

Celebrating Fringe at the National Arts Festival

Boasting an array of provocative and entertaining performances, the National Arts Festival's (NAF) Fringe programme is back in-person to show off some of South Africa's up-and-coming artistic talent alongside some familiar faces on the NAF stages.



Image supplied: Fragments will run at the National Arts Festival

The pandemic has not been easy on the arts and performers have invested many long and hard hours into making you feel, laugh, think and groove in good measure.

Home to diverse experimentation and expression, the Fringe is an engine for the performing arts and needs your support. Here are some of the highlights of the 2022 programme:

Phinda Ubuyele

Memory and trauma pervade the adult lives of a brother and sister who try to recollect their troubled past: a childhood spent with an abusive father and ailing mother. Directed by previous Standard Bank Ovation Award Winner, Thembela Madliki, this play explores generational trauma and survivor's guilt as the siblings try to reconcile their adult selves with the inner children that survive.

Phinda Ubuyele runs from 23-27 June. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).

Emsini

Focused on a conversation between an elderly man and a young woman who is on the run from two murderous criminals, this play explores the rift between two generations in post-Apartheid South Africa. Director Mkhululi Mabija and the cast from Thapelo Tshite Art's Development examine the clash in consciousness that exists between the older generation who fought against Apartheid and the disillusioned youth of our democracy who often resort to violent crime.

Emsini runs from 30 June - 3 July. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).



Image supplied: *Emsini* will run at the National Arts Festival

Boundless

Based on a true story, this film tells the tale of a 12-year-old English settler boy who joined his African neighbours and became 'Africanised' on the banks of the Fish River. Thomas Stubbs' own reminiscences are told through the imaginative performances of an imbongi and a pantsula dancer at eight historical sites, bringing history and art together to reflect on the frontier conflicts and its untold tales.

Boundless runs from 26 June-1 July. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).

Fragments

Examining the fragmentation of our identity through spoken word and music, this six-person ensemble will combine the experimental style of jazz fusion with classical music. Directed and composed by award-winning musician, Stacey van Schalkwyk, and co-directed by spoken-word artist, Lethabo Makweya, this work reflects on the scattered and frantic effects of living life online.

Fragments runs from 23-29 June. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).

Nombasa

Boasting a soulful and evocative repertoire, the Makhanda-based singer and songwriter Nombasa will showcase music from her EP as well as some unheard gems yet to be recorded. Her music fuses the sounds of modern Afro Soul and Acoustic folk to celebrate life and diversity. A 2016 Standard Bank Ovation Award winner, her performance promises to be soul-stirring.

Nombasa will perform on 30 June and 2 July. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).

Afrika Sings!

Afrika Sings! Is a hopeful and colourful celebration of South African musical theatre, featuring song and dance from a wide array of productions including King Kong, Sarafina, Lion King, and Iphi Ntombi. Fresh from the Sonwa Sakuba Institute for the Performing Arts in East London, the show also features original music from the cast of students and is perfect for a family outing.

Afrika Sings! will run from 23-27 June. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).

“Savour”

Straight out of Jozi, this professional dance production reflects on global issues while ultimately carrying a message of hope for a world in distress. It boasts a blend of genres including contemporary dance, ballet, and African dance. Highlighting issues such as the effects of the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and mental health issues, this eclectic production features the unique styles and personalities of 12 choreographers and is bound to have something to suit everyone's tastes.

“Savour” runs from 28 June-2 July. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).



Celebrate music at the National Jazz Festival Makhanda

1 Jun 2022



I.N.C.O.K.O

Examining the conversations of the past and the ‘what ifs’ that arise when we consider what could have happened differently, *I.N.C.O.K.O* is a provocative dance production choreographed and directed by Makhanda-born, Thembani Buka. It asks the audience to consider old conversations which they now critique and to reflect on how these impact the future.

I.N.C.O.K.O runs from 26 June - 1 July. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).

We are Sky's Things

Reflecting on the sublime in both its large and small forms, this exhibition interweaves and contrasts astro and macro photography. Marc Schäfer and Ingrid Schudel draw our gaze from the boundless space of the stars to the intricate patterns of spider webs and other tiny earth-bound wonders. Viewers are faced with the powerful forces of nature, the infinite scales of time and space, the dynamic between order and chaos, and the ‘metamorphic and evolutionary possibilities’ that arise in our vast universe.

We are Sky's Things will run on 23 and 25 June. For more information, go [here](#).

Whistleblowers

The final match of the hockey season takes on new metaphor in Afdajohannesburg's new production that is part tragedy, part comedy. Through physical and visual performance, searing story-telling, and surrealist dream sequences, the play tackles the plight of women in South Africa. As the players burst onto the field, the challenges that the women players face behind the scenes are revealed, and they must decide whether to attack or defend.

Whistleblowers will run from 23-36 June. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).

The Absolutely Mental Magic Show

This is a show that children and adults alike will love. The award-winning mentalist and magician, Brendon Peel, and world-record-holding escapologist, Li Lau, get together to wow audiences with their mind-bending mentalism, daring feats, and world-class illusions. The duo that has been featured on *Britain's Got Talent* will be live in Makhanda to entertain, shock, and keep festival-goers on their toes.

The Absolutely Mental Magic Show runs from 25-30 June. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).



Image supplied: Li Lau and Brendon Peel present *The Absolutely Mental Magic Show*

Can't-Centrare

Finding humour in the chaos is the fuel of great comedy, and the past few years have provided plenty. Award-winning comedian, Yaaseen Barnes, presents a comedy show packed with ideas, thoughts, and jokes of a busy mind in a mad world. Reflecting on the messy process of attention and how we are constantly bombarded with new information, Barnes is sure to make the audience laugh and reflect in equal proportions. With seven performances lined up for NAF, he thinks that the world is burning and that we may as well go down laughing.

Can't-Centrare will run from 23-30 June, with an additional show on 2 July. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).

I'm Not Angry – I Swear!

The Comics Choice Awards nominee Emilio Tobias will perform his first solo stand-up comedy show in Makhanda this year. Set to entertain and reflect on uniquely South African quirks and challenges, Tobias will ground his show in childhood tales of growing up in Eldorado Park, Soweto.

I'm Not Angry - I Swear! runs from 28-30 June. For more information and to book tickets, go [here](#).

Spiritfest Programme

A wide array of spiritual and religious gatherings will take place over the Festival period for free. From weekend and weekday worship services to musical performances, prayer walks, and SpiritFest Winter talks, there are lots of opportunities for spiritual contemplation and celebration amidst the busyness of NAF. Details about the events can be found on the NAF and Grahamstown Cathedral websites.

With an eclectic and wide-ranging offering from some of South Africa's most promising performers, the Fringe hopes to

play its part in reigniting the creative engine of South African arts and culture. NAF encourages artists and arts lovers to help revive the decades-long Festival tradition. With a programme that promises to entertain, engage, and provoke, you will not regret the journey back to NAF 2022.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>