

Zabalaza Festival award winners announced

The Baxter's fourth Zabalaza Theatre Festival ended with enthusiasm at an awards ceremony held recently, in the Baxter's Golden Arrow Studio.



Well over 200 participants from all over the Western Cape and Gauteng rejoiced with their fellow dramatists who received awards in 26 different categories for their achievements at the festival, which showcased over 40 productions during its seven-day run.

Top honours for Best Production went to *The Champion*, written by Khayaletu Anthony. The cleverly crafted play is performed in English and South African vernacular. Anthony was a former winner of the Zabalaza Festival in 2012, and this year won the Best newcomer/breakthrough award (Brett Goldin Award) at the Naledi Awards for his role as Solomon in *Solomon and Marion*.

Later this month Khayaletu will also be performing at the Kennedy Centre in Washington with Dame Janet Suzman in *Solomon & Marion*.

On the Main Programme, the categories and winners were: Best Performance by an Actor, Sinxolo Cezula in *Ibhekile Yothando*; Best Performance by a Supporting Actor, ZaneKhaya Mhlanna in *From Hero to Zero*; Best Performance by an Actress, Leatitia Solomons in *Mathilda Confuse of te not*; Best Performance by a Supporting Actress, Thandiwe Hona in *Imbokotho*; Best Director, Lwanda Sindaphi for *Death the Redeemer*; Best Script, Khayaletu Anthony for *The Champion*; Best Ensemble, *Hungry Road*; Best Visiting Production, *Thula Thula*; Most Outstanding Performer in a Visiting Production, Lubabalo Mbombela in *Hungry Road*; Best Musical Director, *Thula Thula*; Most Outstanding Artist of the Festival, Khayaletu Anthony in *The Champion*; Best Newcomer in a Performance, Unathi Rorwana in *Death the Redeemer*; Best Newcomer in Direction, Sisipho Mbopa for *Secret Flames* and Most Dedicated Company, Chommiez.

The winners on the Fringe Programme were: Best Newcomer in Performance, Sive Makhoba in *Mr President*; Most Promising Actor, Luxolo Rapula Mboso in *Mr President*; Most Promising Actress, Farhaanah Bergh in *The Sanctuary*; Most Dedicated Company, Vangnet Projekt; Most Promising Young Writer, Thabang Baleni (*I don't want to be like you*); Most

Promising Director, Xolisa Yawa (Dancing with a dead man); Best Director, Thando Mzembe, Mr President; Best Script, Thabiso Newman (There is life after hurt) and Best Production (Zabalaza Weekend), Mr President.

Highlights

A highlight of this year's festival was the attendance of Dr Pallo Jordan as the opening keynote speaker.

Over seven days the festival presented 25 Fringe productions, 12 Main Festival productions and regular 'open-mic' sessions, as well as Spoken Word sessions in different venues. This year's performances were presented in English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu and Setswana by the various theatre groups.

Over 200 presentations were seen during a three-month period at mini-festivals held earlier this year, where the final selection was made by the panel comprising the Zabalaza team, assisted by the award-winning Faniswa Yiza, Mbulelo Grootboom and Thando Doni.

The success of this year's Zabalaza Festival proved that its managing team has lived up to its commitment to partnering with community groups and bringing these values to life. The dynamic trio are all multi-award-winning actors and former cast members of Baxter CEO and Director Lara Foot's critical successes Karoo Moose and Woyzeck. The festival's Artistic Director, Thami Mbongo, says that the 'aim of the festival was to allow young theatre-makers and community theatre groups to showcase their work in a professional and supportive environment, and to elevate it to another level of being bigger and better.' Mbongo added that the festival contributes to the development of new South African work for artists wanting to venture into acting, stage management, writing and directing.

Baxter Director Lara Foot says the Zabalaza team's community-development platform will ensure that it remains a fundamental part of the Baxter's broader vision of becoming a cultural hub, reflecting the diversity of the country's demographics for all its patrons, communities, artists and visitors.

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