

2024 Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards special awards recipients named

The judging panel of the annual Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards, sponsored by Heineken Beverages, has announced the recipients of the special awards for 2024, ahead of the gala event on 17 March.

"These awards honour the long-term and ongoing contribution to the performing arts of outstanding individuals and organisation. They deserve the recognition for their extensive and profound influence," says panel chair Africa Melane, speaking on behalf of the judges.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Professor Angelo Gobbato is the recipient of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award for his enormous impact on South African opera extended over many decades. As a singer, director, educator and mentor to exceptional local operatic talent, and as an administrator, he has set new standards and enabled those who have followed him to achieve world-class performance excellence.



Professor Angelo Gobbato. Source: nowinsa.co.za

He is an operatic icon in this country, as much for his exceptional talent as for his tireless advocacy in making opera such an integral and growing part of the lives of South Africa.

Professor Gobbato is to be greatly admired for his dramatic integrity, always underscoring that 'opera is not only a specialised brand of vocal music, but also one of theatrical performance' as he likes to say.

The judging panel salutes him for his selfless activism and determined efforts to ensure a future for opera.

The Encore Award

The Encore Award goes to Gregory Vuyani Maqoma's contribution to theatre exemplified in his production of *Exit/Exist*. The judges chose him for his masterful integration of contemporary dance with indigenous movement and for the indelible mark he has made on the country's cultural narrative.



Gregory Vuyani Maqoma. Image supplied

"He has created a unique vocabulary that is deeply personal yet universally compelling," said Melane.

The panel lauded him for the skilful way he embodied his ancestor Chief Jongumsobomvu Maqoma. His poignant performance is described as "seamlessly blending past and present through captivating dance, music and powerful storytelling. It was a vibrant tapestry of tradition and innovation".

The Innovation in Theatre Award

The Rainbow Arts Organisation lands the Innovation in Theatre Award for its impact on youth development. The panel called it a "a shining light in Delft, Cape Town".



The Rainbow Arts Organisation. Image supplied

Since 2006 the organisation has been training aspiring artists through its full-time youth development programme that includes participating in productions, community work and organised events. Trainees are also routinely exposed to professional and community productions. “All this with limited resources”, said Melane, “but with an abundance of commitment”.

Melane stressed that the organisation had seen many trainees go onto creative arts careers. For others their education in drama has allowed them to explore their emotions, foster empathy and critical thinking, all desperately needed strengths in South Africa.

The 59th Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards ceremony will take place on Sunday, 17 March, at the Baxter Theatre Centre.



All the 2023 Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards nominees

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