

# The Savanna Comics' Choice Comedy Awards celebrates 10 years of laughter

By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Despite the number of issues facing South Africa and South Africans, we still find ways to laugh. Now in its 10th year, The Savanna Comics' Choice Comedy Awards is one of the most successful, longest-running comedy awards platforms in Africa.



Traditionally, the awards celebrated stand-up comedy, but new times bring new opportunities to celebrate more, and in a bid to take the awards appeal to a broader audience and become a household name, the Savanna Comics' Choice Comedy Awards (SCCCA) team has revamped its management and is also introducing new categories to celebrate comedy in all its forms.

With the awards last taking place in 2019, it was touch-and-go, whether it would be able to revive itself after the realities of the coronavirus, especially as comedy clubs closed their doors and stand-up comedians adapted to a new performance arena... online.

And now, 24 months later, and a whole lot of hard work behind the scenes, the Savanna Comics' Choice Comedy Awards is back with a new team bringing it all to life!

At the helm is entertainment marketing agency, One-eyed Jack, the founders of the DStv Content Creator Awards and now the new custodians of the Savanna Comics' Choice Comedy Awards.

## Highlights over the years

Manuela Dias de Deus, managing director of One-eyed Jack, shares more about how the awards have evolved over the years: "The awards first launched in 2011 and were such a hit, that, 10 years on (the Covid-19 years don't count), it's the longest running awards event of its kind in Africa. One-eyed Jack came onboard in 2012 and brought Savanna Premium Cider in as the event's key sponsor, who, along with the event's other brand partners, have helped it grow into the biggest comedy awards event in Africa."

For Dias de Deus, discovering new talent is always a highlight. "The first time I ever saw Lo... Gola and Schrik Bezhuidenhout was at the Savanna Newcomer Showcase years ago, and they brought the house down! Skhumba Hlophe was an emerging talent when he opened the show in the early years, and he's now one of the biggest comedians in the country, working with the likes of Tumi Morake and Celest Ntuli, and writers like Laz Gola."



Manuela Dias de Deus, managing director of One-eyed Jack



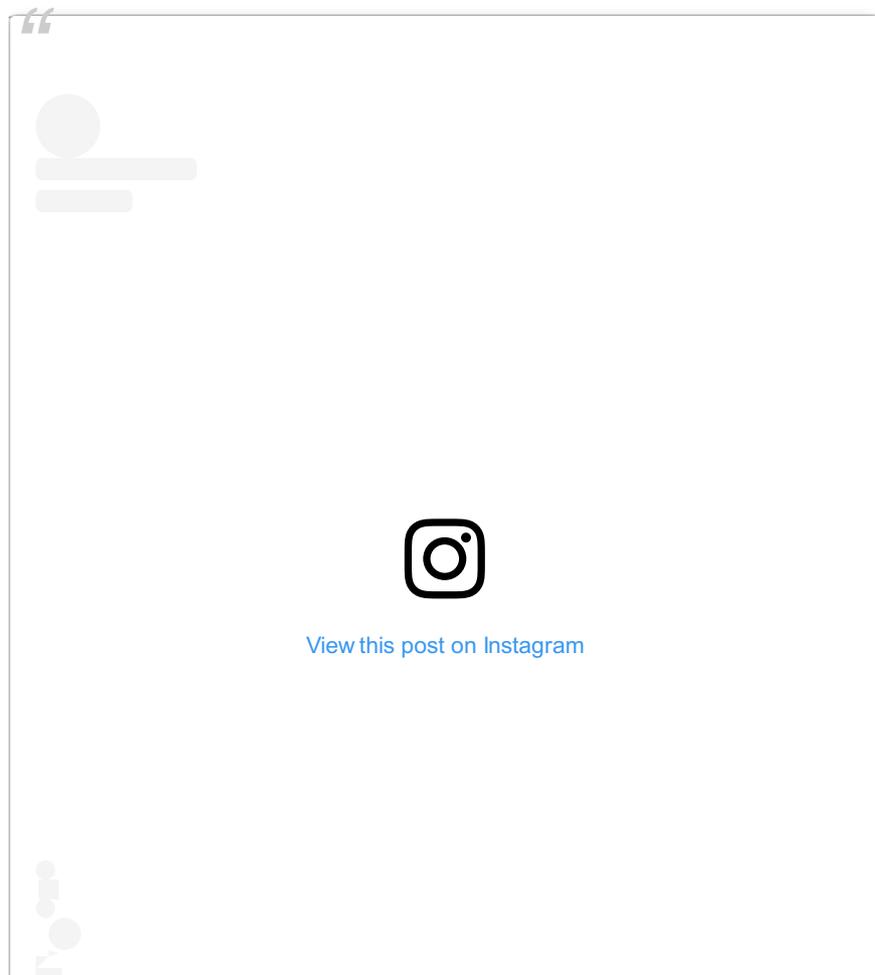
#BehindtheSelfie: Manuela Dias de Deus, owner of One-Eyed Jack marketing

