



# Welcome to the Umtiza Arts Festival 2026!

Message from the HONOURABLE MEC SIBULELE NGONGO. (Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture)



It is my singular honour and a privilege to officially welcome you all to the 10th edition of Umtiza festival. A festival that has grown to become part of the Eastern Cape's bold expression of our arts, heritage and creative spirit. This year marks the first decade of the existence of Umtiza Arts festival since it was founded in 2016. The festival was founded by a collaboration between EL Guild Theatre, EL Museum and

Ann Bryant Art Gallery and supported by the Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture.

It has grown to become a celebration of sustainable partnerships. The department has underpinned the foundations of this important cultural and creative industries ecosystem enabling platform by supporting the Guild Theatre. In 2023 DSRAC recognised the efforts of this growing initiative and urged for its adoption as a provincial flagship. This has been pivotal in bolstering the growth path of the platform and a sector that was still recovering from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As DSRAC and DSAC continue to invest holistically in this important cultural spectacle, we continue to endeavour to make it a regional anchor strategy to boost cultural tourism, the creative and sporting economies and the livelihoods of creatives. We continue to explore ways of growing the event and enabling it to reach a wider audience.

The infusion of sports and recreation activities in this years' edition is a conscious attempt to broaden the scope and nature of the festival. It is for this reason that as the festival marks its 10th year, we build the bridge to synergise sports and arts opportunities towards a healthy ecosystem by inaugurating the Umtiza Soccer challenge.

However, these initiatives will not thrive without partnering with all spheres of government and private business. We want to make a call to all the industry players to come on board and join us in this bold expression of our arts, culture and heritage as expressed by our creatives.

May the music captivate you; the comedy be as enchanting; the creativity be mind blowing. Lastly, may this advance our efforts of building a socially cohesive province as I declare the festival officially opened.

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Message from the EXECUTIVE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR PRINCESS FAKU



It is with great pride that I present the Umtiza Arts Festival, a vibrant celebration of the rich cultural heritage, creativity, and talent that defines Buffalo City and its people.

This year marks a significant milestone as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Umtiza Arts Festival since its founding in 2016. Over the past decade, the festival has grown into a cornerstone of

our cultural calendar, offering a dynamic platform for artists, performers, crafters, and cultural practitioners—particularly our youth—to showcase their talents, share their stories, and connect with diverse audiences. It continues to promote social cohesion while unlocking economic opportunities within the creative sector.

As a proud member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality is committed to advancing lifelong learning as a driver of inclusive growth. This commitment strengthens access to skills development, innovation, and knowledge—empowering especially young people to actively participate in the creative economy.

Our ambition to position Buffalo City as a City of Literature aligns with global frameworks such as the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. This vision recognises literature, storytelling, and indigenous knowledge systems as

powerful tools for cultural preservation, education, and economic development. It further opens pathways for writers, poets, publishers, and digital creatives to grow, collaborate, and access new markets.

Youth development remains central to our vision. Through platforms like the Umtiza Arts Festival, we are investing in the next generation by creating opportunities for mentorship, skills development, industry exposure, and entrepreneurship. In doing so, we are not only nurturing talent but also addressing youth unemployment and fostering innovation and resilience within our communities.

These initiatives bring tangible benefits to the creative sector, including improved access to markets, international partnerships, and stronger institutional support. They contribute to building a sustainable and inclusive creative ecosystem that empowers local talent, stimulates enterprise development, and enhances the city's cultural and tourism appeal.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all organisers, partners, sponsors, artists, and community members whose dedication makes this festival possible. Your contribution continues to ensure that Umtiza remains a platform that inspires, uplifts, and unites us.

Let us continue to celebrate and invest in the arts as we build a vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous Buffalo City for all.

