

INTWASA

ARTS FESTIVAL KOBULAWAYO



Intwasa Director at
Grahamstown Arts Festival

Competing against a **Standard**

INTWASA



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Copyright Editor: Runyararo Mutandi
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LAPF House, Suite 403, 8th Avenue & J. Moyo Avenue, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

If the Zimbabwean identity was a mere piece of clothing that one could pick up from a wardrobe and wear what colour would it be? What fabric would it be made of? One thing for sure it will be a cloth of many colours. A quilt, woven by the best hands. At least that is what we were left thinking after attending the My Zimbabwe Dialogue Workshop hosted by The Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust in collaboration with UNDP. The workshop was an eye-opener. Let's face it. Many Zimbabweans we know prefer to be something else other than what they are - Zimbabweans. Many young people we know would rather be American citizens and in Matabeleland more than half the people instinctively identify with South Africa than Zimbabwe. The tragedy of Zimbabwe is that it is divided. It is a country where we seem to notice our differences more than our similarities.

But we are Zimbabweans and nothing will ever change that. The image many foreigners have about us can only be changed by us. Before we attended the My Zimbabwe Dialogue workshop we had decided as a festival to be proudly Zimbabwe - we even put the national flag on our 2013 publicity material. It is a fact that Intwasa Arts Festival koBulawayo is a Zimbabwean product. While embracing the different cultures of artists and arts lovers that come to perform and consume the arts at the festival our identity will always be rooted in Zimbabwean colours.

It is less than 70 days to the festival and we are already excited by some of the groups and acts that are coming to the festival. From South Africa we have Flatfoot Dance Company and the highly talented Omphile Moluse confirmed. Omphile was recently at HIFA where he brought the house down with his one man play "Itsoseng". Flatfoot Dance Company will be coming all the way from Durban with their contemporary dance production Last Thoughts. Their visit comes at a time when the city of Bulawayo and Durban are strengthening cultural ties. The two cities are twinned and for years Zimbabwean artists have been going to Durban for cultural exchanges. This year Bulawayo is hosting! The two South African acts are coming to Zimbabwe courtesy of Pro Helvetia and Swiss Development Corporation.

Our schools program also continues to grow. This year we have performances for young audiences starting from pre-school all the way to high schools. Watch out for the Plan High Schools Drama Finals, The Habitat Safaris Children's Dance Competition, Kolobeja - Stories from a Zimbabwean childhood.

Raisedon Baya
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR



INTWASA DIRECTOR AT GRAHAMSTOWN ARTS FESTIVAL (S.A)

A week after the return of Miss Runyararo Mutandi, Intwasa's administrator, from her seven week stint at Swaziland's MTN Bushfire Festival Raisedon Baya, the festival director, left for the Novel-Script Writing Project at the South Africa's National Arts Festival in Grahamstown.

Raisedon Baya, the festival director at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown.

The festival is one of the largest festivals in Africa and the world hosting more than 500 performances in 11 days. Baya, a renowned playwright in his own right, attended the unique writing workshop that focuses on adapting novels into theatre scripts. The project, coordinated by Twists Theatre Development Projects (S.A), brought together writers, actors and directors from South Africa, Zimbabwe and the Netherlands to work on adapting the satirical South African novel "The Miracle of Crocodile Flats" by Jenny Hobbs.

"Adaptation is a specialised skill. The workshop was fantastic. The participants were amazing. My eyes were opened wide. To be honest there are a lot of great stories in Zimbabwe in the form of novels and short stories and these could bring in new audiences to the theatre if adapted well. During HIFA Shimmer Chinodya's adaptation of his novel Harvest of Thorns drew a lot of interest from people who had read the book before. At Grahamstown we were able to watch Madonna of Excelsior. A brilliant adaptation of Zakes Mda's novel of the same name. It was a great workshop and a great experience," said Baya.

