



sport, arts, culture & recreation
Department of
Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation
FREE STATE PROVINCE

A **FREE STATE** 
THAT **WORKS** **FOR ALL**



MACUFE 2026 WHEN YOUR HEART AND SOUL IS AFRICAN



Celebrating more than two decades, the MACUFE festival set high expectations for the 2026 edition by promising a nostalgic and exhilarating experience. This milestone follows its successful relaunch as a recalibrated program during a high-profile launch event on August 1, 2025.

The 2026 edition of this flagship programme of the Free State Provincial Government was officially launched on the 31st July 2026 at the War Museum of the Boer Republic by MEC Ntombizanele Sifuba.

Inaugurated in 1997 by the Free State Provincial Government, the festival serves as a platform to honour elite local and international African artists. The initiative arose from a lack of cultural events dedicated to the diverse heritage of indigenous South Africans. Its core objective was to establish an event that celebrated indigenous African cultural history, specifically countering other arts festivals deemed lacking in this representation.

The festival was designed not only to entertain, but also as a government vehicle to develop artists in all disciplines, to give exposure to new, unknown artists, to empower SSMEs and to promote tourism in our beautiful province.

As previously stated, MACUFE is a government-run program and has never been driven by profit during its 20-year history. It is a well-established principle that the government does not seek to profit from public services, and arts and culture programs like MACUFE are no exception.

Hosted during Heritage Month, the revamped program ran from September 3–13, 2026, with a dedicated focus on cultural heritage. The initiative acted as a powerful catalyst—boosting cultural tourism, driving local economic growth, providing a platform for local performers, and strengthening social cohesion and national unity.

We elevated this year's MACUFE lineup with exciting new additions! The program featured the debut of the MACUFE Divas Music Festival, a transition from developmental to professional showcases for Comedy and Poetry, and the MACUFE Cultural Village—complete with an immersive, living-museum experience of the Basotho Cultural Village.

Comedy featured the following comedians: Shaun Dihoro; Rasta Eye & Eye; Mashabela Galane; Teboho Khakhau; Celeste Ntuli; Sputniki; and Chris Mapane

Divas Concert, we headlined the following artists: Zonke; Lira; Brenda Mtambo; Puleng Phoofole; Snazo Moloi; and Nthabi

Amapiano vs Hip Hop featured: Khuli Chana; Big Laz; Amo; Moarda; Majasto; Taylor K; Teddy MC; Emtee; Jacob; and Kenny Mcvital

Main Music Festival headlined the following performers: Sannere; Jaziel Brothers; Siphokazi; Khuthala; Fantas DJ; Zonke; Lira; Moneoa; Vusi Nova, Ntando, Puleng Phofolo; Victor Kgantlape; Thabiso wa Maloti; Khaya; Peter Nthwane Band; and Semito.

Gospel Music Festival, featured the following artists: Minister Spokes; Teboho Moruti; Winnie Mashaba; Sello Maletle; Jabu Hlongwane; William Mthethwa; Teboho Moloi; Katleo Seobi; Keletso Mofokeng; Andiswa Mbantsa; Re Gao; Kgosi Lebetsa; Lebo Segobela; and Puleng March.



ACTIVATIONS AND FSGLTA OPEN BUS TOUR



The marketing campaign, encapsulating below and above the line interventions, reached thousands across the length and breadth of our land, utilizing social media and digital media, print and electronic media. Event marketing activations turned passive brand awareness into hands-on audience interaction.

Hype was built around the festivals using influencer teaser campaigns, early-bird special and ticket giveaways.

The programme extended MACUFE beyond digital channels into diverse venues, campuses, public spaces, streets, and regional communities. Promotional teams engaged audiences directly through venue activations, street activations (at traffic lights and around shopping malls), and tertiary institution engagement. The activations footprint extended beyond Bloemfontein into towns across the Free State and into Maseru, Lesotho.

To boost regional tourism, the Free State Gambling Liquor and Tourism Authority joined forces with the Department, introducing an open-air tour bus to enhance city visibility and public engagement.



MACUFE 2026 OUTCOMES



1. **P**rovision of a platform for **68% local artists** in the mainstream programmes of MACUFE (Main Music Festival; DIVAS Concert; Gospel Festival; Main Theatre; Comedy and Poetry as well as Amapiano vs Hip-Hop). All other platforms of the festival (Theatre; Dance; Drama; Film Festival; Visual Arts, Crafts, and Literature) were 100% local artists.
2. **Economic opportunities** provided to local business persons (events organizers) who in turn subcontracted various services: cleaning, technical, security, hospitality and other services required in a festival of the magnitude of MACUFE that was implemented for eleven days. As a departure from the past, when one (1) service provider/company provided services for the entire programme of MACUFE, **six (6) companies** were contracted for MACUFE service provision in 2026. This is a procurement model that was started in 2025 as part of the reimagined MACUFE programme. These six (6) companies further subcontracted other 17 companies with capabilities in various festival services. Some of these companies are youth and women owned.
3. **1068 temporary job opportunities** were created in various services throughout the eleven days of the festival.
4. **24 Local Community Media entities** as well as two (2) Public Broadcaster radio stations were contracted.
5. **Security measures** in place ensured no single security breach or incident.
6. **Technical and infrastructural resources** (stage, sound, lighting, temporary infrastructure such as marquee tents and ablution facilities) posed no major, if any, technical glitches or health hazards disruptive of the festival during the eleven days period.
5. An **enthralling artistic line up** which entertained the revellers from beginning to end.



PETER NTHWANE TRIBUTE



During the main festival, a special tribute performance was staged for the late beloved afro-jazz musician Mr. Peter Nthwane. On the evening of 11 November 2016, the province and the entire arts fraternity across the country lost a talented and seasoned icon in Peter Nthwane. We saw it befitting to honour Mr. Nthwane because he lived a life that was worth emulating over the years as he kept many of us entertained and dancing to his tunes. It was a was a sombre but equally joyful moment when his band took to stage and got the crowd dancing to hit songs such as Ha A Batle Ho Sebetsa, Mokgwenyana and Senanapo.

Mr Nthwane's legacy is that of a hero in our society who dedicated most of his life towards changing South Africa's music landscape for the better.

The people of the Free State shall forever be indebted to Mr. Peter Nthwane and the rich legacy he has left behind. Though he may be gone among us his melody lingers on!



MACUFE OPEN BUS



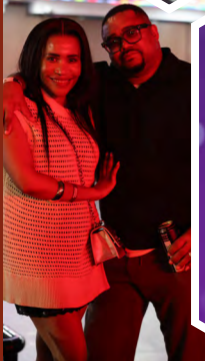


POETRY & COMEDY SHOWS





A vibrant collage of 15 photographs capturing various moments from the 2023 African Music Festival. The images feature performers like DJ Khaled, Cardi B, and Lil Nas X, as well as audience members dancing and socializing. The collage is set against a background of colorful, abstract patterns.



DIVAS



MAIN FESTIVAL





GOSPEL

Thank You

A heartfelt thank you to the wonderful people of our province and fellow South Africans from all corners of the country for making MACUFE 2026 a resounding success. We extend our deepest appreciation to every role player, including our incredible performing artists, dedicated stakeholders and partners, the technical crew, department officials, and, most importantly, our amazing patrons.



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