

Setting the scene for the exciting lineup of TEDxCapeTown 2013

 By [Sue Northam](#)

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"So who are you most looking forward to hearing speak at TEDxCapeTown 2013?" Not an uncommon question, but a rather uncomfortable one for me. Having helped curate the line up, working closely with so many of the speakers, being fascinated with their ideas, editing their bios and getting the chance to explore the connections between them, how the collective story builds into something quite unintentionally profound makes this an extremely tough question to answer.

I was always the kid who wanted the party packet and not just one chocolate, the girl who chooses 'rainbow colours' as my favourite rather than just one colour and who loves all animals (but yes, mostly cats!).

Curated by the team of [TEDxCapeTown](#), the event will consist of 20 speakers sharing 20 ideas worth spreading, each an amazing person with an idea worth spreading.

While I am truly unable to pick a favourite, perhaps their delivery will sway me on the day... But till then, here's a little bit of insight into why I just can't wait for Saturday:



Tony Elvin

Inspiring me to action

Tony Elvin ([@MrTonyElvin](#)), an outsider to Cape Town, and yet someone who has taught me more history about Langa in an hour than I have learnt myself growing up in Cape Town in a lifetime.

Much like Salt River's Biscuit Mill, Tony has envisioned the 'Langa Quarter', a sustainable tourism precinct and social enterprise hub in the geographical centre of the wider City of Cape Town and South Africa's oldest black township, Langa.

Yes, between the economic nodes of Belville, Claremont and the CBD lies the triangle of Langa, Athlone and Pinelands. It's wonderful how an 'outsider' can inspire a love of my own city, a desire to learn more about my country and strive for my aspirational best!

Then there is John McInroy ([@johnmcinroy](#)), the man who ends most conversations with 'ShoOops' much like a prayer ends with Amen. He is humble and warm hearted, infectious and just your everyday kinda guy. While I have worn my red socks every Friday since I met him, it is more the ethos of his way of being that reminds me that it's not about what we do, but how we do it.



John McInroy

Warming my heart

"Some people see things and ask why, others see things that never were and ask why not", this favourite quote of mine makes me think fondly of Karen Dudley ([@lovethekitchen](#)).

As the resident mother hen of most of Woodstock, she must be the giver and receiver of an abundance of hugs everyday. Whether a big embrace or a gentle love from one of her tasty morsels, Karen is the epitome of how we can live love through service. Whether stirring a spoon of sugar into someone's tea and 'administering a lemon square' as she says, or creating one of her gorgeous Love Sandwiches, Karen inspires connection through one of the most common things we all share, food and the devotion of sharing.



Karen Dudley

Plus her infectious twinkle in her eye makes her look like she is about to burst into giggles at any given moment. 1 x side order of Love and 2 x spoonfuls of extra special amazingness please!

Also in the spirit of food, but a whole other approach to it, is Leonie Joubert ([@LeonieJoubert](#)) with her wisdom of helping to internalise the very out there issue of food security.

While my thoughts were always to the worldly way of 'produce more maize and we'll be fine', she in fact considered food security as a 'hidden hunger', of how the food that is produced is then so over processed into all sorts of things that most of us are actually eating 'dead food'. She also talks about how cities make us fat and sick, and that we must consider the quality of the calories we consume. Factual, informative and inspiring. Definitely an idea worth spreading!



Leonie Joubert

Driving solutions for the future

Having recently been introduced to an interactive app that is teaching me and my partner French, I am fascinated by the way it almost knows where we're at in our learning level. It repeats things, and uses different approaches to test us from written to audio exercises.



Rapelang Rabana

Technology entrepreneur Rapelang Rabana ([@rapelangrabana](#)) has a similar concept at the core of her new company, ReKindle Learning. Plus I love the name and am excited to hear where this young aspirant entrepreneur will go next!

