

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Tafadzwa Muzondo Curates the Inaugural Zimbabwe Human Rights Festival

Mbizo Chirasha · Wednesday, December 11th, 2019

Machipisa in Highfeilds is a paradoxical African high density suburb in Zimbabwe. It gave birth to the both iconic song maestros and political heavyweights inclusive of the late George Nyandoro, Enos Nkala. Robert Mugabe, the late nationalist and former long serving president of Zimbabwe, resided in Highfeilds before his long trip to Mozambican jungles to preside over the liberation struggle in the 70s. Highfeilds shaped the life and creativity of the late Dendera Superstar Simon Chopper Chimbetu, father of the current Dendera crooner Sulumani Chopper Chimbetu, while Oliver Tuku Samanyanga, the iconic Ketekwe maestro, had most of his musical walk to stardom inside Highfeilds.



Like another creatively fervent generation, to revive the legendary traits of Highfeild, Tafadzwa Muzondo of Edzau Isu fame, an independent theatre guru, and human rights defender have artistically turned an old disused bridge into a popular, edutainment and infotainment theatre, arts and poetry venue. The artists and human rights defenders are using this venue as a space for artistic exhibition, freedom of expression through arts as they continue to promote civil dialogue through theatre arts production. Theatre PaBridge (pa Machipisa) has become a common artistic oasis or Theatre Arts hub for both young and established artists in Zimbabwe and abroad.



*If hate is the only beverage in the bar,
I'm holding on to my thirst,
suppress the crave for the meanwhile
reciting lines and verses that question our sanity,
rhythms and rhymes that expose us to our stupidity.
Assuming we still have the conscience
I want to see them meet the hatred in the streets...
i want them to know how we so much yearn for peace*

—by Poet Edward Dzonze

To mark the International Human Rights Week, Tafadzwa Muzondo, Edzai Isu Theatre Arts and Action Hub are curating and hosting the inaugural Zimbabwe Human Rights Festival at Theatre PaBridge from the 10th to 13th of December 2019. The artists are destined to speak on human

rights through poetry, express freedom through dance, to sing against political tolerance through Katekwe violins, and to use stand up theatre to stop corruption, political abuse and injustice in high offices. Zimbabwe Human Rights Festival is an entertaining, engaging and empowering platform to take stock of the human rights situation at local, national and international levels. It is an artistic initiative meant to mainstream human rights in an innovative way by rallying together rights holders and solution holders.

ZHRF will feature theatre, music, dance and poetry performances on human rights as well as post performance discussions and exhibitions by relevant civic society organizations and responses by invited solution holders. Major highlights of the performances, discussions and representations will be streamed live on our social media platforms as well as other partner platforms.



ZHRF will utilize the power of the arts in providing an interactive platform for citizens, civic society, and government, private and international organizations to inspire (foster) a culture of human rights in Zimbabwe. As much as we will touch on a range of human rights, this year we will focus on the right of citizens to participate in governance particularly in the area of social and economic development.

The theme of the inaugural festival is “AFTER,” which is an abbreviation for Arts Fostering Total Enforcement of Rights, and also meaning *AFTER* all the bickering, sloganeering and propagandizing, citizens need their rights to be respected not trampled on.

It is encouraging that the Zimbabwean government has established the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, a Constitutional Commission to promote awareness, protection, development and attainment of human rights and freedoms in Zimbabwe. As a transformative arts organization, EDZAI ISU Trust conceived a creative and innovative initiative in the name of Zimbabwe Human Rights Festival to commemorate Human Rights Day and contribute to the need to respect human rights in our dear country.

Besides the Zimbabwean constitution being clear on human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ratified by Zimbabwe, recognizes the inherent dignity of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. It includes civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to social security, health and education.



The Zimbabwe Human Rights Festival, the brainchild of award winning transformative artist and social activist Tafadzwa Muzondo, is a rallying point in the mission to improve accountable, democratic governance that serves an engaged citizenry. Respect for human rights is at the core of social and economic development as without citizens enjoying and authorities respecting human rights, we cannot talk of any meaningful people centered development.

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