



Gaudeamus igitur
Amemus dum sumus
Fratres ut in iu-
tu-
re vestram sen-
sus
Nos habebit unum

UNIZULU Choir confident about fate in SATMA Awards

IT is only a matter of hours before the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) Choir learns its fate at the 14th South African Traditional Music Achievement Awards, taking place tomorrow (Saturday, 28 September) at the Mmabatho Convention Centre in the North West Province.

Founded in 2006, the SATMA Awards are the largest traditional music awards in the continent, celebrating indigenous music, culture and heritage. Its core objective is to empower local traditional musicians, artists and groups to celebrate their indigenous music, for the preservation and regeneration of African heritage and culture across Africa and beyond.

The UNIZULU Choir is nominated in the Best Traditional Dance Group category where it is pitted against three other dance groups. The nomination comes after a strict adjudication process by a select panel which reviewed the choristers' music and choreography.

Speaking on behalf of the group, UNIZULU Choir Conductor Bhekani Buthelezi said it was an honour to be recognised in this category, adding that the nomination on its own was a huge achievement. He was not so modest though when asked whether they expected victory as he plainly stated that the highly coveted prize had the university choir's name on it.

"We are confident in our work because we are very intentional in what we do. We understand that when we are on stage, we are a complete package. It's not just about our voices but how we move and look as well. That's why we put a lot of effort into every aspect of our performances,"



The UNIZULU Choir is counting the hours before the big reveal at the SATMA Awards tomorrow. The group is nominated under the Best Traditional Dance Group category.

he highlighted.

From the various activation campaigns the choir had in areas such as Dlangweza and Esikhawini in Empangeni, the public was very receptive to the music. This has been a big confidence-booster for the group and has given it the assurance of victory.

Buthelezi noted that what also sets the UNIZULU Choir apart from its competitors is its versatility and unique approach to music. The track list on the debut album is a melodic mix of genres from

traditional gospel hymns to *imibholohlo* (traditional wedding songs) to Afro pop to maskandi.

"Versatility is the name of the game. As a choir, we come from a classical background. That's an advantage when it comes to transitioning to different musical genres. We could have easily chosen to include choral music in our album but we wanted to break the mould by stretching ourselves musically. Incorporating choreography was a bonus," Buthelezi said. It is blessings upon blessings for the

UNIZULU Choir as on top of its nomination, it will collaborate with Afro pop great Ntando in performing what it hopes will be a spectacle during the awards ceremony.

Buthelezi said he hoped the said performance would open the door to more collaboration opportunities with internationally acclaimed artists.

In conclusion, he extended his gratitude to the UNIZULU community for its unwavering support throughout the years.

Mobilising IKS in response to the effects of climate change in Africa

THE Department of Geography and Environmental Studies together with the Department of Consumer Sciences at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) recently hosted their debut Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) Workshop.

The event took place earlier this month at the Umhambi Lodge, Richards Bay. Dr Innocent Moyo, co-organiser of the event, introduced the workshop by highlighting that the overarching goal of the workshop was to explore how and to what extent IKS can be mobilised in response to the effects of climate change such as drought in many African countries including South Africa.

The workshop was officially opened by Prof Gideon De Wet, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation. UNIZULU staff members, postgraduate students, NGOs (Siyazisiza Trust), Owen Sithole College of Agriculture (OSCA) and community members who are IK experts attended the thought-provoking workshop. In his opening remarks Prof De Wet emphasised the importance of IKS contribution to environmental matters and the whole issue of sustainability and quality of life. He also reiterated the significance of strengthening the relationship between industry, community and academia to mitigate the disjuncture between learning and living. He also grappled with the complex question of how we are to interact with communities which are in many ways very vulnerable to climate change.

The guest speaker, Dr Komeine Nantanga who represented the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia, started off the day with an analysis of how people in different parts of Namibia successfully responded to the effects of droughts. He then concluded by highlighting the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to research on IKS so as to



Prof Unathi Kolanisi, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, hands over a token of appreciation to Dr Komeine Nantanga, from the University of Namibia, for his guest speech during the debut IKS Workshop organised by UNIZULU's departments of Geography and Environmental Studies and Consumer Sciences.

effectively respond to drought. Delegates from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and South African Weather Service (SAWS) also demonstrated the efficacy of IKS in terms of responding to drought and improving food security.

Participants commended the workshop as having capacitated them to have better focus in their IKS research. The response of the delegates to the IKS workshop was positive as evidenced by the live discussions. Prof Unathi Kolanisi, the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, amplified the need to pay more attention to IKS as an alternative paradigm and/or approach to food systems in Africa, particularly those which are most affected by drought.

Developing efficient researchers and supervisors for South Africa

IN response to the Minister of Higher Education's call for the increase of academics with master's and doctoral qualifications as well as quality supervisors and publications, the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), in partnership with the South African Technology Network (SATN), recently conducted extensive training for its pool of emerging researchers.

