8- to 12-year-olds with *Galela*, an epic adventure, delving into the murky but topical issue of municipal water.

Graham Maxwell, a South African bubbleologist, who honed the secrets of bubble magic in the UK, makes his debut at the Festival.

An alchemist of bubbles, Maxwell uses chemistry, magic and the boundaries of his imagination in his amazing, and beautifully realised, *Bubble Show*.

Florence and Watson and their intrepid friends from the Sugar Bush Mountain return with *The Great Pangolin Mystery* in English and *uFlorence NoWatson kunye Nem-puku Yomoba* in isiXhosa. Rob van Vuuren and Danielle Bischoff's series of children's books come to life in these gentle, funny, and heartwarming performances about friendship and family. The Festival's own production of Tall Stories' *The Gruffalo* has been translated into isiXhosa and will have its premiere at the Festival this year – a truly South African *iGruffalo* that will have you and your littlies singing the catchy tunes long after the curtain has gone down.

James Cairns, Taryn Bennett and



FLIGHTS OF FANCY: In 'Flying Solo', Sophia loop-de-loops through Roald Dahl's imagination

Toni Morkel breathe life into Alex Latimer's acclaimed book, *The Boy Who Cried Ninja*.

Tim's parents don't believe him when he tells them the truth about the ninja that ate the cake and the giant squid that swallowed his book bag... so he has to make a plan. A delightful twist on the Peter and the Wolf tale.

From New Zealand comes the intriguing, mysterious and magical fairy tale *The Bookbinder*.

Woven together through shadow play, paper art, music and magic, and created for curious kids and their parents, siblings and grandparents.

Fixing an eye on the sky is Ubom!'s production, *Fundisa's Fabulous Adventure* – the hilarious antics of a young girl who dreams of becoming a pilot; and, in *Flying Solo*, the second in a trilogy of Roald Dahl adventures (*Flying High* 2018), little Sophia loop-de-loops through

Dahl's imagination bringing new energy to the classic stories.

For teenagers, Followspot's must-see *Big Boys Don't Dance* makes its final 10th anniversary return to the stage; *Samthing Soweto*, *Bombshelter Beast* and *Neo Mot-satse* are musical no-brainers; *Plas-tocracy* and *Burning Rebellion* are hard-core challenges on environmental issues; and a cast of 12- to 18-year-olds give us a glimpse into the minds of today's teenagers in

How to stay sane this FESTIVAL

Set in the beautiful grounds of St Andrew's Prep School, the Children's Arts Festival caters specially for children under the age of 13, every day of the Festival.

You can drop your children off for a fun-filled, creative day with lots of craft as well as music or drama workshops, with a daily visit to a Festival production.

They will be creatively entertained – and fully supervised – by experienced carers and teachers.

From 9am to 5pm for children aged six to 13. Cost is R450 a day, including lunch.

Younger children can enjoy a creative morning from 9am to 1pm at R200 a day.

For more info, contact Cindy Renard on 046-603-2417 or e-mail cafbookings@saprepsschool.com

Theatre Arts Admin's *Through Our Eyes*.

Workshops include creative writing, collaging for magazines, hip-hop poetry & beat sessions, visual art classes, and VR, gaming, and digital art.

Free things to do for families

The National Arts Festival presents great opportunities for families to introduce their children to all that the arts can offer.

But we're also aware that things can get expensive if you're a family. Here are 10 things for families to enjoy at no cost at all.

SUNDOWNER CONCERTS:

The ever-popular Sundowner Concerts at the Fountain Foyer at the Monument are a fun – and free! – way to end the day.

Artists give short previews of their shows every day at 5pm. Get there early to secure a seat on the steps.

AMAZING STAGES:

There are jaw-dropping performances by buskers every hour on the hour at the Standard Bank Village Green. These local and international street performers aim to entertain with swords, fire and high-jinks. Performances are free, but don't forget something for the hat!

STORYTIME:

Well-known actors read much-loved stories for children – all free of charge. Two sessions a day at 11am to 3pm, daily from June 28 to July 5 at St Andrew's Prep.

