

National Arts Festival Makhanda Live bookings are now open

The National Arts Festival has opened bookings for its 2021 Makhanda Live curated hybrid programme - which will take place in Makhanda from 8 to 18 July. All tickets can be bought on the Festival's website. **Due to the worsening Covid-19 situation the concerts in Joburg have been cancelled.**

The Festival has, together with partner Standard Bank - Arts, reviewed the current Covid-19 situation in Johannesburg and has made the decision to discontinue all audiences for the #StandardBankPresents concerts on the Johannesburg programme.

Tickets for these shows will be fully refunded. The Standard Bank Presents events in Cape Town and Gqeberha are going ahead with audiences, and tickets for those events remain on sale. All of the Johannesburg concerts will be recorded for the #NAFOnline programme and we look forward to sharing more details about that in the days to come.

In Makhanda, the festival will be staged live in venues across the city with limited audiences and full Covid-19 protocols in place. The festival is reinventing its format by crossing over into the hybrid space when the Very Big Comedy Show unites live performances in three cities (Cape Town, Johannesburg and Makhanda) via a stream that will be presented online too.



A scene from "Etherality" - Source: Supplied

The festival is expecting to attract most of its visitors from the Eastern Cape where there is already a loyal following of day-trippers who come for their annual fix and hopes that passionate art lovers from elsewhere will come too. The Eastern Cape will also be showcasing its talents across the programme from the Dakawa Jazz Festival to the Eastern Cape Dance Ensemble and the Eastern Cape Philharmonic Orchestra who will present the Gala Concert conducted by Richard Cock, with guest musician 2018 Standard Bank Young Artist for Music, Guy Buttery. They will also present the ever-popular Children's Concert.

Also from the Eastern Cape Asanda Mqiki and Dumza Mzwana will be performing live on the Standard Bank Jazz Festival programme; the show will be available on the NAF online programme too. Festival-goers will also be rewarded with a performance by songbird Sibongile Mngoma as she celebrates jazz and opera.



National Arts Festival to present in-person, virtual and nationwide programme in 2021

10 May 2021



A much-anticipated show at the festival is *Kamphoer – Die Verhaal van Susan Nell* starring Sandra Prinsloo as a survivor of the horror of a British concentration camp during the Anglo-Boer war. The creative documentary project *One Take Grace* reflects the decade-long collaboration between artist Lindiwe Matshikiza and actor and community leader Mothiba Grace Bapela, who met while working as a part-time actor and full-time domestic worker.



Sandra Prinsloo in "Kamphoer, Die Verhaal van Susan Nell" - image credit Jesse Kramer - Source: Supplied

Clare Stopford's *Covid Moons* tells the story of the disorientation and dislocation of the early days of the coronavirus and our bewildered attempts to survive a full lockdown. In a noisy world, The Listening Biennial brings together an international group of artists, musicians, and researchers, as well as institutions and collectives across the globe, to foster questions and experiences of listening.

Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja's *Zilin* is a sonic journey through a borderless Africa using Zilin, a vocal technique from Benin in Africa; a musical style that is used in rituals and practices. Another musical journey, this time through film, is *My Culture, My Music*; a celebration of the unique cultural landscape of South Africa through the expression of music. The large cast includes Simphiwe Dana and the 2020 National Arts Festival featured artist Madosini.



Simphiwe Dana appears in the film "My Culture, My Music" - Source: Supplied

Co-creators Oupa Sibeko and Nicola Pilkington collaborate in *Black is Blue*. Drawing from the widespread practice of using seawater for healing and spiritual purposes and linked to the 'people of water', for whom the sea is a realm of ancestors, the work calls people to embrace the myth of an inland sea as a way to rethink the urban space; returning to the sea to repair wounds and find spiritual grounding.

Metsi journeys through a relationship tested by tough times and asks what you have left to give when you have nothing to give but your inner being.

Classical concert Reflections by the Gqeberha String Trio weaves together the unconventional combination of violin (David Bester), viola (Jan-Hendrik Harley) and double bass (Mariechen Meyer) taking listeners on a musical tour. In Planets and Symphonies Deconstructed, the Eastern Cape Philharmonic Orchestra Horn Ensemble presents a programme that showcases this versatile instrument.

Curator and artist Zodwa Skeyi-Tutani's interdisciplinary live performance work *Inertia: Ubungeyo Mpazamo/Elwandle/Nithi Ngibanina Lo Makanda* takes place at The Monument in Makhanda, weaving through a wounded history to address the silences that perpetuate divisions and exclusion in the communities of Makhanda. In this retelling, the artists invoke a strategy of mothering and care with the use of the various aspects of *Intsomi*, acknowledging the weight of the residue of colonial trauma still present in the place today.



What to expect from the National Arts Festival's countrywide programme

17 Jun 2021



Umdiyadiya is an isiXhosa word to describe the cloth installed inside the house to create the demarcation of rooms. The theatre piece *Umdiyadiya* is inspired by collective memories and seeks to track historical events in Black households during South Africa's turbulent recent past. Artist Wezile Mgibe remembers time spent in both welcoming and unwelcoming spaces, reflecting on experiences with family and friends.

The Award Ceremony is a film in three parts that tells the tale of a little girl anxiously awaiting her grandmother's return to bring her new shoes so she can collect her school awards, it stars Kgalalelo Mfokazane, Sindi Montsho and Thishiwe

Ziqubu. Rwandan filmmaker Kantarama Gahigiri's *Ethereality* is the story of a man stranded in space for thirty years who finally gets to come home. Selected for the Chicago International Film Festival (2020), and screened previously at Clermont-Ferrand (2020) and Kurzfilmtage Winterthur (2019). *What Did You Dream* completes the triple bill with its tale set in the summer holidays in 1990 South Africa when 11-year-old Boipelo becomes consumed by the fact that, unlike her two cousins, she can no longer remember her dreams and, therefore, can't help her granny play Fahfee.

Festival favourite Aaron McIlroy brings some satire into the mix with a hilarious look at the world of tone-deaf dudes and privilege in its many forms in the comedy *The Apology*.



Aaron McIlroy in "The Apology" - Source: Supplied

National Arts Festival artistic director Rucera Seethal says: "The programme weaves through many distinct and different stories and many ways of telling stories too. Some are quiet and thoughtful, others are brimming with rage and hurt and many seek perspective on events past and present. We see the audience engaging in contemplative spaces with this programme and imagine it will leave them with much to think about in a time that calls us to re-engage with everything anew."

The 2021 Fringe programme straddles the online space and returns to live stages in Makhanda. The Fringe programme will be released shortly. Excellence at the Fringe will once again enjoy the recognition of the Standard Bank Ovation Awards, which will review the works on the NAF 2021 Fringe and select those that stand apart. The Awards will culminate in an online ceremony to announce Gold, Silver and Bronze winners from the Festival.

To view the full Makhanda Live programme, visit nationalartsfestival.co.za/category/naf2021/makhanda-live/

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