

The Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival line-up

This year's Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival, dubbed "21 Years of Arts Alive", festivities kick off on 1 September 2013, at Zoo Lake with the Jazz on the Lake concert, running until 10 September.

The Afro-Cuban All Stars, A Visual Arts Tribute to Sipho Hotstix Mabuse; The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre- British hip hop outfit Mattafix; "Queen of the Dance" Lebo Mathosa; Jamaican spoken word artist Mutabaruka; Xhosa crooner Ringo Madlingozi; the Jeane Ballet Dance from the Ivory Coast; R&B vocalist Tamia; American rapper 50 Cent; Busi Mhlongo; Senegalese giant Cheikh Lo - Blk Sonshine; Nigeria's Femi Kuti; Korean-American spoken word artist Ishle Park; the Kasi Movie Nights; and Belgian-Congolese a cappella artists Zap Mama are just a sampling of the incredible offerings that the Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival (JAAIF) has brought to Joburg during its 21 years of existence.

An uncompromising commitment to delivering quality acts from all over the world, while providing a platform for local talent to shine, has seen the festival earn a reputation as one of the city's richest multi-disciplinary cultural offerings. Year on year, the Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival has put on a programme that makes sure to deliver excellence, while including a variety of artistic genres, from dance, visual arts, poetry, music, theatre, film and comedy.

In 2013, this commitment remains unwavering. The programme consists of a collection of arts exhibitions, dance, poetry and musical performances, theatre productions and film screenings.

Shaped by our apartheid past

"For too long our City continues to be shaped by our apartheid past. It is still divided between rich and poor areas, white and black areas, townships and suburbs. The Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival is a concrete way in which we can begin to redress this - it brings together people from across the city; makes use of new spaces and reminds us that Joburg can be a liveable city in which people can live, work, and play."

Chris Vondo, member of the Mayoral Council for Community Development, said: "We are re-stitching our city to create a different future for our residents where we can link jobs to people and people to jobs. Again, the festival contributes to the city's vision by creating jobs and opening up economic opportunity. After 21 years, we are confident that we have got the formula right."

This year's festivities kick off with the Jazz on the Lake concert. This year's line-up features Don Laka, Mafikizolo, Phuzekhemisi, the up-and-coming Brenda Mntambo, the Sufi Gospel Project from India, the Puisano Jazz project, and the Satchmo Sax Summit out of New Orleans.

The festivities continue over the next week and a half, and include a Land Art exhibition on the embankment by Braamfontein's Melle Street, created out of trees and foliage by artist Neil le Roux in collaboration with the students of the National School of the Arts, a production of Athol Fugard's Nongogo, starring Fana Mokoena and Desmond Dube, amongst others, the Kasi Movie Nights - mobile movies that visit various city regions not exposed to cinema culture, Standard Bank Young Artist winner Fana Tshabalala's dance piece Indumba, and the Speak the Mind Spoken Word sessions, featuring amongst others, Natalie Stewart, one half of the duo Floetry. There will also be a poignant reunion, with Senegal's Germaine Acogny who performed at the Dance Umbrella some 21 years ago, returning in 2013 to celebrate the company's 25th anniversary with her new solo work called Songook Yaakaar (facing up to hope).

A focus on celebrating South Africa's BRICS partnership also has a variety of art from Brazil, India, and China as part of the festival's billing. Shared Histories brings India to the party with ShubhendraRao and SaskiaRao's fusion of Indian and Western classical musical performance, the Sufi Gospel Project, where traditional Western gospel merges with Indian classical sound, and the Bollywood Public Dance Workshop, amongst other treats. The People's Republic of China comes

through with the collaborative Spring Concert Orchestral Celebration, featuring pianist Xue Xiaoqui and conductor Lei Yu, working with the Johannesburg Youth Orchestra. Brazil and South Africa deliver a classical jazz experience with South to South - an Evening of the Masters", featuring Hugh Masekela and Brazilian maestro Egberto Gismonti in a one-night-only performance.

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