CHILDREN'S CONCERT:

The KwaZulu-Natal Youth Orchestra conducted by Lykele Temmingh will present this year's Children's Concert on June 30 at 1pm. The KZN Youth Orchestra, comprising talented young musicians from around KwaZulu-Natal, will showcase their different instruments in a fun and interactive way in the Fountain Foyer at the Monument. Entrance is free.

FINGO FESTIVAL:

Held in Fingo Village, one of Makhanda's oldest townships, the 10th Fingo Festival offers a unique programme of live performances, readings, workshops and exhibitions. It runs daily from 9am in Fingo Square. From July 1-5.



SOMETHING FOR ALL: Children enjoy the popular Sundowner Concerts at the Monument, which start at 5pm every day Picture:MICHELLE HODGKINSON

HIP HOP FESTIVAL:

The Return of the Cypher Hip Hop Festival offers beat making sessions, live music sets and performances, readings, workshops and films. At the Black Power Station, Industrial Area. From July 1-4.

CREATIVATE:

The second-ever Creativate Digital Arts Festival will run for the full length of the Festival this year. With loads of fascinating and interactive events, it's perfect for older children and teens. All Creativate exhibi-

tions, talks and workshops are at Thomas Pringle Hall at the Monument. Tickets should be reserved in advance.

VISUAL ART:

There's no charge for admiring artists' talent and passion at the many exhibitions being held in every nook and cranny of the city, with all exhibitions free to enter.

CONCESSIONS, DISCOUNTED & FREE SHOWS:

Many of the productions offer discounts for pupils and students. There are also other specials available on some performances, ranging from 25% discount to completely free (although donations are encouraged). These are marked in colour in the Festival programme and on the website.

STREET PARADE:

Join the colourful, joyful procession of stiltwalkers, dancers, puppeteers and others as a farewell parade winds its way through the streets of our City. Starts 11am on July 6 and at 12am on July 7.



LOYISO MADINGA

finding comic relief on every corner



BIJOU



DYLAN MORAN



KHANYISA BUNU

Enter this hilarious crew of doctors with a bag of the “best medicine” and switch the serious stuff to mute for a while. We’re all in urgent need of a belly laugh and the 2019 Festival dishes them up in spades.

Headlining the comic line-up is Irish comedian Dylan Moran, who brings his new international show *Dr Cosmos*.

Expect “high-octane riffs from the Irish master of grumpiness”.

The rest of the comedy programme is rich with solo and group shows by some of the SA’s finest – Loyiso Madinga, SA’s correspondent to Trevor

Noah’s *Daily Show*, Tats Nkonzo, Robby Collins, Mo Mothebe, Mojak Lehoko and many other top names, who together hold a clutch of local and international accolades.

Also not to be missed is Khanyisa Bunu, who has opened for Trevor Noah and is the first woman to win the Comics Choice Award. Catch her in *New Year’s Resolutions*, a funny way to remind us about the promises we make to ourselves every year.

For the seventh year, *The Very Best Comedy Show* gathers plenty of this talent under one roof and in the capable hands of host Rob van Vuuren.

No stranger to Makhanda, Aaron Mclroy returns with his hit show *ADHD* and, with Lisa Bobbert, *Bloopers*.

Get in on the bottom floor as hot new name Tsitsi Chiumya takes it all the way to the top with his debut stand-up show, *So Naive*.

He earned himself the 2018 Comics Choice Best Newcomer and also toured with Trevor Noah’s *Nation Wild*.

Consistently among the Festival’s top-selling shows are Followspot’s much-loved capers – and this year the line-up includes *Bijou*, *Big Boys Don’t Dance* and *You Should Be Dancing*.

A true child of the Festival, Rob van Vuuren is celebrating 25 years at NAF this year with more than 20 performances in 11 amazing days.

You're an incredibly versatile performer – from rolling-in-the-aisles comedy to your chilling performance in Louis Viljoen's 'Dangled'. What are your favourite roles to play?

