

Christopher Weare to direct Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards

Christopher Weare is to direct and Alan Committie to MC the 50th annual Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards to be held, for the first time, in the Artscape Opera House, Cape Town, on Sunday, 15 March, 2015.



Theatre luminary Christopher Weare, who has won four Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards and who needs no introduction to the theatre fraternity in South Africa, recently retired as an Associate Professor of UCT Drama School and as the Director of the Little Theatre. He is the founder of The Intimate Theatre, a member of The Mechanicals Collective, a professional theatre director and a prolific theatre maker.

Weare has revealed that his theme for this year's on-stage event will be 'vintage celebration'. His approach will incorporate the awards' unique role in the growth of South African theatre and will celebrate the synergy between the theatre space, actors, creatives, technicians and Distell, the sponsor of the awards ceremony.

Those participating in the onstage entertainment include veteran actor Andrew Buckland, slam poet Kholeka Putuma, Trevino Isaac's band Eminent directed by Alistair Izobell, Not The Midnight Mass with Graham and Christine Weir, Tina Schouw and Donal Slemon, dancer Grant van Ster and company, and Hamlet, featuring actors from the UCT Drama School that include four 2014 Fleur du Cap Theatre Award nominees, namely Skye Russell, David Viviers, Sive Gubangxa, and Nathan Lynne. Luke Ellenbogen will head up the lighting design team.

Cross-pollinations

Mandla Mbothwe, Artscape's Creative Manager, will be curating installations in the various public spaces throughout the Artscape venue, both inside and out. He said: "The take for the curation is to find cross-pollinations between the art of wine making and the art of theatre making. Like Distell's slogan, my inspiration and guidance for this comes from 'Inspired by Nature'. It draws correlations from the various stages of wine making, such as farming, harvesting, the waiting for the right time, patience and so is our art form and the art of acting. Both wine making and theatre making are inspired by nature."

There will be two prominent live installations that encapsulate the correlation between wine and theatre making. There will

also be a potjiekos exhibition that draws these metaphors and the elementary idioms between those two creative universes. Guests will enjoy a truly sensory experience as they move through the venue.

Alan Committie, who has been the MC at five previous Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards events is one of SA's most loved comics and a successful actor in his own right. At this, his sixth event, he will no doubt bring the house down with his hilarious quips throughout the night.

The Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards each carry a cash prize of R15,000 and each award recipient is given a silver medallion. The awards is a flagship arts-and-culture initiative of the Distell Foundation and a premier event on the South African social calendar. "This year, our golden anniversary, presents Distell with an ideal opportunity to look back at its unique role in the growth of South African theatre," said Irma Albers, Distell's Arts and Culture Controller.

The judges for 2014 productions were: Africa Melane, Dr Beverley Brommert, Christine Moritz, Eugene Yiga, Gillian Mitchell, Herman van der Westhuizen, Jill Markram, Johan van Lill, Len Ashton, Mariana Malan, Marina Griebenow, Peter Tromp, Steyn du Toit and Tracey Saunders. Stephanie Klink completed a year-long internship in 2014 and has been accepted to join the panel of judges this year. The panel, chaired by Melanie Burke, the non-voting chairman, is made up largely of local critics, journalists, writers and drama educators. Theatre practitioners are recognised for acting, directing, staging and technical abilities, and the panel of judges furthermore considers an individual, company or organisation in the theatre industry that has consistently created exceptional and innovative work. Winners are chosen from productions performed at approximately 15 venues in and around Cape Town. For a production to be eligible, a run of a minimum of eight performances over a period of three weeks at the same venue is required. All voting processes are audited and overseen by the legal firm Cluver Markotter.

Tickets for the Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards ceremony at the Artscape Opera House on 15 March cost R200 per person via Computicket, 08619158000, and +27 (0)21 421 7695, and include canapés and Fleur du Cap wines.

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