

Call for applications from Zabalaza Theatre Festival

The Baxter's Zabalaza Theatre Festival is calling for applications from young theatre-makers, directors, script writers, community groups and theatre companies to participate in the 2013 festival in March at the Baxter Theatre Centre. The deadline for applications is Friday, 26 October 2012.



Productions that are selected from applications received will thereafter be auditioned and will then be invited to participate in the mini-festivals, which are planned for January 2013 when the final selections for the 2013 line-up will be made. Auditions take place from 8 October through to December 2012, so community groups and companies are strongly encouraged to apply early.

The festival organisers are looking for one or two-handers, children's theatre productions, puppetry, musical theatre, comedies, straight dramas, comedy, physical theatre and storytelling.

"Participants in the 2011 and 2012 festivals are also welcome to apply, provided that they bring an entirely different production," explained Thami Mbongo, artistic director of the Zabalaza Theatre Festival. "Those who auditioned in 2011 and 2012 may reapply to audition with the same production provided that they can show that they have worked on improving it. Only those groups or theatre-makers who apply to be part of the festival will be auditioned when we visit them at their rehearsal venues. It is, therefore, essential that applications reach us by no later than 26 October, 2012."

The search has begun

The Zabalaza team has already started the search for productions that will be part of next year's festival by visiting the Eden Drama Festival where they engaged with community theatre groups from George, Knysna, Riversdale, and Plettenberg Bay. The final selection from this region will be made on 24 November, 2012.

"Thanks to generous assistance and support from the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, we are able to continue this much-needed showcase," said Zoleka Helesi, Zabalaza co-ordinator. It is hard to believe that this is our third festival, which we hope will be even bigger and better than the first two. We are determined to offer audiences a very exciting and diverse variety of the immense and abundant talent and enthusiasm that exists within our communities."

With a new team, name, vision and integrated approach the Zabalaza Theatre Festival has, since its inception in 2011, firmly established itself as one of the premier and vital development theatre platforms in the country. This year 19 productions were staged as part of the main and the fringe programmes, which ran at the Baxter over two weeks in March.

Innovations introduced

Several innovations were introduced to give further meaning and add value to the festival's vision. These include: a fringe programme; an awards ceremony in recognition of the outstanding contributions by participants; the mini-festivals from which the final selections are made for the main festival and the ongoing guidance, mentoring and relationship building with theatre-makers and groups.

Next year's festival will run over three weeks from 2 to 23 March with the main festival performances taking place from Monday to Friday over two weeks and targeted at emerging theatre-makers, theatre companies, professional actors and actresses who want to venture into the field of writing and directing. The third week will be specifically focussed on opera and music theatre.

The Fringe programme will take place on Saturdays 9 and 16 March, and cater for those groups who have members still at school and cannot make the weekday performances. On 21 and 22 March the festival showcases a host of hip hop performances featuring well-known and popular artists from around Cape Town, culminating in the awards ceremony in which the best of the festival in various categories will be announced on 23 March.

Applications for the 2013 Zabalaza Theatre Festival close on 26 October, 2012, and entry forms may be obtained from the festival office at the Baxter Theatre Centre, in Main Road, Rondebosch, from the Baxter's reception in the main foyer, or can be downloaded from either www.baxter.co.za or www.facebook.com/zabalazafestival. Interested community groups and theatre-makers from outside the Western Cape who wish to apply should email their full contact details to the office zabalazafestival@gmail.com.

For more information, call the Zabalaza office on +27 (0)21 680 3980, go to www.baxter.co.za or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/zabalazafestival. For further enquiries contact Zoleka Helesi or Thami Mbongo on +27 (0)21 680 3980 or email her at zabalazafestival@gmail.com

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