Honestly, I don't have a favourite. I love that I get to do it all. I love that my day at the Festival starts with a kids' show – they give me so much energy and it puts me in the right frame of mind to go to all the places I need to go for the rest of the shows. I love that *Dangled* pushes me emotionally and tests my technique and precision as an actor, that *Electric Juju* makes me sweat as I take audiences on a fantastical journey into another realm, and that I get to wind it all down with belly laughs in *Again!* I wouldn't want it any other way.

You do much more than acting – you're a writer, director and producer across various genres and media, from TV to movies to books to the stage. Where do you feel most at home?

My first love will always be the stage but, ultimately, I consider myself a storyteller.

This year is the 45th edition of the Festival – and your 25th! That's quite a run. Why do you keep on coming back every year?

Insanity, probably. I do, however, have a deep connection with this Festival and it has helped shaped me as a person and an artist. This may be my 25th year at the Festival as a performer, but it is my 29th year coming to it. My first was when I was in Standard 8 and it changed my life. I got to see Andrew Buckland, Johannes Kerkorrel, Theatre for Africa and so much more in an environment that was overflowing with creativity and expression.

Having grown up in conservative and brutal apartheid SA, the Festival made me feel like I could breathe

‘My first love will always be the stage’

Rob van Vuuren



picture: NARDUS ENGELBRECHT



again and maybe the world wasn't mad.

What's next?
I think it's time for me to take a step back and a deep breath and think about what I want from the next 25 years.

What do you regard as your best moment at NAF?
I have had so many unforgettable moments over the years but the

defining one would have to be coming off stage after our very first performance of *Squadron Marmite* in 1995 and realising in that moment that my dream was attainable.

Tell us about the works you're presenting this year.
I'm doing *Florence and Watson presents the Great Pangolin Mystery* for the kiddies in the morning. We are

also bringing an isiXhosa production, *uFlorence noWatson kunye Nempuku yoMoba*.

I'm returning with my latest “stand-up” comedy show, *Again!*, which blurs the line between, stand-up, dance, poetry and character comedy in a show that explores repetition as a comedic device.

I'll be doing a few shows of Louis Viljoen's *Dangled*, which is a multi-

award-winning powerhouse of a show both nationally and internationally. I really wanted to do something this year that reflected the physical theatre work that formed such an important foundation for my career so I decided to revive *Electric Juju*. It is an epic one-person multi-character physical odyssey in one of my favourite genres, fantasy, which is not often seen on stage.



CHINESE SINGER COCO ZHAO



LOCAL VOCALIST ASANDA MQIKI



SALIM WASHINGTON



HUANG JIANYI



STANDARD BANK NATIONAL YOUTH JAZZ BAND



LOCAL GUITAR MASTER ERNIE SMITH



SHANE COOPER – MABUTA

Jazzing it up

By Alan Webster - Director,
Standard Bank Jazz Festival

The 32nd Standard Bank Jazz Festival in Makhanda is very special jazz festival, produced as a barometer of South African jazz, and is a place where artists meet and challenge audiences to expand their expectations of the art form. In the midst of the National Arts Festival, audiences know that they can trust the programming to be exciting and different and, even if some performers are not household names, always to be excellent.

The jazz festival kicks off with a big band on four successive nights – the massive Funk Big Band, led by world-renowned Swedish trombonist Nils Landgren and sourcing the best of SA's big band players; Marcus Wyatt's ZAR Orchestra, with fascinating versions of Wyatt's compositions; and the Standard Bank National Schools' Big Band. The first weekend also with a jazz party most nights, featuring Too Many Zooz - New York's hippest new act – and our own wild things, Bombshelter Beast.

The first half of the festival traditionally also features a glimpse into our nation's jazz future, with the Standard Bank Young Artist for Jazz, Mandela Mlangeni, showcasing his musical plans and another five past winners of the award dotted through the programme, including Shane Cooper with his latest project, Mabuta.

There are numerous opportunities

Wide
variety to
satisfy all
tastes

to hear what is coming from the nation's youth players, gathered for the Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Festival – a festival that has provided musicians, teachers and students with networking opportunities and exposed them to the world in a fashion unique in SA and possibly the world.

