



**PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release**

## **Bulawayo Arts Festival (BAF) Report 2021 Launched**

**Issued by: Bulawayo Arts Festival**

**Date: 8 September 2021**



Bulawayo City Council and its technical partner Nhimbe Trust have launched the 2021 Bulawayo Arts Festival report, with details of the vivid and culture-packed 5-day activities which took place in

Bulawayo City and online, from 1 to 5 June 2021. The festival attracted 348 performing artists who presented 134 acts that were viewed by global audiences in 53 countries.

Festival Director Saimon Mambazo Phiri said, “with the arts sector not fully functional, we brought a hybrid edition of the festival...Our desire was to stimulate and revive the arts again, as a means of restoring hopes and aspirations. BAF 2021 was a celebration of the rebirth of the arts. We felt immensely honoured and proud to be one of the stakeholders at the forefront of bringing the arts community back to life through active programming.”

Programming highlights in 2021 were the pre-festival national tour, official opening by H.E the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, a wide array of performance and visual arts, the Cultural Governance Conference, launch of the Urban Heritage Corridor, a cookout fiesta, the ‘I Love Bulawayo’ campaign, and a citywide clean-up.

For the second year running, the festival partnered Skyz Metro FM for radio programming that included festival updates, artist interviews and the celebration of musicians who have contributed to the building of a resilient cultural identity in which Bulawayo takes pride.

Speaking on behalf of the City of Bulawayo, His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Solomon Mguni said the city celebrates artists and creatives for being a creative engine that has the ability to cause a paradigm shift towards the development of Bulawayo and its people. He further expressed that the festival would not have been a success without the city's technical partner, Nhimbe Trust, and the team astutely led by Saimon Mambazo Phiri.

Nhimbe Trust Executive Director Josh Nyapimbi said that the economic downturn and continued COVID global pandemic have not deterred the collaborative efforts of artists, cultural professionals, non-profit, governmental and intergovernmental partners and supporters to ensure the success of the 2021 BAF edition. He said the elevation of the festival to a national annual calendar event is ground-breaking in post-independence Zimbabwe and reassuring on government's aspiration to promote cultural and creative sectors.

Nyapimbi acknowledged the technical support by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services, and expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Youth, Sport, Arts and Recreation, and partners Africalia and UNESCO for their support.

The festival also marked the 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (2015-2021) of the partnership between Nhimbe Trust and the City of Bulawayo, after Nhimbe first engaged city authorities in 2014 on the prospects of developing a partnership to facilitate the formulation of a cultural policy and corresponding strategic plan for the city.

[The 2021 BAF report is accessible for viewing and download HERE.](#)

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by **Nhimbe Trust, BAF Technical Partner**

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