

21st Masakhane Festival in Soweto

The 21st Masakhane Arts and Culture Youth Festival will be held between 10 and 18 December, 2010, at the Emndeni Youth Centre, Soweto, and will include theatre, dance, music, poetry and workshops.

Besides workshops ranging from contemporary dance and acting to drumming, this year's festival programme includes theatre productions by Gibson Kente, Bongani Linda, Julian Seleke Mokoto and Ntshieng Mokgoro (2009 Winner of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Drama).

Also on the programme is the Imbube Music Programme and competition, which will be held in the Emndeni Senior Secondary School Hall on 4 and 5 December. The programme and competition aim to popularise imbube and isicathamiya music.

A display of movement and colour

Hostel dwellers, the bigger Soweto community, and music lovers are invited to join in a celebration of indigenous folk music and movement. Participants not only make music, but also compete as the best dressed. It is not so much about the outer beauty, but rather a display of movement and colour.

The Imbube Music Programme is a developmental initiative and caters specifically for organisations based in the Soweto hostels. Besides finding new talent, it is also a celebration of the diverse cultural richness in Gauteng.

The competition will start on 4 December at 6pm and end on 5 December at 6am. Entrance is free.

The Masakhane Arts and Culture Youth Development Project was created just over two decades ago by the youth of Emndeni in Soweto and is funded by the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund. The aim is to empower and develop young people who are artistically inclined. The annual event offers an opportunity to these talented young people to showcase their skills and also exchange cultural activities.

Love and respect

The Masakhane (togetherness) Festival nurtures love and respect for each other's background, language and culture. At the same time the youth-development project encourages women to play the leading role in various organisations in the South African arts industry.

This year's festival opens with a musical festival on Friday, 10 December, featuring artists such as Chomee, GP Gangsters,

Pro Kid and Deep Soweto.

The mainstream theatre productions, which will be performed in the Emndeni Youth Centre daily at 7pm, include the following:

- * 10 December - Thursday's Child by Ntshieng Mokgoro
- * 11 December - Sins of a Man, directed by Thapelo Motloung
- * 12 December - Marry the Unfaithful Woman, directed by Julian Seleke Mokoto
- * 13 December - Carrot Sisters, directed by Bongani Linda
- * 14 December - Garden Boy, directed by Kunene Nyembezi
- * 14 December - Torn Apart, directed by Darlington Michaels (starting time 7.20pm)
- * 15 December - Mfowethu, written by Gibson Kente
- * 16 December - Remorse, directed by Duma Mnembe
- * 17 December - Pot of Fire, directed by Charles Sello Mphana

Entrance to all the shows and workshops is free and open to the public.

Some of the workshops offered feature Thulani Didi and Kere Nyawo (Zone 14 Popeye & Spinach) guiding the various youth groups through a presentation about musical theatre, Duma Mnembe tackling theatre and Thuli Mazibuko (lead singer of the Soweto Gospel Choir) sharing secrets about music and music making. Young people from KwaZulu-Natal, the Free State, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, the Northern Cape, the Eastern Cape and other areas in and around Gauteng are transported by bus to attend the various activities that are offered free of charge.

For more information about the programme, contact +27 (0)11 934 3435.

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