

2008

ZIMBABWE IN PHOTOS



This edition is a special focus on the Harare International Festival of the Arts (www.hifa.co.zw) held from 29 April to 4 May at the Harare Gardens in central Harare. The existence and continuation of the festival is testament to the spirit of resilience and hope resident in the people of Zimbabwe. We pay tribute to the artists and managers who made this event possible. We hope that HIFA 2009 will take place in a truly free and prosperous Zimbabwe.

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EDITION 8



Chris Kabwato - Editorial

Some things change, some things don't

I am used to mocking the Mazoe Orange Juice advert with the punchline "Something change, some things don't". But although I am not sure if the ever popular Zimbabwean juice has remained the same over the decades, I can vouch for some things that don't seem to change and I list them as:

- Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA – www.hifa.co.zw) – see explanation below
- Bronte Hotel (how does this place maintain its grace and elegance in the middle of a city wracked by neglect)
- Zimbabweans ("MaZimbo") – how do they maintain their smiles and civility in the middle of such nonsense?

HIFA is an anomaly in a country collapsing – dubious water that flows intermittently; electricity rationing (polite term is "load-shedding"); pot-holes in which a hippo could take a nice swim; snaking queues for cash at banks; ubiquitous plain-clothes police and informers; and a hysterical state-controlled media. Started in 1999 by world-renowned pianist Manuel Bagorro, HIFA has grown in leaps and bounds in the short space of nine years. HIFA is a moving feast of dance, theatre, music, poetry, food, drink and just plain merry-making.



Chris with Simon Attwell of Freshly Ground.

The 2008 HIFA came against a backdrop of major political developments in the country. Results of the presidential election had not yet been announced when the event started (we had waited for a world record of 5 weeks); the rural populace and township dwellers daring to go for a drink in the evenings were being savaged by uniformed soldiers, militia and ruling party thugs; the opposition had taken over parliament for the first time since 1980; and inflation was roaring unabated towards 200,000 percent. In the midst of all this was HIFA – a world-class event taking place in the Harare Gardens with the 5-star Monomotapa Crowne Plaza Hotel looking over.

The music (Freshly Ground, Oliver Mtukudzi, Chiwoniso Maraire); the dance (Tumbuka); drama (The Two Leaders I Know); poetry (Outspoken, Chirikure) and the crowds!! Need I say more?

Just feast on the pictures and see what you missed if you chickened out being in Harare then or simply didn't know that this miracle exists in the pressure cooker that is Zimbabwe.

Peace.

Special thanks goes out to: NiZA; Farai Mpfunya (Culture Fund); Chipso Muvezwa (Culture Fund); Heeten Bhagat (National Art Gallery of Zimbabwe); Manuel Bagorro (HIFA); and my understudy, Simba Mudhokwani.
Big up to Zimbabwe in Photos team: Shalen Gajadhar and Levi Kabwato





Capathia Jenkins and Louis Rosen in concert, Harare Gardens, 1 May 2008. Capathia and Louis (both from the USA) bowled the crowd over with their jazz interpretations of the poetry of Nikki Giovanni, Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou. Check out their latest album – *One Ounce of Truth – The Nikki Giovanni Songs*.





Dobet Gnahore from Cote D'Ivoire gave a memorable performance that you could term "triple play" – a mixture of dance, theatre and music. Her message on HIV/AIDS was unambiguous.





The Coca-Cola Green at HIFA is the space for free concerts, soul food and just chilling. Transit Crew, one of Zimbabwe's foremost reggae bands had a jam there on 1 May 2008. Mikey, the Transit lead singer, has never been to Jamaica but speaks deep patois. Reggae remains big in Zimbabwe.





Dread in a Babylon. Reggae fans, Harare Gardens, 1 May 2008.





Legendary Zimbabwean guitarist Louis Mhlanga joined in the Transit gig and mesmerised the fans strumming the strings. Louis is based in South Africa.