The weeklong SATN Capacity Enhancement Programme training was the first of a series to be conducted by SATN between 2019 and 2020. SATN programmes have been developed, tested and refined by a team of national and international experts to meet the quality and "time to completion needs" of especially the new generation universities and technology-focused universities. Over the past three years of SATN offering such programmes, the outcomes and outputs are said to have been phenomenal.

The objectives of SATN programmes is to strengthen the teaching and research capacity of institutions, enable qualified academics to deepen their knowledge of



UNIZULU staff members who were trained during the recent week-long SATN Capacity Enhancement Programme.

research methodology in their disciplines; ensure that they complete their Master's and PhD programmes in the required time; enhance their supervision skills and ensure submission of high-quality papers for publication to accredited journals.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning

Professor Mahlomaholo Mahlomaholo highlighted that UNIZULU produces a sizeable number of PhD graduates every year.

"PhDs improve research output for a university as the huge number of graduates translate into excellence and cutting edge research and teaching solutions for staff members," Prof Mahlomaholo said.

During the training, attendees were split into two groups based on their fields of interest. Candidates thereafter presented their initial research ideas through interactive discussions. The proposal development programme is a six module blended learning programme with residential and online modules. It is run over a two-year

period taking you up to dealing with your own collected data. It has an Embedded Supervisor Enhancement Programme and is based on a cohort model creating opportunities for regional, national and global networks and communities of practice. It is facilitated by national and internationally recognised academics.

The programme is implemented in a novel triangular model with the candidate, supervisor and facilitator working together in a common learning space. It is a hands-on, multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary programme that is assessed, monitored and evaluated throughout the period.

SATN representative Prof Ahmed Wadee mentioned that the programme seeks to encourage the production of at least one high-quality journal publication from the dissertation in an accredited journal. "The SATN has a partnership with the International Journal for Science, Technology and Society and candidates will be encouraged to submit to this journal. Given that there is currently no formal training for supervisors and that South Africa has a dearth

of supervisors, the Embedded Supervisor Enhancement Programme will not only ensure the production of doctorates in the three or four-year period but will also introduce current supervisors to new supervision methodologies and will create a community of practice among the supervisors on the programme," he said.

Nomaswazi Dlamini, a lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Studies who was among the PhD candidates in the programme, commended SATN and UNIZULU for bringing the programme to the institution.

"I would like to believe that we have been transformed as young and emerging scholars. What we have learned here is going to produce quality researchers and supervisors. The week was short but very fruitful and I am grateful for that," Dlamini said.

Prof Wadee said that all the resolutions and recommendations would, at the end of the programme, be tabled for further interpretation by UNIZULU Vice-Chancellor Prof Xoliswa Mtose.

UNIZULU eager to host international nuclear physics conference

THE University of Zululand (UNIZULU) is looking forward to informative sessions and fruitful scientific engagements during the upcoming 9th Tastes of Nuclear Physics, an international conference on fundamental nuclear physics and applications.

The event will be hosted from Monday until Friday next week at the Premier Hotel The Richards in Richards Bay.

An annual conference, the Tastes of Nuclear Physics is aimed at stimulating students to reach their full potential in their academic and research endeavours by attracting world-class lecturers to instruct them on topical subjects in fundamental and applied nuclear physics. In so doing, students will be enlightened on new research possibilities and supporting state-of-the-art facilities in South Africa and abroad.

The ninth edition of the conference is

being organised by UNIZULU, in collaboration with the University of Western Cape (UWC). This year's event promises to be exciting, according to Professor Sifiso Ntshangase, a n academic in the Department of Physics and Engineering, who is Chair of the conference, together with Prof Nico Orce from UWC. It will feature interactive lectures delivered by local and international speakers, special workshops as well as engagement sessions between postgraduate students and field experts who will provide feedback on the students' ongoing research.

"We have a wide range of delegates from local and international institutions who will attend and participate in the conference. There will be interesting public lectures by field experts. One of the lectures will be delivered by Prof Eric Norman from the University of California, Berkeley

in the United States of America. He will unpack the topic of Neutrino Physics. There will be other lectures on nuclear medicine, by Amo Jordan, and the microscopic origin of the cosmos by Azinnwini Muronga," said Prof Ntshangase.

In hosting the conference, the academic said he hopes all attendees will gain immensely from the wealth of knowledge that will be shared during the conference. Nuclear physics can be applied in many areas which include forensics and oncology, therefore it will be important for attendees to learn about its various applications.

According to Prof Ntshangase, UNIZULU is one of the major producers of nuclear physics graduates in the country. He, therefore, is intent on enlightening delegates on the institution's research culture and practices.



Delegates who attended the eighth edition of the Tastes of Nuclear Physics conference at the University of Western Cape.

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