## UMTIZA ARTS FESTIVAL - ON STAGE:

### GUILD THEATRE • ALEXANDER PLAYHOUSE • HEMINGWAYS - THE VENUE

Date	Time	Show	Venue	Tickets
<b>Thu 21 May</b>	19:00	<b>THE TRAMP</b> Cabaret-style performance blending humour, music and theatrical flair. Award-winning The Tramp arrives at the Umtiza Arts Festival - a one-man theatrical tribute to Charlie Chaplin and his iconic alter ego. From the Wela Kapela team (Vincent), this Naledi Award-winning production blends comedy and pathos, exploring the blurred line between Chaplin and The Tramp through music, movement and storytelling. Daniel Anderson.	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Fri 22 May</b>	15:00	<b>MASTERCLASS: BONGEZIWE MABANDLA &amp; WANDILE MBAMBENI.</b> Insightful session with two leading contemporary musicians.	Guild Theatre	Free Entry
<b>Fri 22 May</b>	19:00	<b>BONGEZIWE MABANDLA LIVE</b> As Bongeziwe Mabandla enters a new chapter, his latest tour reflects a deeply personal exploration of identity, heritage and ancestry. Known for his powerful live performances, he brings new material alongside fan favourites in a raw, immersive and emotionally charged experience.	Guild Theatre	Quicket
<b>Sat 23 May</b>	14:00	<b>DIE SIEL VAN EUGENE MARAIS</b> Cabaret exploring the life and poetry of Eugene Marais. Die Siel van Eugène Marais is 'n poëtiese reis deur die lewe van een van Suid-Afrika se mees onwaarskynlike Afrikaner-helde - digter, wetenskaplike, joernalis "Wonder Dokter" en dwelm verslaafde Deur woord, musiek en sy eie gedigte word Marais se soeke na liefde, waarheid en menswees blootgelê, van sy briljante vroeë jare tot sy gebroke laaste oomblikke onder die doringboom. 'n Teaterervaring waar poësie asemhaal en 'n siel sy bly voortpraat.	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Sat 23 May</b>	18:00	<b>WANDILE MBAMBENI LIVE</b> Buffalo City-born singer-songwriter Wandile Mbambeni blends soul, African folk, indie and folk-country with a powerful, distinctive voice and storytelling style. A rising star who has performed at major festivals like Rocking the Daisies and Lake of Stars, and toured with Tamia, he returns home for his debut Umtiza performance.	Guild Theatre	Webtickets

# GUILD THEATRE • ALEXANDER PLAYHOUSE • HEMINGWAYS - THE VENUE

<b>Sat 23 May</b>	19:00	<b>DINNER FOR ONE</b> KuGompo City favourite Kerry Hiles teams up with Tony Koch to bring Dinner For One to the Umtiza Festival in a sparkling revival of the classic comedy audiences still adore. You know it as the gloriously tipsy, wildly familiar comedy that never grows old. Expect polished silliness, delicious nostalgia and the kind of laughter that sneaks up on you and then refuses to leave.	Alexander Playhouse	Webtickets
<b>Sat 23 May</b>	20:00	<b>KUGOMPO COMEDY JAM</b> An incredible evening of comedy awaits at the Ku Gompo Comedy Jam with 4 award-winning comedians: Ndumiso Lindi, Jam Jam, Dillan Oliphant, and Mbali Gudazi.	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Sun 24 May</b>	15:00	<b>FESTIVAL OF DANCE</b> Showcase of local dance studios across multiple styles.	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Sun 24 May</b>	18:00	<b>FESTIVAL OF DANCE</b> Showcase of local dance studios across multiple styles.	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Mon 25 May</b>	11:00 & 19:00	<b>DINNER FOR ONE</b> KuGompo City favourite Kerry Hiles teams up with Tony Koch to bring Dinner For One to the Umtiza Festival in a sparkling revival of the classic comedy audiences still adore. You know it as the gloriously tipsy, wildly familiar comedy that never grows old. Expect polished silliness, delicious nostalgia and the kind of laughter that sneaks up on you and then refuses to leave.	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Tue 26 May</b>	19:00	<b>MADOSINI PROJECT</b> Traditional Xhosa music performance with indigenous instruments. A heritage-driven concert celebrating the life and legacy of Madosini. Featuring leading indigenous musicians, this powerful performance honours African musical traditions through bow instruments, music, dance and storytelling.	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Wed 27 May</b>	19:00	<b>BUFFALO CITY BIG BAND</b> Founded by trumpeter Sakhile Simani, this dynamic intergenerational jazz ensemble brings together seasoned educators and young talent. Their vibrant programme blends African jazz classics, original works and tributes to Eastern Cape legends, celebrating musical excellence and cultural storytelling.	Guild Theatre	Webtickets