Baya also used the opportunity to network and scout for new and exciting acts for Intwasa 2014





MY ZIMBABWE DIALOGUE WORKSHOP SERIES

A month ago the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust in partnership with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) hosted a workshop for Bulawayo's creative sector at the National Art Gallery. The workshop was attended by Pathisa Nyathi, Jeys Marabini, William Nyandoro, Cliff Zulu Priscilla Sithole Ncube, Tswalero Mothobe, Tomeki Dube and other artists. It was facilitated by Chipu Chikara and Heeten Bargat. The objective of the workshop was to encourage national dialogue and development through the arts.

In encouraging dialogue as a way of solving problems rather than resorting to violent means the workshop had participants asking themselves the following questions:

1. Is it possible to be Zimbabwean and proud?
2. What is the true Zimbabwean identity?
3. What is the rope that binds us together as Zimbabweans?
4. How and when do we find common ground?

It was quickly noted that the tragedy with Zimbabwe is that half the time we celebrate our differences instead of our similarities. These dialogue series are the beginning of that journey towards finding and celebrating a shared history.

Interestingly the workshop started with participants using their creativity to interrogate their identities. Participants were placed in groups and asked to design T-shirts with messages about Zimbabwe or designing a national flag. Later in the day participants created jingles and performed them in front of everyone. The designs that came out and the thinking behind them were mind blowing. In the ensuing discussions the participants were encouraged to interrogate the past, present and future of Zimbabwe. Participants shared their different ideas and experiences freely. Participants were frank about Zimbabwe and the issues affecting the country.

Commenting on the workshop Farai Mupfunya, the Executive Director of the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust, had this to say, "Lots of artist can play a critical role in being the country's ambassadors as they tour other countries, they can pass on information about Zimbabwe." In other words it is time for artists to stop being on the sidelines of national dialogue. Artists need to be in the centre. Watch out for My Zimbabwe Dialogue Series on the cyber space.

ZIMBABWE ARTS FESTIVALS MANAGERS WORKSHOP



In our last issue we wrote passionately about the need to set up a network of Zimbabwean festivals since festivals have become a popular and regular platform for celebrating national cultural heritage and marketing artistic goods and services. Festivals have also been identified as critical drivers for tourism. Well, it has happened. A couple of weeks ago about 18 Zimbabwe Festivals gathered in Harare and official launched the Zimbabwe Festivals Network.

The Network was formed after the Festivals Managers Workshop organised by Nhimbi Trust with the support of National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and funding from the UNESCO IFCD. The workshop had the following objectives:

To share experiences and good practice in festival management, marketing and resource mobilisation

To enhance understanding on the role of NACZ in the promotion, development and regulation of festivals.

To provide rationale on the need for the establishment of the Zimbabwe Festivals Network (ZFN)

To set up a steering committee to spearhead the mandate of ZFN including regularisation of ZFN with NACZ and other regulatory bodies.

We are excited about the new network, particularly coming immediately after the AFRIFESTNET launched the priceless Festivals Best Practice toolkit recently. Together we can do more.

The following people were elected into the steering committee:

1. Runyararo Mutandi - Intwasa Arts Festival koBulawayo
2. Maria Wilson - Harare International Festival of the Arts
3. Kenneth Page - Rainbow Arts Festival
4. Nigel Mnyathi - Zimbabwe International Film Festival
5. Brain Banda - Dzimbahwe Arts Festival





COMPETING AGAINST A STANDARD

Plan High schools Drama Competitions preliminaries 2013

With the high standard of plays presented at Intwasa Arts Festival koBulawayo 2012 still lingering in our minds the biggest challenge for schools in 2013 was going to be a competition not against each other but against the standard which they set for themselves last year. Partners in the project, as well as the audience that follow the schools drama competition, were expecting nothing below the standard of previous editions of the competition. Disappointingly most schools in the 2013 preliminaries were found wanting.

Three preliminaries have been done at Mpopoma High School, Townsend Girls High school and Eveline Girls High. The response from the schools was soothing. At Mpopoma there were eight schools, at Eveline High nine schools and at Townsend High nine schools. From each pool two schools automatically qualified for the finals to be held during Intwasa Arts Festival koBulawayo 2013. Meanwhile the third and fourth placed schools are to square it off during playoffs to fill the last two slots for the Bulawayo province. Bulawayo province has eight slots in the final and the other three slots will be filled by three schools, two schools from Kwekwe and one school from Harare respectively.