Johnny Anderton ([@Eternallysolar](#)) had my attention when he spoke at a speaker workshop about travelling the world for ten years on a yacht. I often daydream of tropical islands, so this idyllic image really stuck with me. But then he reflected on the confined space within which they existed, though not from a negative angle but rather in terms of how we must utilise our space.

This, and a whole bunch of other life lessons, eventually saw him living back in Cape Town where he has since developed the 'ekhaya', an affordable informal housing solution. With a clever roof structure, he talks about the value in making use of space by building up.

It has made me reflect on how sometimes many of us actually need less space to live in, rather than extra rooms, over-sized gardens and endless cupboards to clutter, perhaps we'd be better off with less stuff and more well utilised spaces.



Johnny Anderton



Angela Horn

A fitting follow on then, is a lady I can't wait to hear more from. Partly cos I am a lover of organising things, but also because I have a mother who is a lover of collecting many things as am I. Angela Horn ([@angelagayehorn](#)) calls herself an avid minimalist.

Yes, someone who indeed has less clutter and more cupboard space. I have always felt that collecting things, and clutter, is more about emotional attachment above anything else but the decision to de-clutter is a very personal one. I can't wait to hear more about her journey!

Adding to my understanding of the world

I am fascinated by moon cycles and the impact of these universal elements on our Earth's tides, the ebb and flow of our seas as well as how stars and other systems exist beyond our wildest dreams. With great fascination we will get to hear

from Jasper Horrell ([@jasperhorrell](#)), one of the main guys behind the Square Kilometre Array project, the massive configuration of telescopes right here in South Africa that will soon be able to map our universe to infinity and beyond!



Jasper Horrell

As an avid SA music lover, Shannon Hope's ([@ShannonHope](#)) story is one close to my heart. She is a beautiful and brave young woman. Brave, because she truly made the decision to follow the dream that had been in her heart since she was a little girl.



Shannon Hope

The dream of performing, of playing piano, of writing songs, of doing what she knew she was destined to do. Our country doesn't have a fully-fledged music industry or enough local loyalty to support SA musicians to be the stars they are, but for those who persevere the proof is in their playing, in their performance - its what she was born to do. We should never forget that behind every musician, every artist, are so many beautiful stories waiting to be shared. And with a name like Hope, well it certainly seems destined in the stars!

Starting to get excited

Despite having worked on the [TEDxCapeTown](#) team for many months ahead of our 20 July event, my excitement only started to build on 11 July when we chatted to Warren Harding ([@BizcomWazza](#)) on the [Biz Takeout](#) show on 2OceansVibe Radio.

For the first time, it felt a milestone to be able to share it publicly on radio and realise that we'd actually achieved a hell of a lot. We had speakers, some sponsors, a venue, a programme and even a sold out show over two weeks before the event.

Don't stop the magic

In true TEDxCapeTown ([@tedxcapetown](#)) spirit though, we didn't stop there. So with livestreaming being a big cost, we worked hard still to cover this cost and create this solution so that the content of the TEDx Talks, and the magic on the day can be shared far and wide beyond the interior of the Baxter Hall on Saturday 20 July.

We want anyone with a good broadband connection, from here to Helsinki, Harare to Hawaii and in between, to join in, to tweet and to be part of the unfolding of ideas worth spreading at TEDxCapeTown 2013 'Amazing People, Crazy Places'.

You can also listen to some of the TEDxCapeTown 2013 speakers being interviewed on the 18 July 2013 Biz Takeout show. Warren Harding will be chatting to Tony Elvin, the enigma behind the exciting Langa Quarter, Karen Dudley of The Kitchen and John McInroy.

Are you excited yet? ShoOops!

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ABOUT SUE NORTHAM

Sue Northam is a curious Capetonian with a desire to discover and capture stories of innovative and inspiring projects and people. She explores initiatives that are impactful and making a difference in her city. Shaping words and ideas is her thing. Sue is a freelance content and comms strategist, editor and writer. www.suenortham.blogspot.com and www.inspirebeing.blogspot.com

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