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'Songs of Queen Lozikeyi' to Dubai

A Celebration of the great Ndebele Queen represents Zimbabwe at Dubai Expo



'Nkwali'



Thandy & dancers

[Photo credits: Mgcini Nyoni]

The exciting and colourful 30-minute-long musical production from Bulawayo - 'Songs of Queen Lozikeyi' – is headed to the United Arab Emirates for the on-going world famous Dubai Expo this week, courtesy of the Government of Zimbabwe for a performance on 14 March – Zimbabwe Day.

A music collaboration by artists of Bulawayo, ***Songs of Lozikeyi*** which made its debut at the annual festival in 'the City of Kings' in Zimbabwe last year as the opening act for the official opening by His Excellency ED Mnangagwa President of the Republic Zimbabwe, ***Songs of Lozikeyi*** celebrates the powerful Queen Lozikeyi Dlodlo, senior wife of the great King

Lobengula, and later Queen Regent of the Ndebele people; warrior queen of the 1896 Anglo-Ndebele war, champion of women and justice.

From October 2021 to February 2022, the Dubai Expo hosted more than 13,000 heads of state, presidents, prime ministers and ministers, including presidential visits from Tanzania, Cyprus, Uruguay, South Sudan, Turkey and Kenya. Expo 2020 Dubai's virtual visitation numbers have crossed 150 million, driven by the diverse entertainment available via Live@Expo.

With vibrant performances in song, dance and poetry, the production offers a vivid musical tribute to the life and history of the great Queen. Guided by the writings of acclaimed Bulawayo historian Pathisa Nyathi in *Lozikeyi Dlodlo: Queen of the Ndebele* and other research, the production was written by Noma Damasane ('Lady Tshawe') and Thabani H Moyo, conceptualised and directed by Saimon Phiri, with Josh Nyapimbi, Executive Director of Nhimbe Trust as executive producer.

The cast includes lead singers Nomathamsanqa 'Nkwali' Mkwanzani and Thandeka 'Thandy' Dhlana Jele; backing vocalists Laura 'Katso' Ngwenya and Nomatshawekazi 'Lady Tshawe' Damasane (poet); Dancers Cheryl Mabaya, Dorcas Ngwenya, Alice Guru and Makhula Moyo. All these are backed by musicians Raymond Takawira (lead guitar), Caleb Mujere (drums), Paul Maseko (bass), Samuel Mabhena (keyb), Gomez Dube (percussion) and Vuyile Qongo (saxophone).

The production is an initiative of Nhimbe Trust, executive director **Josh Nyapimbi** said "We are honoured to represent Zimbabwe with the Songs of Queen Lozikeyi, working with some of Bulawayo's finest musicians. We believe the music will cut a niche for itself on the world stage both live and digitally."

Zimbabwean musician and producer **Clive 'Mono' Mukundu** said of the Harare show on International Women's Day: "Artists from Bulawayo have always been known for their excellent stage presence and confidence. This is exactly how this group performs. It's a group that is sellable on any world stage."

Bulawayo provincial arts manager **Cleopatra Dube** told NewsDay that the artists should go and showcase their talents and represent the country in a way that will uplift its banner. "Performers, go out there and represent Zimbabwe and Bulawayo as you are the window, face and the voice of the city in the arts industry. Let's showcase the beauty of our culture, let there be joy in our dances, singing, and may our conduct bear long-lasting fruits for the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe," it was reported.

The send-off programme was facilitated by the Bulawayo City Council in partnership with the Nhimbe Trust.



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