# GUILD THEATRE • ALEXANDER PLAYHOUSE • HEMINGWAYS - THE VENUE

<b>Fri 29 May</b>	19:00	<p>DEVO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: MAGICAL MUSICALS</p> <p>The Devo Chamber Orchestra presents a vibrant 60-minute concert celebrating the unforgettable music of Broadway and the West End. Featuring iconic songs and orchestral highlights, this uplifting showcase brings the magic, drama and romance of musical theatre to life for all ages.</p>	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Sat 30 May</b>	09:00 – 14:00	<p>FAMILY MARKET FESTIVAL</p> <p>Family-friendly market with stalls and activities. Live music.</p>	Guild Theatre & Museum	Free Entry
<b>Sat 30 May</b>	11:00	<p>DEVO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA</p> <p>Morning orchestral performance. A vibrant 60-minute concert celebrating the unforgettable music of Broadway and the West End.</p>	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Sat 30 May</b>	14:00	<p>BRENDA AND I</p> <p>Kwezi, a die-hard fan of Brenda Fassie (Dikelo Mamiala), has built a career belting out MaBrrr's hits in smoky bars, living in her shadow. On her 38th birthday, she takes the stage again - but something shifts. Will she remain the echo, or finally become her own voice?.</p>	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Sat 30 May</b>	16:00	<p>SIZWE BANSI IS DEAD</p> <p>Sizwe Bansi is Dead, by Athol Fugard, explores the dehumanizing impact of apartheid's pass laws. Sizwe Bansi, must abandon his identity to secure a work permit. By adopting a dead man's passbook he "dies" to live, and support his family.</p>	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Sat 30 May</b>	19:00	<p>BOBBY VAN JAARVELD LIVE</p> <p>Umtiza Arts Festival, in association with Hemingways Casino and 043 Events &amp; Entertainment, presents Bobby van Jaarsveld live at The Venue. A leading Afrikaans pop artist with a long-standing career and loyal fanbase, Bobby delivers an unforgettable evening of hit songs and live entertainment.</p>	The Venue, Hemingways	Webtickets
<b>Sun 31 May</b>	15:00	<p>GOSPEL: PRAISE HIM</p> <p>Featuring Jonathan Rubain and Elwira Standili, this uplifting concert brings together two leading gospel voices. Expect a powerful blend of traditional hymns, Cape Jazz and contemporary gospel.</p>	Guild Theatre	Webtickets
<b>Sun 31 May</b>	19:00	<p>UMTIZA FESTIVAL CLOSER.</p> <p>Celebrating 20 Years of Jaziel Brothers. With Lwuh Ndlunkulu &amp; others.</p>	Guild Theatre	Webtickets