The schools that have made it straight to the finals are Eveline Girls High School, Mzilikazi High School, Townsend Girls High School, Gifford Boys high School, Msiteli High Schools and Milton Boys High school.

While one can write home about the presentation of a handful of schools, the rest of the schools' presentation was average. Most plays lacked depth in terms of plot development as well as treatment of the theme "too young to marry". Most of the issues which the schools chose to address were not relevant to current urban lifestyles. The stories were ancient, influenced by traditional and cultural norms on arranged child marriages. We were all expecting to see a depiction of urban life as we live in a city but most schools chose a rural setup which they also failed to conduct a detailed research on. Participants were supposed to tackle the causes of these early marriages which are current as well as the consequences of one entering into this kind of setup and also the benefits of waiting.

While some schools exhibited good talents there were let down by bad stories. The reverse is true, where they were good stories the acting and blocking was mediocre. Those who are in the final they have to spend an extra hour in the rehearsal hall and fine tune their presentations in preparation for the finals s in September. Remember we are competing against a standard.

By Nelson Mapako
(Adjudicator)



MY MTN BUSHFIRE EXPERIENCE

MTN BUSHFIRE Swaziland's International Festival of the Arts was held from the 31st of May to the 2nd of June 2013 under the theme "Bring Your Fire".

Festival Administrator of Intwasa Arts Festival koBulawayo, Runyararo Cynthia Mutandi was in Swaziland for 6 weeks on an internship programme courtesy of Africalia Belgium through SCAZIM (Steering Committee of Africalia in Zimbabwe). The main objective of the internship was to strengthen the capacity of festivals in Zimbabwe.

The internship strengthened my skills as an administrator, as it became so much more than just an internship; it was more of a share/teach & learn experience, I became a part of the Bushfire team and will be bringing some of my experiences to build Intwasa up to be an even better festival. I believe this is the beginning of collaborations, synergies and collaborations between the 2 festivals and it is my desire that this can be an on going relationship as both festivals have something to learn from each other.

The MTN Bushfire festival has been in existence for 7 years and has been a success due to the support it receives from the corporate sector, the artists and the community (audiences) both local and international everyone brings their contribution, basically the sponsors, artists, community have a sense of ownership towards the festival, everybody wants to feel a part of it and support it in whichever way they can, big or small, be it in the form of sponsorship, partnership or even through buying a ticket.

Collaborations & networks between Zimbabwean and Swaziland artists need to be established, it's something we're working towards as a festival – resources permitting.

Runyararo left Zimbabwe on the 27th of April and worked with the bushfire committee in preparing for the festival.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

SOME WINNERS OF THE INTWASA SHORT STORY COMPETITION (NOW NAMED THE YVONNE VERA AWARD)

We thought it would be interesting to catch up on what some of the winners of the short story competition have been doing.

THABISANI NDLOVU was the first winner of the competition. At the time Thabs was a teacher of Literature in English at Falcon College. He describes the effect of his story 'Cold Careless Hands' winning the competition as 'reviving my interest in creative writing and being a challenge to produce even better work.' In terms of creative writing, Thabs has contributed short stories to Short Writings from Bulawayo III, Long Time Coming: Short Writings from Zimbabwe and Where to Now? Short Stories from Zimbabwe. He has also had short stories appear in other anthologies, including the Caine Prize for African Writing. Thabs is an accomplished short story writer and is presently working on an anthology of his own stories. Thabs also has a piece in Writers, Writing on Conflicts and Wars in Africa, edited by Okey Ndibe and Chenjerai Hove, and is working on the translation of Where to Now? Short Stories from Zimbabwe into isiNdebele.



Since winning the competition, Dr Ndlovu has been awarded a PhD in African Literature in English from Witwatersrand University and is now Deputy Director of the International Human Rights Exchange there.