US-born jazz professor at UKZN Salim Washington with his Durban band; local vocalist Asanda Mqiki, guesting with Chinese singer Coco Zhao and also starring with her own band; Italian vocalist Susanna Stivali; Billy Monama; Robin Auld playing the Blues; and another local legend, Feza Faku, performing with an American band.

The programme continues with musical greats from the past decade or two, including Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Freshlyground, Ernie Smith and Mafikizolo. Over the 11 days we feature musicians from Kenya, Sweden, USA, Switzerland, Brazil, Italy, Norway and, for the first time in Makhanda, from China!

The festival finishes with a bang getting down to the funky African sounds of Nairobi Horns, a Kenyan band that comes with great acclaim.



NILS LANDGREN OF THE FUNK BIG BAND



ROBIN AULD



SUSANNA STIVALI



NEW YORK'S TOO MANY ZOOZ



KENYAN BAND NAIROBI HORNS



BOMBSHELTER BEAST



MARCUS WYATT WITH THE ZAR ORCHESTRA

Young poet tackles queerness & religion

In a generally homophobic country with high hate-crime statistics like SA, the role of the Christian church in homophobia is a crucial subject to tackle, however uncomfortable.

This is what inspired Port Elizabeth-born author, poet and theatre practitioner Koleka Putuma's play, *No Easter Sunday for Queers*.

The 25-year-old was named winner of the 2019 Distell National Playwright Competition, which aims to discover emerging South African talent and to foster new South African voices. She won R25,000 and the opportunity to take her play into full production, to be staged as part of the Main programme at this year's National Arts Festival in Makhanda.

Adapted from her poem of the same name in Putuma's best-selling book *Collective Amnesia*, *No Easter Sunday for Queers* tells the tragic tale of two women – one of whom is the pastor's daughter – who meet and fall in love in church but end up being murdered.

"People's perception of the queer community and queer love is heavily influenced by the church and people's religious beliefs," Putuma said.

"I submitted the play with the intention to challenge the adjudicating panel to see if they would want to challenge the audience."

Nobesuthu Rayi, Acting Executive Producer of the National Arts Festival who was on the panel, says Putuma "is one of those black women who have been claiming their spaces on this

earth – and her play does nothing less than that. Her work is a rare force – aggressive, true and layered. While it does not sit comfortably at times, just as homophobic attacks never sit well, her narrative's rough texture resembles the nature of our society for the LGBTIQ+ community."

When *No Easter Sunday for Queers* was released with other poems in her 2018 anthology, it was welcomed by some readers in that community, while raising questions in more conservative communities.

"The poem is based on me growing up in Belville, living a very particular life and then having to go to varsity at a certain point and discovering certain parts of myself that I was not aware of while I was at home," she said.

Since its release, *Collective Amnesia* has been translated into Spanish and Danish, and was named Book of the Year by City Press in 2017.

Putuma has previously collaborated with other theatre makers at the National Arts Festival, but this will be the first time she stages her own work.

● A version of this article first appeared in *The Weekend Post* written by Zamdulo Malonde

As winner of the Distell National Playwright Competition, Koleka Putuma will debut her play at the Festival



'Her work is a rare force – aggressive, true and layered'



ON STAGE Qudus Onikeku's 'Spirit Child' Picture: SAGACITY STUDIO



BACK IN SA: Collaborative piece 'PINK MONEY' Picture: EIKE WALKENHORST

German-Chinese dancer and choreographer Hannah Ma brings her surprising *Sylphides* to Makhanda this year. Hers is "spiritual ballet of the 21st century" – a light-hearted, ironic, poetic interpretation of the romantic ballet *Les Sylphides*.