## EAST LONDON MUSEUM

Date	Time	Event	Venue
24 May	08:30	A Guided Walk at Nahoon Point Nature Reserve Join the museum for a guided walk at Nahoon Point Nature Reserve led by East London Museum Specialist Scientist, Kevin Cole. The one-and-a-half-hour ramble will include an interpretation of the geology, early human utilisation of the coast as a food source and the importance of Nahoon as a natural and cultural history hotspot in the metro.	Nahoon Point Nature Reserve
23 May	09:00	A Story of Shared Heritage: the wreck of the ss Stuart Star, Hood Point. In 1937, while outbound from Liverpool to Australia, the ss Stuart Star wrecked off Hood Point, KuGompo City, sparking a story of shared heritage. A talk by Johnathan Bals, Maritime Archaeologist at the East London Museum.	Museum Classroom
23 May	10:00	The Wreck of the ss Solglimt, Marion Island, Sub-Antarctic In 1908, the Norwegian Seal Hunting vessel the Solglimt struck an uncharted rock in a small bay on Marion Island in the Sub-Antarctic. A crew of more than 70 men survived the wrecking and built a village of shacks where they spent three months before being rescued. In 2013, an Archaeological expedition investigated the survivor campsite and in 2014 explored the wreck of the Solglimt itself. This presentation will discuss the archaeology and some of the history unearthed about this unusual story in the far South. A talk by Jaco Boshoff, Curator Scientist at Iziko Museums of South Africa, Cape Town, responsible for overseeing the Maritime Archaeology and Historical Archaeology collections at the museum.	Museum Classroom
23 May	11:00	Tales Unveiled Join U3A Writing Group for an entertaining preview of their unpublished dramatic scenes and short stories.	Museum Classroom
23 May	12:00	Planets and Stars Talk by Prof. Matie Hoffman Observations with the James Webb Space Telescope: Wonder... and Tension in Cosmology Join Prof. Hoffman, a leading UFS physicist and passionate astronomy educator, as he explores the latest discoveries from the James Webb Space Telescope. Known for his work in planetarium and observatory development, he is also a familiar voice on the Afrikaans radio programme Sterre en Planete.	Museum Classroom
23 May	13:30	The history of the amaTshawe Royal Family, the oldest Xhosa Royal Family A talk by Prince Thando Tshawe	Museum Classroom
23 May	12:00	Masquerade Fashion Show – a Fashion Show by Just Models A Fashion Show organised Davianne Blignaut and Just Models featured in the Museum Costume Gallery. Theme: Masquerade	Museum Costume Gallery
23 May	09:00 – 15:00	Joy of Books Meet authors, enter a writing competition, and visit book stalls.	Museum Garden

## EAST LONDON MUSEUM

28 May	08:00 - 12:00	Mercedes-Benz South Africa Ltd Plant Tour Take a tour of the Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) Plant – the manufacturers of the current C-Class sedan for right and left-hand drive markets. 081 303 9119 to book.	MBSA
30 May	09:00 - 14:00	Stories of the Past Real films. A series of short films/documentaries.	Museum Classroom
30 May	09:00 - 14:00	Fab Farm: Quest for Children Jen Bryson- Moorcroft and Joy of Books bring another fun-filled quest to the museum.	Museum Galleries
23 May	09:00 - 15:00	Museum Café A range of affordable food and drinks will be available at the café at the East London Museum.	Museum
30 May	09:00 - 15:00	Museum Café A range of affordable food and drinks will be available at the café at the East London Museum.	Museum

## ANN BRYANT ART GALLERY

Date	Time	Show	Venue
22 May	18:30	Umtiza Arts Festival's Private Collection Exhibition & Auction	Ann Bryant Art Gallery
23 May	15:00 - 18:00	Harry's Lit Fest: Fireside Poetry, Storytelling and Singing in collaboration with Hogsback Ensemble. R30 includes a welcome drink	Ann Bryant Art Gallery

## STEVE BIKO CENTRE, GINSBERG

Date	Time	Show	Venue
28 - 29 May	18:00	<b>Ukonga – A Bold Profession.</b> Ukonga is a riveting dramatic stage interpretation of the book <i>A Bold Profession</i> by Prof Leslie Hadfield. The play is about the lived experiences of the nurses who worked in Rural Ciskei in the 1960 -1980s. It celebrates and honours their dedication and resilience through the system of Homelands and Apartheid. The province's creative arts values shine bright through X's dramatic visions and Thandiwe Mqokeli's choreography. An experience not to be missed.	Steve Biko Centre
30 May	15:00	Ukonga – A Bold Profession	Steve Biko Centre