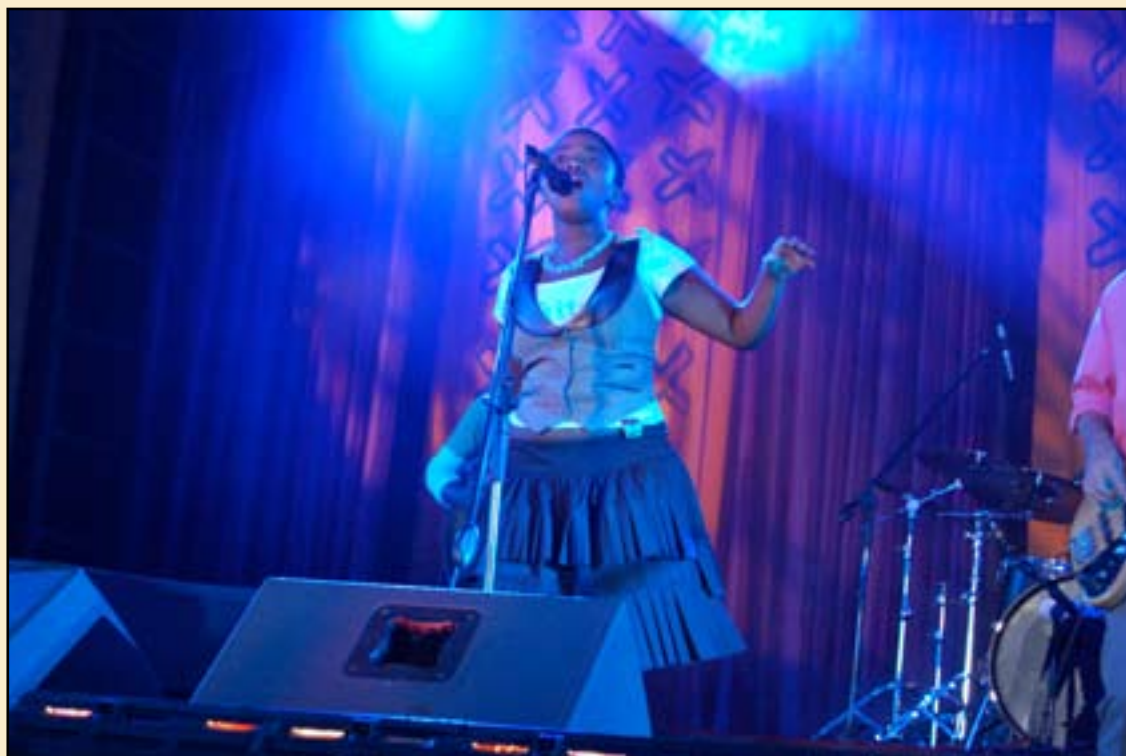


Max Wild (Max Wild Band), born in Zimbabwe and now living in the USA, jammed with Sam Mtukudzi (Oliver's son) and left the audience wanting more. Harare Gardens, 2 May 2008.



Freshly Ground, the South African jazz-pop fusion band, was the highlight of HIFA 2008. The concert was sold out. In solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe they sang Bob Marley's "Zimbabwe" and it was a very emotional moment for the crowd. The liberator had turned enemy. Harare Gradens, 3 May 2008.









Fans at the Freshly Ground concert sang along to every song and even composed their own song "One More" – chanted when ever they wanted a show to continue!



Music has no language – it is its own language. Canaman, a Spanish reggae band proved this. They sang in Spanish and all the “Dreads” and reggae-lovers rocked to their heavy beat.



Chiwoniso Maraire, mbira-player and singer extraordinaire, headlined the opening of HIFA on 29 April 2008.





This broken down car is a metaphor for Zimbabwe. Exhibition at the National Art Gallery, Harare, 1 May 2008.







A sign of the times. Exhibition at the National Art Gallery, Harare, 1 May 2008.



There is a new voice on the Zimbabwean literary scene. It is the poetry of young people who flock to places such as the Book Café in Harare and “verb what they like”. The scene is flourishing and hearing the youth in action is an inspirational moment. HIVOS, the Dutch organisation, presented the Poetry Café at HIFA 2008. Some photos of the action below.



Pathiswa Nyathi, a respected writer and poet, has been mentoring the young poets rocking Zimbabwe’s literary scene.



Brave young warriors. Poets for Human Rights are three young people who use the "Word" to mobilise.





Outspoken (left) and Chirikure Chirikure (right) – both poets at the forefront of the Poetry Movement in Zimbabwe. Chirikure organised the poetry programme at HIFA 2008.



2008 HIFA was remarkable for the consistent message in the music, theatre and poetry – CHANGE and FREEDOM.

Two plays *Everyday Heroes* (directed by Elton Mjanana) and *The Two Leaders I know* (directed by Cont Mhlanga) explored the contradictions of an independent Zimbabwe.



Kudzai Chimbaira, director of the play *Silent Words*.



Rani Moorthy wrote and performed in *Curry Tales*. At the press conference she quipped she was trying to crack the Coca Cola recipe so she could use it in her curry.



The play, *Everyday Heroes*, features Blessing Hungwe (right) as Peter, Pretty Xaba (below left) as Shungudzehondo and James Mukwindiza as Chris.





Elton Mjanana (right), director of *Everyday Heroes* and also coordinator of the theatre programme for HIFA 2008.



Zimbabwe theatre legend, Cont Mhlanga (right), chats to poet Chirikure. Mhlanga is the founder of Amakhosi Theatre Productions based in Bulawayo and well known for its plays with biting social commentary.



Another theatre legend, Daves Guzha (left) of Rooftop Promotions, acted in the one-person play *The Two Leaders I Know*. The play will be running at Theatre-in-the-Park in central Harare from 14 to 24 May 2008.



Simbarashe Mudhokwani, student journalist, interviews Raphael Chikukwa, curator. Raphael had just come back to Zimbabwe after obtaining an MA in Art Curation in the UK.



Godwin Mawuru, leading Zimbabwean filmmaker & TV producer (Neria, Studio263), left, and Farai Mpfunya, Director of the Culture Fund. The two had just watched Daves Guzha's play *The Two Leaders I Know* – a hard-hitting satire that looks at Ian Smith and Robert Mugabe and what they have meant to Zimbabweans.



Maria Wilson, Executive Director,
HIFA.



Angeline Kamba, Chair, HIFA
Board of Trustees.



Manuel Bagorro, Founder and Artistic Director, HIFA.



Simon and Zolani of Freshly Ground, Dobet Gnahore (bottom left), and Louis Rosen (bottom right).





Not exactly the election results!



The Bronte Hotel is situated in the Avenues of Harare – pretty much in the centre of town. Walking into this little English hotel is like steeping into another world given the surrounding decay.







