

YOUTH ARTS

... a festival

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From 11 to 14 July 2011 the youth of the Western Cape converged in a medium-sized hall at the Okkie Jooste Cultural facility in Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch to showcase and celebrate their artistic talents. They came from as far as Vanwyksdorp, Laingsburg and Riebeeck-Kasteel. On their arrival the participants immediately took to the stage where they jammed together which set the tone for what became an exhilarating three days of the arts.

The festival hosted by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport was meant to be a collaboration between three distinct art forms: literary arts, dance and music, and it did not disappoint. Each and every performance took the audience on a scintillating

journey to vast and picturesque landscapes of the Western Cape. The performances were reflective of the diverse cultures of the Cape and the young reel dancers from Laingsburg had the audience eating out of their hands and begging for more.

Jazz and popular music was well represented by the brass bands from Ceres (Ceres Crusaders), Oceanview, Klappmuts and Blackheath (Loudability Music Group). Who will ever forget the historic performance by forty pennywhistlers from the Eden District who opened the festival on a high note, led by Susan Odendaal. The festival also attracted recognisable and celebrated local artists such as Camilo Lombard, Theo Ndindwa, Lwanda Gogwana and Gerald Foster who put the participants through their paces and motivated them at the same time. For most of the young people it was their first time performing for an audience and their peers which, as some of them said later, improved the level and coherence of their performance. This is a strong testament to the old expression of nothing ventured, nothing gained.

There were also a number of notable performances and workshops which were equally enthusiastically welcomed by the audience. The South African Police Service (SAPS) band gave a sterling performance and their message to the youth about different career choices available in the SAPS

proved to be a welcome inspiration. A fun-filled presentation by a group of young story-tellers from the Human Rights Media Centre nevertheless added a serious and educative message to the youth. Participants also learnt about the importance of reading and the value of the indigenous languages of the Western Cape from the language section of the department.



▲ The SAPS band during their performance at the festival



▲ Dancers in action

The festival was concluded with a collaborative performance by all the participants of the festival which saw the three art forms merged into one. With the amount of artistic talent that was exhibited at this festival, it gives one hope for the arts sector in the Western Cape and South Africa.

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