

Successful Second Edition Of Makhanda Stibili Festival

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Closing Heritage month, on Saturday, 30 September 2023, the founder, and Chairperson of Makhanda Stibili Festival Mr Velile Pantsi and his team hosted the 2nd edition of the Makhanda Stibili Festival. It was first launched last year on Saturday, 10 August 2022. Stibili music represents isiXhosa music while the traditional dance represents the movement our great grandparents used to celebrate in the olden days of stibili music.

This year, there were 11 choirs, including 8 high school choirs and three youth choirs: namely Abancedisi, the Makhanda Youth Choir and the Twelve Apostle Church Choir.

Founder of the Makhanda Youth Choir Mr Lonwabo Sandi said, "Makhanda Stibili is a great initiative as many choirs have joined now. I, myself this year my choir joined the festival for the 1st time as my choir is only a few months old. Last year, I was a conductor for the Khutliso Daniels High School... [The] formation of new choirs do prove that through the first Stibili Festival that stibili music has grown."

When asked how he came up with the name of his new choir, he said, "Because other youths that are not in high school would approach me and ask me why don't I accommodate the youth that are not in high school? That's how the name [and idea] came as it combines all Makhanda youth, ranging from 15 to 35, and makes them free from drugs, alcohol, and any other bad habits."

It improved since last year as it had branded banners and t-shirts. This was after organisers knocked on certain doors for assistance as they are not funded externally and had to charge a R50 entry fee into the venue.

One of the invited guests of the day was Councillor Yandiswa Vara who promised to assist financially with the event next year, and to be hands on as she made her speech.

When Pantsi did the closing of the festival, he stated that the objective of the festival was to organise children and make them busy outside of the streets. This is to have them more focused on having something to do, like practising everyday after school and the "child gets to be free from drugs and other bad habits."

Pantsi also thanked the community for coming out to support the choirs and asked the community to support the festival again next year.

The festival that Pantsi and his team is doing in the Makhanda community is one of a kind through instilling discipline and a skill of being organised and working together, as it is not only about singing.

Philasande Myeza, said he loves singing. He joined his school's choir last year through his former maths teacher Mr Lonwabo Sandi. His former teacher would sing in class, so he had told himself that he would join the school choir when Mr Sandi started the choir at his school.

When asked about this year's festival, grade 10 learner Philasande Myeza said, "During the festival I was so excited! I love music because it keeps me away from drugs and alcohol."

The event was a success despite the cold weather, as the community did come and attend the festival as the Karibu! team witnessed.

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