## AMATHOLE MUSEUM

Date	Time	Show	Venue
21 May	18:00	Lovedale TVET College Art Exhibition Opening	Steve Biko Arts Centre, Ginsberg
23 May	09:00	Amathole Museum Flea Market	Amathole Museum
25 May	11:00	Friends of Huberta – Discovering the Hidden Mammals of the Eastern Cape (Murunwa Nelufule)	Amathole Museum
26 May	11:00	Unsung Heroines: The Pioneer Black Beauty Queens (Sipho Bawuma)	Amathole Museum
27 May	12:00	Art Demonstrations & Workshops by Lovedale TVET College	Amathole Museum
27 May	Daytime	Workshops: Ceramics / Painting / Digital Design	Amathole Museum
28 May	11:00	Queen Mamani: Ruler of the Mpondomise (Dr Stephanie Victor)	Amathole Museum
29 May	11:00	Mazibuye iibhokhwe zam: Repatriation of Artefacts (Lolonga Tali)	Amathole Museum
30 May	09:00 – 11:00	Chess Tournament	Amathole Museum
30 May	11:00	Material Culture of German Settlers (Dr Stephanie Victor)	Amathole Museum

## LEGENDS SHOWCASE VENUE

Date	Time	Show	Venue	Tickets
21 May	20:00	Monde Fani - Afro-pop	Legends	Webtickets
22 May	19:00	The Elevators	Legends	Webtickets
23 May	19:30	Viwo Kulati - Afro Soul	Legends	Webtickets
24 May	17:00	Zadwesh - Afro Soul	Legends	Webtickets
28 May	19:00	Big Karaoke Night	Legends	Webtickets
29 May	19:00	Serotonin - Rock Band	Legends	Webtickets
30 May	18:00	Open Mic Night Market	Legends	Webtickets
31 May	17:00	Athi Ngcaba - Jazz	Legends	Webtickets

## ARTSIDE COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE - HAMBURG

Date	Time	Show	Venue	Tickets
30 May	12:00	Artside Collective Experience featuring Dumza Maswana.	Hamburg Gardens, Hamburg	Quicket

## JEN BRYSON MOORCROFT THEATRE (CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL)

Date	Time	Show	Venue
18 May	11:00 / 18:00	Thabo The Space Dude	Guild Theatre
19 May	9:00 / 11:00	Thabo The Space Dude	Guild Theatre
20 May	9:00 / 11:00	Thabo The Space Dude	Guild Theatre
23 May	9:00 / 13:00	Joy of Books Umtiza Festival	EL Museum
30 May	9:00 / 10:00 / 11:00 12:00 / 13:00	Fab Farm Quest	EL Museum

## BEACHFRONT EVENTS

Date	Time	Event	Venue	Tickets
28 May	18:00	Creative Coffee Chats	Kofini & Co	FREE
29 May	20:00	Kaylow Unplugged	Zaza Beach Club	Quicket

## THE LEIGHANDRE "BABE LEE" JEGELS RECREATIONAL PARK

Date	Time	Event	Venue
23 May	08:00	Hercules Boot Camp. FREE	The Stoep
24 May	From 12:00	Umtiza Africa Day Concert. FREE	The Stoep

## ABSA STADIUM - UMTIZA SOCCER CHALLENGE

Date	Time	Show	Venue
31 May	10:00	Chippa United FC vs Sibanye FC	ABSA Stadium
31 May	12:00	Chilli Girls FC vs University of Fort Hare (Hollywood Bet Ladies)	ABSA Stadium
31 May	14:00	Zwelitsha All Stars FC vs Gompo Greats FC	ABSA Stadium
31 May	15:15	Chippa FC (Chilli Boys) vs University of Fort Hare under SAFA Amathole Regional League	ABSA Stadium
31 May	17:00	Umtiza Soccer Concert	ABSA Stadium

## BUFFALO CITY UNESCO - JOY OF LEARNING SUMMIT

Date	Time	Event	Venue
22 May	08:00	Buffalo City UNESCO - Joy of Learning Summit	66 Belgravia Cres
24 May	15:00	Free Masterclass: Bongeziwe Mabandla & Wandile Mbambeni	66 Belgravia Cres

