

ENTERTAINMENT

Doccie on SA women of song to screen in Canada

Titled Legends of Madiba "in their own words", it features Klaasen, Rathebe, Masuka and Mgcina who have all since passed away

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The legendary Thandie Klaasen performing at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg.
Image: Watson Mcoteli

A film about the life and times of SA music legends Thandi Klaasen, Dolly Rathebe, Dorothy Masuka, and Sophie Mgcina will be screened in Canada on Monday to commemorate Women's Day.

Titled *Legends of Madiba "in their own words"*, it features Klaasen, Rathebe, Masuka and Mgcina who have all since passed away. The film also features singer and actress Abigail Kubeka and Klaasen's daughter Lorraine Klaasen.

The doccic will be flighted by the Embassy Cultural House (ECH) in Canada.

According to the organisation, the decision to recognise the legends was motivated by their commitment to celebrate artists and cultural workers around the globe. The organisation has been working with Lorraine and other African stars for years.

ECH will further have a virtual panel of discussion that will highlight the experiences and perspectives of SA women featuring H el ene Blanchette, Lorraine, Dr Nandipha Ndhlovu and Sheila Woodward.



Dorothy Masuka was the celebrated jazz vocalist of all time.

Image: Arena Holdings Archive

The film was shot by Henshaw Productions with Lorraine Klaasen in 2003.

Speaking to Sowetan on Thursday, Klaasen's daughter Lorraine said it was important for the world to see the documentary to understand who inspired her music and the story of SA music.

"I brought all of them to Canada because I wanted the Canadians to see the women behind my own music career. All these women inspired the person that I am on Friday. I grew up listening to their music. As you can see, the documentary is not scripted, it is about them talking about their lives and how was it like to grow up in the 1950s.

"I turned their story into a doccic because I wanted to inspire young people out there. I just wanted to tell their stories and I am also keeping my mother's legacy alive. It is important to celebrate this year's International Women's Day, which is celebrated in North America on August 8 and August 9 in SA by remembering these music icons."

The 49 minutes doccic features interviews and performances of the five local legends. In the documentary, they speak about their lives, challenges of being a singer during apartheid and what kept them going.

Thandi Klaasen speaks about how her life drastically changed after two men poured petrol on her face and set her alight.

Kubeka said: "When everyone was leaving I stayed behind because I had small kids at that time. We survived by performing at night clubs in the Joburg City. At that time black people were not allowed to be in town at 9pm. We stayed because we wanted to make money and got arrested. I used to get arrested almost every day and the next day we paid two pounds and the same night we went back to performing.

"Sometimes when police arrive while [we were] performing, we would run into the club's kitchen and pretend to be washing dishes and survive that way. I am excited that the world will get to see our story and understand where we come from," she said about the filming of the film in Canada.

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