Emily Stander 22 Jun 2022

"Then there's the awards event itself, which takes the format of a variety show. Some of the sketches over the years have been exceptionally funny, there's always a bit of a surprise moment that captures our hearts. The buzz of the red carpet and the full industry coming out to support, it's the one night of the year that they can all be together and the atmosphere is electric!"

### The Savanna Newcomer Showcase

In the build-up to the awards ceremony in April, there's The Savanna Newcomer Showcase that was created a number of years ago. This year, the event takes place in Cape Town for the very first time on 17 February 2023, when 20 newcomer comedians each get to perform five minutes of comedy for the industry.



A post shared by Comics' Choice Comedy Awards (@comicschoiceawards)

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"The Savanna Newcomer Showcase quickly grew a personality of its own, and has become a bit of a 'if you're in the know, you're in the know' kind of a gig that's attended by some of our country's best comedians, ad agencies, casting agents and talent scouts - all looking to discover the 'next big thing'," notes Dias de Deus.

This year's showcase will be hosted by two-time award winner Schalk Bezuidenhout.

### **New management**

The awards were previously owned by a separate entity that dissolved in 2019. One-eyed Jack has been the awards' agency since 2012, and were asked to come back as the custodians of the event, so that it could continue to exist.

"Understanding the massive knock to comedians' livelihoods over lockdown, with every comedy club in South Africa having to close its doors, we agreed to come onboard completely pro bono this year, to get the awards back to where they need to be, as we've seen first-hand the difference that they make to comedians' lives. The awards were created to build the industry, to highlight the stalwarts that have pioneered new paths, and to support emerging talent to be the best they can be, and we're committed to doing what we can to help the industry and to elevate careers, and to give it all we've got," explains Dias de Deus.



All the 2019 winners of the Savanna Comics' Choice Awards

9 Sep 2019



### **Bold new vision**

When asked about the vision for The Savanna Comics' Choice Comedy Awards, Dias de Deus responds enthusiastically, "We've changed so much, but have managed to still stay true to the legacy of the awards. We garnered feedback from the comedy industry and subsequently overhauled the registration and the voting system, introduced comedic content categories, launched an incubator workshop for emerging comedians, implemented plans to tour its pop-up events nationally each year, and have changed the time of year of the awards to coincide with the international awards season. The response and the support from the industry have been so encouraging, we're all so excited to see the campaign and the events unfold."

Dias de Deus continues, "Historically the awards event took place at a theatre in Johannesburg. This year, because it's the 10th year, we've changed the format of the event, it'll be glam, intimate, black-tie, a real 10th birthday celebration. It will take place on 15 April, watch this space..."

Tickets for the The Savanna Newcomer Showcase are available from <https://www.quicket.co.za/events/204756-the-savanna-newcomer-showcase/#>.

For more information, go to <https://comicschoice.com/>

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