

# National Arts Fest goes completely virtual in light of Level 4 restrictions

The National Arts Festival has been forced to abandon its live audience 2021 Makhanda experience portion in light of the recently imposed Level 4 restrictions.

The new legislation prohibits all cultural, social and political gatherings except funerals – which led to the festival deciding to go completely virtual.



A scene from Qondiswa James' new play "NDINKANIWE" - Source: Supplied

Already envisioned as a 'hybrid event' with both live and online shows, the festival had planned to stage a small live programme in its home town of Makhanda from 8 July and, before that, had flighted a live programme of shows called Standard Bank Presents in Cape Town and Durban, but suspended audience attendance for the Johannesburg shows due to rising Covid-19 numbers in the city. Live shows were also planned for Gqeberha. Working quickly, the team moved to record all these shows for inclusion in the online programme. Now the festival will be fully online for its second stay-at-home edition.

Says National Arts Festival CEO Monica Newton:

*“ Our 2021 festival was built with change in mind, we knew we might need a plan B and this was a part of our risk mitigation strategy from the start. The festival team is working at 200% to adapt our live programme to this new scenario to stick to our original 8 July opening date. We are confident that we can pull it off and the National Arts Festival online will take place from 8 to 31 July. ”*

Fortunately, the festival will be held online in 2020 and the infrastructure was built and refined last year. Newton acknowledged the exceptional resilience of the artists involved in the project. “Together with our team, they are working incredibly hard to ensure work is filmed with all the professionalism and passion they had planned to put onto their live stage performances. Everyone has just taken a deep breath, adapted their plans and moved forward. After a devastating

year for the arts, it felt very important to us to honour our commitments and financial obligations to all the people involved in the 2021 festival. We also have a great programme so the show simply has to go on!”



A scene from "CARTOGRAPHIES OF SURVIVAL, BREATH, BEAUTY, TOUCH and DESIRE" by Siwela Sonke - Source: Supplied

The reimaged festival will be hosted on the festival’s website and visitors to the experience will be able to securely purchase tickets and watch their shows off the same platform. A new addition to the festival is a ‘livestream element with shows being broadcast live into the homes of online audiences. The Standard Bank Jazz Festival is also fully online and features a knock-out programme of shows filmed in cities around the country and also features some amazing international guests.



## Standard Bank Jazz Festival to present special jazz stage at virtual National Arts Fest

2 Jul 2021



The festival programme will, as always, feature both curated works and an independently presented Fringe Festival. Visitors can also look forward to several online workshops, events and discussions, many of which are free.

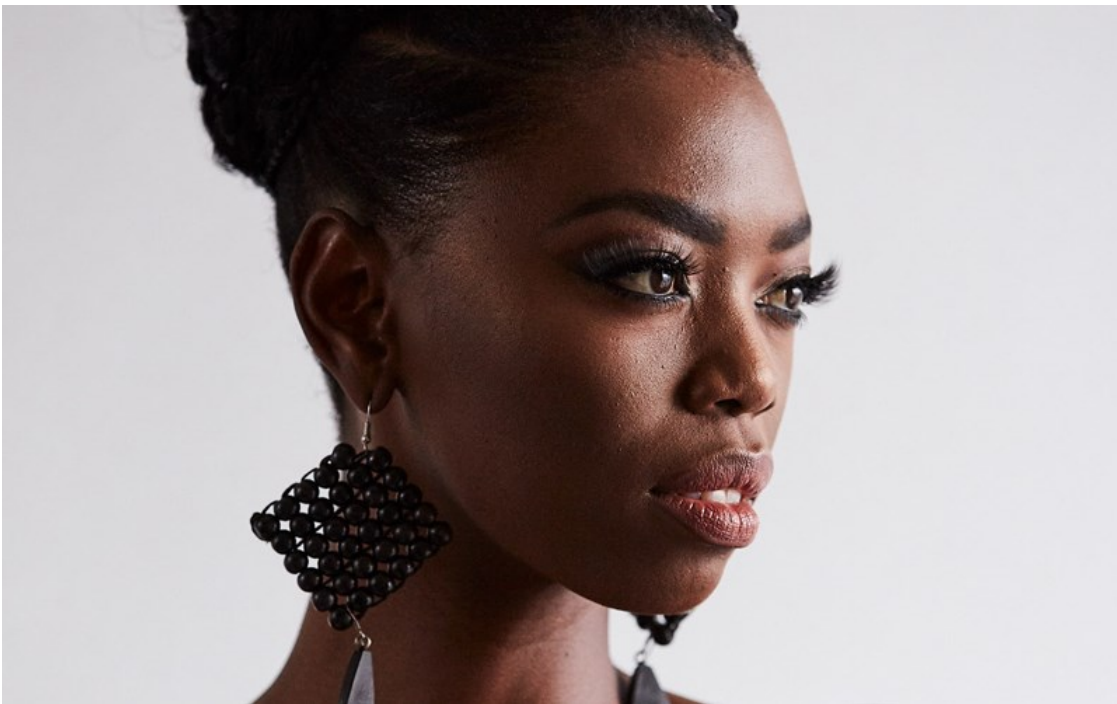
Tickets for shows are between R 40 and R100, but avid art lovers will be able to buy a R1,000 Festival Pass – which will give them access to all the shows on the curated programme and Standard Bank Jazz Festival programme or they can just binge on jazz with a Jazz Pass for R800. Fringe ticket prices, with 90% of the sales going to artists, range between R40 and R80 per ticket.



Reggae band The Conquerors perform on the Fringe Online stage © Mark Wessels - Source: Supplied

The festival will still showcase many of its planned shows. *The Ecstatic* (a Swiss-South African pantsula dance piece), *Van Wyk: the StoryTeller of Riverlea* (a tribute to author Chris van Wyk), the new work from Tony Miyambo and Phala O Phala: *Commission Continua* and the reimaged work *AnotherKind* by Distell National Playwright winner Amy Louise Wilson will all be featured online.

Some of the top acts to catch on the Standard Bank Jazz Festival include concerts from Lira, Judith Sephuma, Feya Faku Sextet and Richard Bona. Performances by 2020 Standard Bank Young Artists Lulu Mlangeni (dance), Sisonke Xonti (jazz) Nthato Mokgata (music), Jefferson Tshabalala (theatre) will be on-demand and an exhibition by visual arts winner Blessing Ngobeni will be free to explore.



Lira - Source: Supplied

Rob van Vuuren and TaylorMade productions bring the festival’s beloved all-star comedy lineup The Very Big Comedy show to your living room. A stellar lineup of 12 of the country’s best comedians will be split over three live shows in

Makhanda, Cape Town and Johannesburg to bring you a hilarious winter tonic to lighten your lockdown mood. Expect names like Marc Lottering, Alan Committie, Robby Collins, Mojak Lehoko, Tumi Morake, Schalk Bezuidenhout, KG Mokgadi, Khanyisa Bunu and more.

*The full National Arts Festival Online programme comprises 96 curated works, workshops and exhibitions on the online programme and 127 shows on the Fringe. The new 2021 National Arts Festival has been reloaded and is open for booking at [nationalartsfestival.co.za](https://nationalartsfestival.co.za)*

*Tickets can also be purchased directly from the programme page.*

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