## UMTIZA ARTS FESTIVAL - FRINGE EVENTS

Date	Time	Event	Venue
28 May	18:00	Colour in Conversation - Sip and Paint Session. Facebook: Sip & Paint East London. WhatsApp / Calls: 076 356 6645	Lasembo Art Gallery, 19 Pearce Street, Berea
29 May	19:00	Neon, Canvas, Puff and Paint. Facebook: Sip & Paint East London. WhatsApp / Calls: 076 356 6645	ZA World Cannabis Club
30 May	18:00	Lasembo Art Gallery Opening. Curated selection of artworks by renowned local artists.	Lasembo Art Gallery, 19 Pearce Street, Berea
31 May	12:00	Colour in Conversation - Sip and Paint. WhatsApp / Calls: 076 356 6645	Ann Bryant Art Gallery, 9 St Marks Rd, Belgravia

## ORCHID SHOW 2026

Date	Time	Venue
22 - 23 May	09:00 - 17:00	EL MUSEUM: Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer Hall. Come and see the different types of orchids in flower at this time of the year. Plants for sale.
24 May	09:00 - 15:00	R10 entry per person.
29 - 30 May	09:00 - 17:00	
31 May	09:00 - 12:00	

## THE KITCHEN TABLE - JAZZ IN THE AFTERNOON

Date	Time	Venue
30 May	15:00	JAZZ IN THE AFTERNOON. The Kitchen Table, 42 Pearce Street Bookings 0643137441

## USEFUL LINKS

Book Webtickets here: <https://www.webtickets.co.za/v2/event.aspx?itemid=1587947428>

Book Bongeziwe Mabandla here: <https://www.quicket.co.za/events/361881-bongeziwe-mabandla-live-in-east-london/?ref=events-list#/>

Book Hamburg Experience here: <https://www.quicket.co.za/events/375042-artside-collective-experience-umtiza-arts-festival-2026/#/>

Umtiza Arts Festival facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083286404127>

## DEDICATIONS



### VALERIE VILJOEN

Valerie Viljoen, a founding member and staunch supporter of the Umtiza Arts Festival, passed away on 10 March 2026.

Val gave so generously of her time, wisdom, and energy, touching countless lives through her deep commitment to heritage, justice, literature, and the arts.

For over two decades, she served the Museum with distinction – as a Trustee, Chair and Vice Chair, library volunteer, proofreader, fundraiser, and trusted guide. Her impact reached far beyond our walls, shaping the cultural life of the community through her work with the Guild Theatre, Umtiza Arts Festival, and Ann Bryant Art Gallery, as well as her service in Parliament.

She will be remembered most for her humour, her steadfast spirit, and her kindness.

We have lost a remarkable soul. Val's legacy lives on in the institutions she strengthened and the many people she inspired.



### LOUISE PIETRUCCI TIFFIN

Louise Pietrucci Tiffin, a former organising member and staunch supporter of the Umtiza Arts Festival, passed away on 16 March 2026.

As a former member of the Umtiza Arts Festival organising team, she helped build something the East London arts community will treasure for years to come.

She was one of the Festival's most faithful presences ... front and centre, show after show, almost always surrounded by friends she had gathered along the way. It was simply the natural order of things.

She loved it all. Fine art. Performing arts. Theatre, music, dance ... no genre was beyond her interest or her appreciation

Thank you Louise, we will miss you!



## THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE (DSAC)  
EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE  
BUFFALO CITY MUNICIPALITY

## COLLABORATING PARTNERS

043 EVENTS  
JOY OF BOOKS  
VINCENT PARK  
GO! & EXPRESS  
DAILY DISPATCH  
HARRYS' PRINTERS  
STEVE BIKO CENTRE  
AMATHOLE MUSEUM  
BORDER CATER HIRE  
LEPPAS EAST LONDON  
C TONE PRODUCTIONS  
ALEXANDER PLAYHOUSE  
LEGENDS CREATIVE HUB  
KELSTON MOTOR GROUP  
WHAT'S ON EAST LONDON  
HEMINGWAYS - THE VENUE  
KEITH NGESI MEDIA GROUP  
EAST LONDON ORCHID SOCIETY  
AMATHOLE DISTRICT UNICIPALITY  
URBAN RURAL CREATIVE LAB NPC  
ARTSIDE COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE