

# Baxter's Zabalaza Theatre Festival to stage 40 theatre productions

The annual Zabalaza Theatre Festival will return to the Baxter Theatre Centre in Cape Town from 8 to 16 March 2019. The ninth edition of the festival will showcase some of the finest theatre and emerging artists from all over the Western Cape.

This year, the Baxter will buzz with groundbreaking works by new theatre-makers as nearly 40 theatre productions and events, featuring well over 100 artists and performers, which is filled with innovation, relevance and originality.

The dynamic team that make up the festival comprises the award-winning actor and director Mdu Kweyama as curator, along with artistic director Bongile Mantsai, coordinator Zoleka Helesi, administrator Jestine Sias and Monde Myataza (marketing and sales).



Ukuwa Kwenkaba - © Sithembele Jnr

## Contribute in a meaningful and impactful way

Following the support and success of the Zabalaza Challenge in 2018, this vital initiative will once again become an important way to contribute in a meaningful and impactful way, to not only the festival but also to the artists and the arts. Baxter CEO and artistic director Lara Foot, who introduced the challenge last year, encourages and challenges individuals, businesses, corporates, organisations and the public, to join her in purchasing bulk tickets, at only R30 per ticket. These tickets will be offered and distributed to those who are not able to afford them.

“This is an investment into the future of theatre-making in the Western Cape,” explains Foot. “Not only will these tickets be given to learners or communities who cannot afford to purchase them, but the door takings from each show will go straight back the groups or artists, which, in turn, means more plays by more talented artists.” Taking up the challenge is simple and easy and can be done by visiting [www.baxter.co.za/ZabalazaChallenge](http://www.baxter.co.za/ZabalazaChallenge).

The University of Cape Town’s vice chancellor, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng, will be the keynote speaker at the gala opening this year.

## What's on

The festival kicks off with the Family Carnival Weekend, which is aimed at and curated for the entire family to enjoy together, with a wide range of activities and shows on offer. Every venue and space in the Baxter will come alive with energetic performances, alongside some fun family activities. Kids will have plenty to do with jumping castles and face-painting while the rest of the family will be able to enjoy the shows on offer, as well as the food, clothing and accessory stalls.

Six productions from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS) finals will be staged over the weekend with participants from the Overberg, Cape Winelands, Central Karoo and Garden Route Districts presenting their best work.

The weekend lineup will boast some top local performances and artists. On Saturday, at 3pm, in the Concert Hall, afro-jazz music sensation Liso Somila Toyi will present *Mdantsane Grooves*, featuring Luyolo Lenga, accompanied by Wimbo Project, with artists from Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Cape Town. At 4.30pm in the Theatre, hip-hop music artist Pzho Thee Kulguy and friends will stage an all Hip-Hop concert called *Incwadi (The Book)*.



Bruce Geza in Jojo - © Sithembile Jnr

Popular comedian Siya Seya returns to the festival to offer all the laughs in his exclusive isiXhosa comedy show entitled, *Critical but Stable* at 7pm, in the Baxter Concert Hall. *Reggae Edition*, which is on in the Masambe Theatre at 7pm, takes reggae music from the streets of Khayelitsha, Gugulethu and Mitchell's Plain into the mainstream at the festival.

Rising afro-jazz young star, Linomtha, along with Sobantwan and Buhlebendalo Mda from *The Soil*-fame will present *She Multiplied* on Sunday, at 3pm in the Theatre. The show is dedicated to women of South Africa and pays tribute to those women who came before them, celebrating legends like Winnie Mandela, Busi Mhlongo, Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuka.

The award-winning actor/director Thando Doni's brand-new play *Isithyilelo* looks at the scourge of corrupt priests who misuse their powers by urging congregations to donate money to the church and become rich in the process, while the poor remain poor. Doni, who was last seen in the Baxter's production of *#JustMen*, will be showcased on the Platform for Special Talent at the Zabalaza Festival.

The main festival runs from 11 to 16 March with daily shows at 10am, 11.30am, 4.30pm and 7pm throughout the week. The full programme can be viewed on the Baxter website at [www.baxter.co.za](http://www.baxter.co.za). These productions were the strongest productions chosen from four mini-festivals that took place over two weekends in Khayelitsha, Delft, Nyanga and Langa.

On 16 March, at 7pm, in the Concert Hall, the acclaimed poet and spoken word group Lingua Franca, explores how fatherlessness affects young black males from the townships in post-colonial South Africa by using poetry, images and sounds. It is directed by Lwanda Sindaphi.

The festival will close with an award ceremony on Saturday, 16 March, where accolades will be awarded to artists and productions in various categories. The Best of the Zabalaza Theatre Festival winner will be announced, and the production will receive a two-week run at the Baxter in May.

*Bookings for the ninth instalment of the Zabalaza Festival is through [www.webtickets.co.za](http://www.webtickets.co.za) Webtickets or at Pick n Pay outlets.*

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