



Ground Floor Media24 Centre
40 Heerengracht St, Foreshore
Cape Town 8001

 [capetowncarnival](#)
 [TheCapeTownCarnival](#)
 [CTCarnival](#)
 [capetowncarnival](#)
www.capetowncarnival.com

PRESS RELEASE

Follow your HeART to this year's Cape Town Carnival

Design. Art. Fashion. Music. Dance. Passion. Creativity. This is the heartbeat of the Mother City and what makes her the cosmopolitan capital of Africa. On 21 March, this beat will ripple through the city, lighting up the streets in a bold, bright celebration of talent as the sixteenth Cape Town Carnival showcases the talent of 1500 performers.

The 2026 Cape Town Carnival theme **“Follow Your HeART”**, invites Capetonians, South Africans and visitors to cheer on creativity and connection on Green Point's Somerset Street – and to celebrate the artists, makers and dreamers who follow their passion to create something extraordinary.

Speaking at the launch of the 2026 event yesterday (EDs: Thursday 15 January), Prof Rachel Jafta, Chair of the Cape Town Carnival Trust emphasised how the Cape Town Carnival offers a joyful antidote to a world that is *onderstebo*, or upside down.

“There's so much uncertainty globally, but it's in these uncertain times when the spirit of the Carnival shines its brightest. We are about community, human connection, joy and creating something magnificent. Our performers put their hearts, soul and bodies into bringing us this amazing spectacle. We are so grateful for the sponsors who share this vision – you are investing in so much more than an event, you are investing in dreams.”

This year, the event will feature 12 “Champions” drawn from the city's creative community: “These Champions have followed their heart in order to live their passion, and they'll be providing inspiration as they share their stories,” said Cape Town Carnival CEO Jay Douwes.

Along with her fellow Champions, singer Zolani Mahola credits Cape Town for providing the backdrop to her artistic growth.

“The role of ‘Champion’ means a lot. I arrived here from the Eastern Cape 26 years ago, dreaming of performing to thousands. Those dreams have come true, and in a large part it's thanks to this city that has given me so much. It feels meaningful to be a Cape Town Carnival Champion in the city where I've crafted and grown my art,” she said.

Her 11 fellow Champions are Anslin Gysman, DJ Ready D, *Suidooster* star Natasha van der Merwe, graffiti artist Rizah Potgieter, hip-hop artist Bravo le Roux, designer Stephen van Eeden, make-up influencer Jemma Fourie, performance legend Terry Fortune, activist Nyaniso Tutu-Burris, make-up artist Qhayiya Tyali, and musician Dylan Majavie.



Ground Floor Media24 Centre
40 Heerengracht St, Foreshore
Cape Town 8001

 [capetowncarnival](#)
 [TheCapeTownCarnival](#)
 [CTCarnival](#)
 [capetowncarnival](#)
www.capetowncarnival.com

Guest speaker, Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis highlighted the role of the event in creating a shared space for communities that might never interact otherwise.

“We have so many people in our city and society who live in different bubbles. Events like this provide the opportunity for people to come out of their bubbles and meet on the streets of Cape Town and be exposed to other stories,” he said. “That’s why I love the Cape Town Carnival – you’re seeing an incredible show that’s taken months to create but you’re also seeing the different stories of the city walk right past you.”

Behind the scenes, the Carnival is far more than a once-a-year spectacle. It is a year-round engine for job creation, skills development and artistic opportunity.

The ability of the Cape Town Carnival to lift spirits and create opportunity was echoed by Western Cape Premier Alan Winde. “This event changes people’s lives. The northern hemisphere really is a crazy place but think about the millions of tourists who have arrived here and what they’ve had to say about us. This place is actually at the top of the world, and the Carnival showcases the top of the world, and all we have to offer.”

“We’ve been a proud partner for 16 years,” added Multichoice’s Itumeleng Thulare. “The Cape Town Carnival really speaks to impact and reflects the beauty of the city and South Africa. Multichoice is about enriching the life of others, which the Carnival embodies. I hope everyone follows their heart, and that their heart tells them to come to the Cape Town Carnival.”

Sponsors and partners of the Cape Town Carnival:

- City of Cape Town
- Multichoice and DSTV
- Media24 including News24
- Western Cape Government Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport and the Premier’s Office
- Kfm94.5
- Southern Sun Hotels
- Novus Media including People’s Post, Tygerburger and City Vision
- Tractor Outdoor
- Media24 Lifestyle: Huisgenoot, You, Kuier and Drum
- Via TV
- Clicks
- Okushal Cordials
- Coca Cola Peninsula Beverages
- City Sightseeing



Ground Floor Media24 Centre
40 Heerengracht St, Foreshore
Cape Town 8001

 capetowncarnival
 TheCapeTownCarnival
 CTCarnival
 capetowncarnival

www.capetowncarnival.com

- ***The event is FREE but there are some VIP and seated stand tickets on sale on <https://capetowncarnival.com>***

ENDS

Link to images:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1USoZTaQ6Wc5LIRZoZj7BcOWrgJevpLPb?usp=sharing>