

Atelier for Young Festival Managers

23 - 29 March 2018

Speech by

Ismail Mahomed

CEO of the Market Theatre Foundation

Closing Ceremony of the Atelier for Young Festival Managers Johannesburg 2018

29 March, Johannesburg, 2018

Ismail Mahomed, the CEO of the Market Theatre Foundation, due to a commitment at the KKKNK Festival in Oudtshoorn regrets that he cannot be present this evening at the closing of the Atelier for Young Festival Managers.

The Market Theatre Foundation extends its appreciation to the Festival Academy and to the University of Witwatersrand for a superb partnership which has ensured that a new chapter will be written in history that the first Atelier for Young Festival Managers that was hosted in Africa was held at the Market Theatre.

The presence and participation of such a diverse group of participants coming from across the globe who have spent this past week at the Market Theatre Foundation has been both exciting and inspiring. We hope that each of you will take back with you precious memories about our theatre, our city and our country. Most of all, we hope that you will treasure the engagements that you have enjoyed with the people of our city and country; and that you will become brand ambassadors for the Market Theatre Foundation, the city of Johannesburg and of South Africa.

The Market Theatre Foundation extends its appreciation to Inge Ceustersmans and Laure Verbruggen of the Festival Academy for choosing to partner with the Market Theatre Foundation. We extend our appreciation to Brett Pyper and his team from Wits University for their dynamic role in the partnership; and for playing a pivotal role in working together with the Festival Academy in content development and in documenting this week's deliberations. We look forward to see the kind of scholarly work that Wits University will develop from this exercise so that it can continue to benefit the arts and creative economies.

The Market Theatre Foundation also extends its appreciation to Mike van Graan for brokering this partnership between the Market Theatre Foundation, University of Witwatersrand and the Festival Academy. We also extend our appreciation to Mike van Graan for the strategic role that he has played in content development and directing the curriculum of the Academy.

The Market Theatre Foundations extends its appreciation to the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences for a grant that has enabled the Market Theatre Foundation to partner with on the Atelier Project. We extend our appreciation to the Apartheid Museum and to the South African Constitution Court for hosting our delegates.

Ismail Mahomed wishes to also extend his gratitude to the teams at Market Theatre Laboratory and the Windybrow Arts Centre for being active participants in the Atelier; and for creating an opportunity for the delegates at the Atelier to experience the cultural heartbeat of our institution. In this regard he wishes to thank in particular Nomalanga Nkosi, Clara Vaughan and Keitu Gwangwa for ensuring that delegates experience the pulsating energy of our cultural institution. He wishes to extend a special gratitude to Yusrah Bardien who was the Market Theatre Foundation's official coordinator and representative to undertake all the Market Theatre Foundation's responsibilities and to ensure that the Market Theatre Foundation fulfills all aspects of its contractual obligations to ensure a successful Atelier. Yusrah performed her responsibilities with passion and commitment; and that she exemplifies the kind of cultural administrator who serves the arts with absolute dedication.

He also wishes to extend his appreciation to the Front of House team under the leadership of Thuli Hlaneke. They ensured that the delegates enjoyed a comfortable, clean and safe venue at the Market Theatre Foundation at all times. Under the leadership of the Front of House team, we also extend our appreciation to the security and cleaning staff at the Market Theatre Foundation for the extended services that they provided for the Atelier. A special word of appreciation is also extended to Hailey Kingston and team in the production department for ensuring that the Market Theatre Foundation could provide the technical services for the Atelier.

He also extends his appreciation to Zama Buthelezi and her team in the Brand & Communications Department for promoting the Atelier across all the Foundation's social media platforms; and in particular for bringing out a special edition of the Foundation's weekly online supplement which carried an extensive feature of the Atelier.

Most of all we extend a special word of gratitude to each and every delegate at the Atelier --- local and international. We know that the arts sector will become a far more dynamic sector because of your vision, passion and leadership. We hope that you will take your learning from this Atelier and use it to strengthen your Festivals. Most of all, we are confident that the world will become a better place because of the delegates in this Atelier are so invested in the arts. You all recognize the power of the arts as a change agent to transform and build our societies. In a world beset with so many challenges the arts give us hope. It unites us in our common humanity. In the words of Nelson Mandela, "It is music and dance that make me at peace with the world".

As we close this Atelier, the Market Theatre Foundation wishes that all of you will make more music and more dance so that we can all be at peace with the world. Thank you and travel back safely to your destinations.