

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Kitwe Roars Into Sotambe Festival Mood

Mbizo Chirasha · Wednesday, September 18th, 2019

When the September sun washes away misty ripples off the concrete jungle of Kitwe-Nkana, while its rays caresses and licks off August dust from the copper belt, the children of earth pour into the city like an obedient hurricane, to join hands with griots of Chimwenwe, writers of Kwacha, filmmakers of Lechwe and they dance Vumbuza with Kaunda's grand children at Mplembe. The serenity of the city is aroused and reverberated by the echo of filmtainment and the September sun kisses its tongue into the anxiety filled Kitwe-Nkana. Sotambe International Film, Documentary and Arts Festival roars beautifully in motion like a revered lioness in an Africa wilderness. Behold, Kitwe becomes a Sotambe festival city.



Daniel Mwale and Martina Mwanza, Founders of the Sotambe International Film, Documentary and Arts Festival

Sotambe Documentary, Film and Arts festival was founded in 2014 by Zambia's reputable arts curators and festival organizers, the duo Martina Mwanza and Daniel Mwale. The word 'Sotambe' means 'come and watch.' The festival was founded with the scope of using film and arts as new vehicles of human education, infotainment, edutainment and of societal transformation. The festival also promotes dialogue and social inclusivity in school communities and other spaces. It has since grown into a fully-fledged international showcase that attracts big voices every September. Sotambe plays a significant role in building the confidence of young Zambian and Southern African filmmakers as well as artists, as they connect with the world and grow professionally in their film and creative arts expertise. The Sotambe festival runs a myriad of programs. The preliminary programming includes Filmmaking Boot Camp, which is a filmmaker's dream polishing activity, equipping filmmakers with requisite practical experience. The 6<sup>th</sup> Sotambe Festival has introduced film projects from international, African and local film industrialists. Top drawer film and arts master classes of photography, mobile apps film development projects, cinematography, script writing and film editing are part of the festival's star-studded package. Sotambe 2019 is hosting a Women in Film Conference presided by Zambia creative glitter studded women filmmakers and thought leaders that include Chisi Jessie, Bridget Mazango- Kashiba, Becky Ngoma, Cassie Kabwita and Chansa Gabbi Lamba.



BECKY NGOMA, filmmaker and thought leader (Zambia)

Interestingly, the newly launched Women in Filmmaking Campaign will act as a catalyst for diversity and inclusiveness as it grows the number of women storytellers and filmmakers in Zambia and Africa. Women are major drivers for social change issues. They are the custodians of arts and culture. The Women in Filmmaking Campaign will award both illustrious and upcoming women for the great strides in the field of filmmaking, promotion and production.



Mbizo Chirasha 2019 Live Literature Hub Curator

A fringe Word Fiesta dubbed the Live Literature Hub, or simply SOTAMBE Poetry Café, is another creative nutritious ingredient to flavor up the already delicious festival menu. Poetry as usual spices several festival menus correctly if not creatively. Poets from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana will croon Sotambe revelers with mesmerizing metaphors and satire. The lineup is an ocean basket menu of top drawer poets that include Robson Isaac Shoes Lambada from Zimbabwe, traditional griot Gorata Mighty Ntswabi of Botswana and Kitwe's Mwenya Makupe, with more and more word gunners gracing the Sotambe 2019 Live Literature Hub. The 6th SOTAMBE Festival has an interesting topical theme dubbed "Southern African Reels" and the competition categories are open to the filmmakers from the Southern African Region.



Mwanya Makupe, A Sotambe Poet from Kitwe

Martina Mwanza, the festival director has this to say: “Our vision is strong, and we continue pursuing our dream of becoming the biggest Film Festival in Southern Africa Region. All corporate houses are therefore invited to support these activities and contribute to the growth of the Film and Arts Industry in Zambia.”





Martina Mwanza, Director of Sotambe Film, Documentary and Arts Festival

The Kitwe Nkana District Commissioner and his esteemed office supports the Sotambe festival and they have giving sterling support in line with their means of contribution. The Sotambe Film Institute is also partnering with a number of organizations that include the International Human Rights Art Festival, in New York, the Power Tools Luxury Transporting, Hospitality organizations in Kitwe, the Kitwe District Commissioner, the Arts Fraternity in Zambia and Southern Africa. Over and above all, Multi Choice has been instrumental in the growth of Sotambe.

Founder Martina Mwanza, who graduated in Development Studies, actively participated in the organization of the biggest Human Rights Film Festival in Czech Republic for many years. During her employment as a lecturer at the Zambia Catholic University, she had a desire to promote the use of film in the learning process and create a platform for college and university students to share ideas. Her dream is to create an international standard Film Festival for the Southern African filmmakers. Founder Daniel Mwale is a Metallurgical Engineer and a scholar of Business Management with a passion for film and arts. Before establishing the Sotambe Film festival, he was actively involved in arts through his membership at the Nkana Arts Society where, later on, he became a Business Manager for the Kitwe Little Theatre. His belief is that the Creative Industry can contribute significantly to the preservation of the Zambian Culture and the economy.

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