

Indigenous musician Madosini named 2020 National Arts Festival featured artist

Indigenous musician Madosini Latozi Mpahleni - best known as Madosini - is the 2020 National Arts Festival featured artist. Every year, the festival pays tribute to an artist who has made a significant mark on the country's arts landscape.

The 2020 National Arts Festival takes place in Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown) from 25 June to 5 July.



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Says National Arts Festival artistic director Rucera Seethal: "Madosini is our national treasure. She has kept alive the tradition of Xhosa music rooted in oral tradition, in particular the distinctive sound of the *uhadi* (music bow), *umrhumbe* (mouth bow) and *isitolotolo* (Jew's harp). A musician, composer and storyteller, she also makes instruments, has performed and collaborated widely and continues to teach the body of knowledge she has carried over her lifetime. We are proud to feature her sonic and cultural legacy at this year's National Arts Festival."

Madosini was born in 1943 in the Eastern Cape, and often jokes during her performances that she grew up without formal schooling. She maintains isiXhosa as her spoken language, though in many ways she has superseded translation through her musical language.

Madosini has performed internationally for many years including at Womad festivals where she was also documented in their Musical Elders Project. Over the years, she has performed with renowned artists Ringo, Thandiswa Maswai, Derek Grepper, Hilton Schilder, Gilberto Gil and many more. The support she received from South Africans across the country, during a trip to France in 2019, to facilitate her safe return home after health issues, was a testament to the place she occupies in our national identity and heritage.

Says Madosini of the accolade: *"Ukuva kwam ngokuza kwi Festival, kundenze ndavuya kakhulu okwe thole lincanca kunina. Ukuba bendinendlela ngendivuka ngomso ndiye eRhini. Ndingamele ukunifundisa lomrhube nendlela esasiphila ngayo thina endingayivanga ngamntu, ephilwe ndim lo. Ngoku sasibancinci thina sasingavubisi umphokoqo ngamasi, sasivubisa ngamavilo, kodwa nina aniwazi amavilo. Ndakunibalisela ukunibona kwam eRhini."* (Being told that I'm coming to the festival has made me happy, like a calf feeding from its mother. If I had my way, I would wake up tomorrow and go to eRhini [Makhanda]. I can't wait to teach you *umrhube* and about lived experiences of our cultural practices that you don't practise anymore. During my youth, we did not use sour milk for *umphokoqo* [African salad] we used *amavilo* – you probably don't know what they are, I will tell you about it when I see you in eRhini [Makhanda].)

As 2020 featured artist, Madosini will perform in two collaborative performances, one featuring Madosini performing with members of her traditional ensemble from Libode, and a second as a kind of thanksgiving to her supporters and for her good health, which will include her friend Pedro playing the traditional *ixilongo* flute and various special guest musicians. She will also present a musical storytelling performance for children and several bow playing workshops to arts educators and musicians.

Says National Arts Festival's executive producer Nobesuthu Rayi: "We are extremely grateful that we will be given the opportunity to honour Mama Madosini on her own soil and we feel sure that the people of the Eastern Cape and South Africa will join us in celebrating this extraordinary woman. *Sithi Halala Mama uMadosini, siyababulela abaphantsi ngawe* (We thank the ancestors for your life).



Berni Searle is the 2019 National Arts Festival featured artist

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Previous National Arts Festival featured artists include:

- 2019: Bernie Searle, visual artist
- 2018: Mamela Nyamza, dancer and choreographer
- 2017: Neo Muyanga, musician and composer
- 2016: Lara Foot, playwright and director
- 2015: Satire (The genre was chosen as the programme centrepiece)
- 2014: Sylvaine Strike, actor and director
- 2013: Mike van Graan, playwright and director

For more information, visit www.nationalartsfestival.co.za

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