



Festival of Fame celebrates up-and-coming arts talent

TONIGHT REPORTER

THE FESTIVAL of Fame runs at the Joburg Theatre and the National School of the Arts (NSA) from March 9 to 13.

This year they hope to dazzle with some 20 productions featuring leading professionals and exciting emerging talent. The programme offers dance, music, drama, poetry, puppetry and art exhibitions and, topping the bill, is the Broadway musical, *Once on this Island*.

Directed by Joburg Theatre resident director, Timothy Le Roux, and Tracey Human, this Calypso-flavoured musical is described by critics as "pure joy". It is loosely based on Hans Christian Anderson's *The Little Mermaid* with echoes of *Romeo & Juliet* and gives the triple threat learners from the NSA a chance to shine.

The Dance Spectrum 2016 offers a line-up of diverse works with the headline ballet being excerpts from *The Pharaoh's Daughter* in its first performance on a South African stage. It is danced to a score by Pagni with choreography after the great Petipa.

Vanessa Lamb's new work, *Ballet Fiesta Española*, promises to be a celebration. Taking us further into the authentic Spanish vocabulary is Gillian Bonegio's *Baile Gitano* which means "gypsy dancing" and is inspired by the Sacromonte Caves in Granada, Spain – the famed birthplace of flamenco.

Guest choreographer, Sonnyboy Motau from Moving Into Dance Mophatong, has titled his commissioned work *Shall We Dance*. The leading work from the NSA's choreographic showcase of 2015, *Dance Celebration*, is also on the Dance Spectrum 2016 programme with learner choreographers Jana Rau, Evelyn Mabikwa and Kamogelo Mofutsana.

A shadow puppetry animated art exhibition of Roald Dahl's *Revoltin' Rhymes – Cinderella*, sounds a blast and two of our respected female poets, Phillipa Yaa de Villiers and Naphe Masheane, will lead *Weave Up Words*, which features not only their work, but some school set-work poems and original works by the NSA's student poets.

The daily *Rhythm, Rap 'n' Rock* lunch-hour outdoor concerts will feature musical talent including Vincent Bones (*Idols* winner 2014)

and Tholwane Mohale (*SA's Got Talent* winner for 2014 and NSA grade 11 pupil).

Drama productions include Tara Notcutt's *After Dark in the Groot Marico*, a feast of Herman Charles Bosman stories set against a backdrop of love and the full moon, music and magic and just a hint of the Marico's dark and brooding side. Jenine Colocutt and Nick Warren are back with *Making Mandela* which tells the story of what influenced the rural boy to become a global legend. *Last Cow Standing*, written by and featuring Menzi Mkhwane, has been described as a tour de force performance of 11 characters in a riveting one-man drama. It explores the importance and value of cattle in the livelihood of a people. While the allegorical work highlights the abuse of power, complacency and greed, it is ultimately a story of great poignancy, indestructible hope and perseverance.

Sex & Me by theatre makers Clara Vaughan and Craig Morris, deals with the subject of sexual awakening through the eyes of a group of high school students and includes a workshop and discussion after the performance.

The Visit, a tragi-comedy by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, has been given inventive creative treatment by NSA drama educator, Thoriso Rorisang Raphela, and poses questions on the nature of justice versus corruption amid general economic and societal decay.

The line-up is diverse with much to choose from including jazz, a cappella, classical, rock, hip hop and a choral showcase in its line-up of music offerings. Visitors can also meet the stars, a line-up of achievers in the arts sector who make their time available to engage with the audience.

● The Festival of Fame is hosted by the National School of the Arts in association with Assitej (International Association of Theatre for Children & Young People) and is made possible through funding received from RMB, the Arts and Culture Trust and Business Arts South Africa. Full day pass: R80; school block bookings: R60, evening and weekend shows at the Joburg Theatre: R100 to R120. Full programme: festivalof fame.co.za. For tickets: joburgtheatre.com or call 0860 670870.