

Eclectic mix at The Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival 2014

The Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival 2014 will infuse the city with the arts this September with a mix of dance, theatre, music, poetry, comedy and visual arts over a 10-day period.



Ever committed to ensuring that Joburgers are afforded a range of artistic offerings from across the world, the festival has enlisted the talents of artists as far afield as Brazil, the US, India, France, and China, amongst others.

As per tradition, the festival opens with the much-loved Jazz on the Lake concert, set to take place on Sunday, 31 August - the legendary Johnny Clegg will headline the festival, accompanied by crooner Vusi Nova, a cappella sensation The Soil, and vocalists Colberth, and Mbuso Khoza.

A new development in the annual arts festival is that much of the activity will take place at the Joburg Theatre, one of the city's finest performance venues. From dance, music and the staple of theatre, the Joburg Theatre will host a range of performances over the 10 days of the festival.

This year's edition of Dance Umbrella features a range of collaborations between South Africans and dancers from different countries. Amongst the performances are the renowned Gregory Maqoma works with Spanish choreographer Roberto Olivan De La Iglesia to present *Lonely Together*. Casting an eye at one of South Africa's most painful tragedies, *Cargo* is a collaboration between Dance Forum, Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative, the Fortune Cookie Theatre Company and composer Concord Nkabinde. The piece tells Saartjie Baartman's story, with a specific focus on her ill-fated journey from South Africa to France in 1810.

20 Years of Democracy Diva's Concert

As a tribute and celebrations to South Africa's 20 Years of Democracy, the festival will host a 20 Years of Democracy Diva's Concert, featuring one of Brazil's most celebrated vocalists, Tania Maria. The vocal legend will be joined on stage by Cape Verde's Nancy Viera, Isabella Novella of Mozambique and South Africa's own Lulu Dikana.

In theatre, award-winning actor Charles Dutton will bring his autobiographical one-hander *From Jail to Yale* to theatre-loving audiences, an inspiring chronicling of his life story of triumph over almost overwhelming adversity. Popularly known for his many TV and film roles, this established Hollywood player is definitely one of the festival's highlights, and will run at Joburg Theatre's Fringe Theatre.

Renowned stage production, *9 Parts of Desire* forms part of the Shared History Festival's section of the Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival. A one-woman play that depicts the lives of nine Iraqi women surviving Saddam Hussein's oppressive regime, and the aftermath after his rule, *9 Parts of Desire* has toured the world, and will find a temporary Joburg home at the Auto & General Theatre on the Square.

Can You Sing Like MaBrrrr? competition

In homage to one of South Africa's greatest vocalists, in partnership with the Brenda Fassie Legacy project, the festival will be hosting the Can You Sing Like MaBrrrr? competition, for singers who believe that their stagecraft and vocals reflect the fire that Brenda Fassie brought to every performance.

The 10-day festival will round off, appropriately, with the inaugural SEAexpo (Showbiz, Entertainment and Arts Expo) at Newtown's Sci-Bono venue. The event is an exhibition and conferencing expo for the creative industries. The industry gathering plans to gather practitioners, media and opinion-makers in the fields of film, visual arts, theatre, fashion, TV, crafts, amongst others to network and showcase their businesses.

Cllr Chris Vondo, the Member of the Mayoral Committee for Community Development said the festival, dubbed "10 Days in September" will give residents and visitors to the city exciting opportunities to experience some of the best talents in the fields of dance, music, theatre and the fine arts.

"The Johannesburg Arts Alive International Festival confirms Johannesburg's position as South Africa's cultural capital and a city that can host world-class events that are accessible to all communities," said MMC Vondo. "We want to draw in audiences from all age groups, social, economic and cultural background to ensure that this becomes the most inclusive and successful arts festival ever hosted in the country. And it remains the city's commitment to ensure that all our facilities and open spaces are accessible to the public so that the principle of social cohesion is realized. Let's remember, that the arts have played a critical role in transforming the city over the past 20 years; and Arts Alive has been an important contributor to this."

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