

National Arts Fest unveils main programme line-up

The selections for the 2018 National Arts Festival have been completed and the line-up for the main programme stages has been unveiled.

The festival's executive producer Ashraf Johaardien says, "We received an overwhelming number of high-calibre proposals for consideration. Whittling these down to match the available space and resources at our disposal was no mean feat but the artistic committee tackled this gargantuan task with gusto and I feel confident that audiences can look forward to a bold but balanced programme of work that will both entertain and provoke."

Confirmed works

The confirmed works that will be on show at the National Arts Festival include Steven Cohen's performance art piece *put your heart under your feet... and walk! / to Elu*; an intense meditation on loss, grief and absence, following the death of Cohen's partner and artistic collaborator, the choreographer Elu. This work takes the form of a performance, a two-screen projection and an installation of sculptural objects. *A myriad pointe shoes* invoke Elu's absence and are collaged with other found objects embedded with histories, ideologies, beliefs, many of them recurrent images in Cohen's artistic lexicon.



Image by Pierre Planchenault

Mary Watson's *Jungfrau* will be presented in partnership with Festival Theaterformen (Germany). Directed and designed by Jade Bowers - 2017 Naledi Award Winner for Best Director and the 2016 Standard Bank Young Artist for Theatre - and adapted by Ameera Patel. This piece of theatre is based on the Caine prize-winning short story from Watson's collection, *Moss*.

Presented in partnership with Pro Helvetia, performer and electropunk musician Julian Meding takes on the role of a contemporary Hamlet rebelling against reality. Supported by a baroque ensemble assembled by last year's National Arts Festival featured artist Neo Muyanga, Meding embarks on a tour de force in which he reveals himself, his body and his

biography to the eyes of the audience.

UJ Can You programme

Staged is the University of Johannesburg (UJ) Arts & Culture's all-new play development platform, a public-facing extension of the hugely successful UJ Can You programme that actively identifies and develops talent from amongst UJ's 50,000 students.

Staged similarly seeks to nurture new plays and professional talent for the stage by creating a national platform to showcase selected works to local and international producers and presenters. Featured productions for 2018 National Arts Festival programme include Wynne Bredenkamp's *At The Edge Of the Light* (South Africa), Joakim Daun's *The Incident* (Sweden/Zimbabwe/South Africa) and Greg MacArthur's *A City* (Canada/South Africa).



2018 Standard Bank Young Artists announced

2 Nov 2017



Presented by the Market Theatre Laboratory and Windybrow Arts Centre Youth Drama Company in collaboration with Art of Synergy Circus School and supported by the French Institute of South Africa (IFAS), Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* is the story of a grown-up meeting his inner child. It's a philosophical contemplation of loneliness, friendship, adulthood, and authority retold for the stage.

The National Arts Festival has also secured the rights to screen the UK National Theatre's live theatre recordings which include *Angels In America*, *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?*, and *Hamlet*.

National Arts Festival featured artist for 2018 Mamela Nyamza will present her work on the main programme. Confirmed dance works include *Hatched* (a retrospective piece about becoming a mother) and *Phuma-Langa*, which looks at the revival of language, art and culture. Mamela's third work as the featured artist will be revealed soon.

The Gala Concert will take place on the first weekend of the festival this year. The Eastern Cape Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Richard Cock is set for 1 July 2018 at the Guy Butler Theatre. Details about the ballet performance, which will also be on the first weekend, will be announced soon.

www.nationalartsfestival.co.za

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