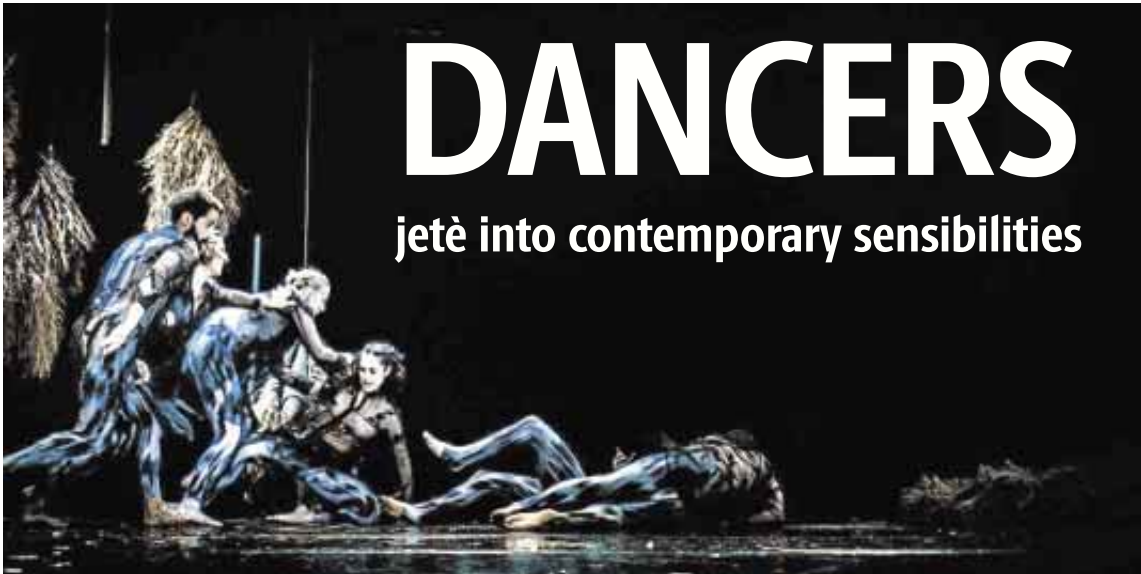
Ma and her company, the People United – a transcultural mix of international dancers – reflect on our current shifts of gender, identities and cultural heritage with the construct of "home" as a starting point.

Bringing historical ballets back to contemporary life and combining both tradition and innovation has made Ma's productions unique.

Wanderer, another contemporary dance work by Ma, looks at the search for traces of home and the longing for rituals that transcend cultural boundaries.

A live musician will accompany the dancers as they set out in search of common roots. "The audience experiences dancers and a choreographer who lives up to her reputation as an ambitious and innovative artist," critic Katrin Schug wrote of the piece in *Luxemburger Wort*.

An international collaborative piece, *PINK MONEY*, makes a powerful plea for individuality, diversity, self-determined love and tolerance as it turns the theatre into a LGBTIQ+ club. This production returns to SA after a successful tour of Ger-



SEARCH FOR HOME: Hannah Ma and the People United bring contemporary dance work 'Wanderer' to the Festival

many and Switzerland.

The three works on the curated part of the Main Dance programme, under the guidance of Artistic Committee member David Thatanelo April, are works by Nigerian choreographer Qudus Onikeku with *Spirit Child*, Themba Mbuli with *The Boat* and Bailey Snyman with *Gas Lands*.

Onikeku and Mbuli look at the rich complexities of being, within an Africa haunted by colonialism; while Bailey sets his piece in a

dystopian future to explore the displacement of women due to war, trafficking and migration.

Standard Bank Young Artist for Dance Kitty Phetla has collaborated with former Standard Bank Young Artist for Jazz Nduduzo Makhathini in a new production, *Going Back to the Truth of Space*.

The work "is a reflection, an evocation of African modes of performance and ritual, calling forth the memories and wisdom of ancestry

and visualising a future of healing".

The 2015 Standard Bank Young Artist for Dance, Luyanda Sidiya, returns to Makhanda with a new work, *Amawethu*. He presses the reset button, telling a story "that seeks to rectify, or rather reclaim, who we are from our culture and customs, and to correct the distortions that pre-date the African slave trade which led us to believe African spirituality has a demonic, pagan, uncivilised, barbaric and godless origin".

With just a few weeks to go before the opening of Africa's biggest Arts Festival, make sure you have the best seats in the house.

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