

Inaugural Wawela Music Awards recognises SA songwriters

On Friday, 26 June 2013, the inaugural Wawela Music Awards celebrated original South African music by honouring SA songwriters.



A constellation of the country's music stars gathered at the Sandton Convention Centre to pay tribute to an elite group of music composers and authors whose work has made a significant impact both locally and abroad.

Presented by Gareth Cliff and Azania Mosaka, the event aptly illustrated the power wielded by creators of original, homegrown music as guests were entertained by the eclectic sounds of The Soil, Phuzekhemisi and Koos Kombuis, with one of the highlights of the evening being an electrifying duet between Dorothy Masuku and Nhlanhla Nciza from Mafikizolo.

Honouring those who exceed expectations

The isiZulu word "Wawela" means "to go beyond", and this SAMRO initiative was launched to give credit to local music creators who have achieved excellence in their craft across various platforms, including composing for film, radio and television.

The awards ceremony - the first of its kind in the country dedicated to honouring composers - saw the industry uniting to applaud the leading lights, trailblazers and unsung heroes of the South African music scene.

The Standard Awards were open to SAMRO members, who were required to submit entries accompanied by motivations. The major winner on the night was Kgomotso Mashigo, also known as jazzy-pop songstress Black Porcelain, who walked off with two awards for Best Creative Album and Best Female Artist and Composer.

The sublime Lira was crowned Songwriter of the Year, while Tumi and the Volume were named South African Best Duo or Group. The multi-talented self-taught musician Daniel Baron took home the trophy for Best Male Artist and Composer.

Other winners were celebrated composer Philip Miller, whose score for the film Leaving Father was voted Best Soundtrack in a Feature Film or Theatric Documentary, and former Via Afrika vocalist René Veldsman, whose music for the Shoprite advert was judged Best Song or Composition in a Radio Commercial.

Musical pioneers

Composer and sound designer Gregory Reveret took home the Wawela Music Award for Best Song or Composition in a Television Production, for Loxion Kulca Roots, while Jeramy James Barnard bagged top honours for best song or composition in a television commercial for his work on the Bells advert.

The judging panel, comprising respected names drawn from the industry, also handed out a number of Special Awards on the night. Among these were Inaugural Recognition Awards that honoured the immense contribution made by South Africans whose groundbreaking work has enriched the reputation of the local music industry.

The five awards went to Los Angeles-based film and television score composer and production music library pioneer Alan Lazar, who made his name in South Africa as a member of Mango Groove; world-renowned writer, composer and producer Mbongeni Ngema, whose Sarafina! musical took Broadway by storm; keyboard player, composer, producer, and studio and record label owner Sizwe Zako, who has taken local gospel music to dizzying heights; Golden Globe-nominated film music composer Trevor Jones, who went from District Six to the bright lights of Hollywood thanks to his twin passions for cinema and music; and Lebo M, the celebrated singer, songwriter, composer and musician whose music for The Lion King scooped a Grammy.

Jones also scooped the Breaking Through the Borders Award. JB Arthur, a South African Music Award- and Emmy Award-winning composer, musical arranger and producer, was rewarded for his international success with the Statistical Award for Broadcast and Live performances.

The Lifetime Achievement Award went to the evergreen Dorothy Masuku, a pioneering force in Southern African music who continues to perform, enchant and inspire. Johnny Clegg, one of the country's most beloved musical sons who has sown the seeds of South African music around the world while producing work of a consistently high calibre, received the Prolific Catalogue of Works Award.

For more information on the Wawela Music Awards, go to www.wawelamusicawards.co.za.

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