BRYONY RHEAM won the competition in 2006 with her story 'The Reunion', which concerns a woman who is consumed with jealousy at a party where she thinks she sees someone she went to school with who appears beautiful and successful. Winning Intwasa, 'gave me the confidence to carry on writing. I enjoy writing short stories and it's great to know that others might also enjoy them.' Bryony has had short stories in many Zimbabwe anthologies and her first novel, This September Sun, published by 'amaBooks in Zimbabwe and Parthian Books in the United Kingdom, won Best First Book at the 2010 Zimbabwe Book Publishers Association Awards and the e-book recently topped the 'Best Sellers' list for books sold in the United Kingdom on Amazon.



Bryony has a BA and MA in English, and presently works as a teacher of English, in Ndola in Zambia.

NOVUYO ROSA TSHUMA won the competition in 2009, which had been then renamed the Yvonne Vera Award, with 'You in Paradise', about the peculiarities of being an immigrant in Johannesburg. The tale is weaved around a scene on a street corner in central Johannesburg, where mayhem erupts at the sight of a police truck - one famed for rounding up illegal immigrants. The story is also featured in her recently published novella and story collection with Kwela in South Africa, Shadows. She comments: 'Winning the Yvonne Vera Award was a major boost to my writing confidence. I was young - 21 - and still in the process of formulating my writing voice. It motivated me to keep writing, keep experimenting, and to see where the story goes.'

Since winning, Novuyo has had short fiction published in The Bed Book of Short Stories, A Life In Full and Other Stories: Caine Prize Anthology 2010 and Where to Now? Short Stories from Zimbabwe, and has attended the Farafina Summer Writing and the Caine Prize for African Writing workshops.



Novuyo has completed her degree studies in South Africa and has recently been awarded a Maytag Fellowship for the Iowa MFA Creative Writing Programme in the USA.

WHY ARTS NEED SOCIAL MEDIA



Having worked with artists and practitioners from a cross section of disciplines, I have met with interesting views on how artists feel about Social Media, or anything to do with computers.

Some feel it has nothing to do with them, seeing that they are still comfortable with the publicity they think they have. Some on the other hand, dive into the sea only to get lost in confusion when they realize their self-perception is not validated by the online or internet community.

Social media is an unavoidable phenomenon, for creatives serious about growing their image, and reaching out to a wider audience. Media and the way people interact have been evolving since humans learnt communicating, it's only happening faster, and the agile are the ones to survive the publicity revolution. Those that try and give up part-way into the exercise are forgotten along with those that never tried. Suddenly it is not enough for an artist to be the creator of a masterpiece, because if not presented to the right audience, publicity will always be in the hands of competition. For artists to harness the full potential of social media, they don't just have to DO social media, but DO social media RIGHT.

'DO social media, but DO social media RIGHT..'

Creativity is synonymous with expression, and expression is futile without an audience, hence local creative content would cease to be meaningful if not expressed to the right audience using media of the audience's choice. Globalization presents an opportunity for the local creative sector to present itself as part of an international community, whose views are not limited by local experience. The most effective way of contributing in this community is through social media. Social media creates a platform for the local creative community to paint a brighter picture of themselves and the communities they come from.

Social media can be a complex arena, where doing things wrong could have worse effects than not doing things at all. There are however, many that are doing things right. It is the objective of this year's Social Media and the Arts workshop to share ideas with the winners and get advice from the experts. The following articles in this series will introduce the different forms of social media and give a preview of what to expect in this year's workshop at the 2013 Intwasa Festival.

INTWASA TRIVIA

1. Intwasa Arts Festival koBulawayo inaugurated in 2005.
2. Mokoomba, Zimbabwe's band of the moment, performed for the first time in Bulawayo at the 2012 edition of the festival.
3. The earlier editions of the festival were coordinated from the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe offices in Bulawayo.
4. Intwasa is a member of Africa Festival Network (AFRIFESTNET) and is in the steering committee of the newly formed Zimbabwe Festivals Network (ZFN)
5. The festival is held every month of September.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Almost always the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.

Martin Luther King Jnr

Art is about raising new questions, suggesting new possibilities and seeing old problems from a new angle.

Anonymous

It is the creative potential itself in human beings that is the image of God.

Mary Daly

A festival is a complex creature that requires careful tending and nurturing. Each festival director brings their own vision, experience, intuition, ambition, and inspiration to the process of shaping it - each one negotiates the politics, economics and social realities of the city where it takes place

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