

Ovation Awards recognise talent and dedication

● Spotlight on emerging performers not part of NAF main programme

Devon Koen

Recognising the excellence of independent artists at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda, the Standard Bank Ovation Awards remains a steadfast reminder of the dedication and resilience of performers.

Awarded to artists who fall under the Fringe programme, the awards give artists and performers a platform and stepping stone to being invited to other theatres and festivals across SA.

A panel of anonymous reviewers made up of industry professionals attend multiple shows and compare notes to agree on the selections.

The criteria to receive the award ranges from audience response to technical excellence, delivery and script.

The Ovations are issued daily and the news of these awards is followed by theatre-goers looking for shows to watch.

Festival organiser and partner Standard Bank will host the official awards ceremony today, when winning artists will receive bronze, silver and gold awards.

Standard Bank head of group sponsorships Desiree Poole said the sponsored awards were in line with the bank's mandate to keep the spotlight on local talent who did not form part of the curated programme.

"These are the hustlers of the festival and we must recognise the sheer determination of these artists," she said.

Poole said the excitement and encouragement offered through the awards showed that artists actively tried their hardest to get the recognition.



CHANGING VIEWS: Tasmin Sherman as Vic Woode in 'My Weight and Why I Carry It'. The production is one of several up for one of the top three spots in the Standard Bank Ovation Awards
Photograph: SUPPLIED/NAF

"Ovation award winners go on to achieve so much more," Poole said.

As of yesterday afternoon, at least 27 Ovation Awards had been listed, with those selected eligible for the top spots.

They include:
AFDA — Johannesburg's *Whistleblowers*; Comedian KG

Mokgadi's *NSFW — Not Safe For Woke*; Sonwa Sakuba Institute from the Performing Arts — *Afrika Sings*; Rhodes University drama department — *Matchbox*; Gauteng DSRAC — *Nakanjani*; Fishnet Features — *My Weight and Why I Carry It*; Wela Kapela Productions — *Vincent*; Amandla Danca Teatro

ZA — *Nomapondo*; Walter Sisulu University Drama Society — *Mamlambo*; Five Sided Records — *Undead Generation*; NWU Arts — *We're Back With Goosebumps A Cappella*; Emfuleni Arts Creatives — *Kgetho*; Sikhuthali Oliver Bonga and Walter Strydom — *SwaRingana*; Ezinyaweni Zam —

I.N.C.O.K.O.; BasicCity — *BasicCity Band*; Wela Kapela Productions — *The Story of Eva Cassidy*; Stacey van Schalkwyk — *Fragments*; Andy Ndlovu — *Intloombe*; Spark in the Dark — *Ile*; Uloyiko Theatre and Projects — *The Gukurahundi Genocide*; The Eastern Cape Theatre Ensemble —

Ghetto the Musical; Brendon Peel Entertainment — *Impossible*; Best of Both Concerts — *Piano Classics*; Asanda Mqiki — *The Vocal Explosion (Amazing Grace)*; Yaaseen Barnes — *Can't-centrate*; South African Theatre Practitioners — *Asinamali*; Mannini Nkata — *Hiding in the Dark*