



on the cutting edge for 27 years

Cue was founded in 1986 when the National Arts Festival was still a teenager, with only a handful of shows at the Rhodes Theatre and the 1820 Settlers Monument. Now considered a stalwart of arts newspapers in South Africa, it's become a paragon of excellence and longevity, covering the Festival as one of several festival projects to come out of the Rhodes School of Journalism and Media Studies.

Staff from the School, visiting journalists as well as student writers, designers and photographers make up the Cue team, which is headed by Journalism lecturer Mr Brian Garman. "Cue is a bit of a guerrilla publication," says Garman who has been working on Cue in various capacities for 17 years; "One minute it's there and the next it's gone."

"Cue is a training ground for budding journalists, and creates a space to bring separate specialisations together: writing, design and photojournalism," he says. "This allows the Journ students to interact and learn a great deal from each other and professional journalists who work in the arts journalism field. Also, for many of the students, this is the first time they have worked in a daily deadline-driven environment, and that exposes them to different pressures from their experiences working on a weekly paper like Grocott's Mail." This gives the students the chance to build invaluable skills such as meeting daily deadlines, needing to write fresh and punchy content, and the fraught nature of arts journalism.

This year Cue will be edited by Darryl Accone with Sean O'Toole as visiting Arts Editor and a variety of specialist writers will be producing jazz, theatre, music and dance reviews. Mr Accone had previously been the arts editor for six years and editor from 2006 to 2009. He says one of the reasons he keeps coming back is because of Mr Garman. "He's one of the finest journalists I've worked with, whose sense of humour and unflinching coolth make the paper a haven of calm rather than a centre of hurly-burly." He also relishes "the idea and the ideal of Cue: to serve the Festival, Festival-goers, the arts and the journalism students working on it, for whom the paper is a real work experience."

Standard Bank has been the paper's main sponsor since the first edition but Cue also receives funding from Business Arts South Africa (BASA) and are supported by the media 24 printers, Paarl Coldset. This funding, together with advertising keeps it going during Festival, and enables Cue to just about break even by the end of the production. One of the reasons for its success is the continuity of the Rhodes School of Journalism and Media Studies being the paper's

anchor, says Mr Accone. "There are the many arts journalists who have worked on and contributed to the paper over the years. For them, it represents an ideal of how arts journalism can and should be done."

Mr Garman describes it as a concentrated project - intense but rewarding. "The department gets a real buzz and it's fun to work with such a large variety of students and professionals. I get to meet a bunch of journalists I wouldn't usually have encountered otherwise. Every year its' a huge project to pull off so it's satisfying to look back and say, we did it!"

Mr Accone admits that the long hours are always challenging, trying to stay alert from lack of sleep, "with lots of running around and almost non-stop intellectual and aesthetic stimulation both inside and outside the Cue newsroom".

Stefania Origgi and Stephanie Pretorius, both ex-students of the School, will return to Cue this year to manage the production of the newspaper. "I love working for Cue because it's a short, intense period where a few people come together to produce something really great. It's amazing to see what is produced every year with a new-ish team. It's also exciting to see students have such a practical experience of their studies. They start off so nervous they're not even sure how to interview someone over the phone yet, but by the end they can talk to some of the biggest names in the art world with confidence. In my first year at Cue, I was that student," says Ms Pretorius.



There are a couple of ingredients that ensure the success of the Cue recipe, but Mr Garman feels that the business model itself; which is partially funded and partially commercial, makes for a strong combination of independence as well as a mutually beneficial relationship with the Festival office. "We annoy each other, we criticise each other, but it's a good relationship. They don't influence us editorially but we fully realise the damage that can be done, not so much by reviews which are critical of poor productions (as there will always be those) but more by irresponsible reviews and shoddy news reporting."

He mentioned that a group of international arts critics who had visited the Cue newsroom a few years ago, were very complimentary of the paper and told them they knew of no other festival newspaper of this kind that had been able to sustain a project of such a high standard, anywhere else in the world.

"A lot of people really enjoy working for Cue, and they want to come back, they believe in it as a training project and as a Festival newspaper," says Mr Garman. "Festival-goers, artists, and the production team all believe in the ability of Cue to deliver. As with all newspapers, we do make mistakes, sometimes from a lack of knowledge or experience- but in the end it's about doing the best that we can with limited and inexperienced staff and getting edition out there."

Capturing the **Magical** moments

Cue's online photo agency, CuePix, is the perfect visual representation of what Festival is all about – a vitally muscular dancer caught in full flight; the face of a famous actor shining with emotion or a passing group of brightly dressed Festinos. But for 10 days every year, there's so much going on behind the scenes: Photo-Journ students attending any number of shows a day, taking up to a total of some 200 000 photos, of which only about 5000 are chosen and posted on the Cue Pix website.

Photo-Journalism lecturer Harold Gess started working for Cue as a student in the late 80s, when the paper was designed by hand on a light table, and photos were converted to halftones using a bromide camera.

After returning to Rhodes in 2005, he headed up the Cue Pix team, helping to build an online database of images, which were sold to the artists, as well as supplying the Cue paper with images. This year, he will juggle the dual roles of running the Cue Pix team of around 15 people as well as being Photo Editor for the paper.

A typical day starts with a meeting at 8.30 and then rushing off to shows, rushing back to edit and upload, ending the day at 11 or 12pm.

"As a mentor and educator, it's gratifying to see how the students start off tentatively, but then learn how to capture just the right moment, and then blossom as the Festival recedes." He believes part of Cue Pix's success is because it is such a valuable training project for these young photographers.

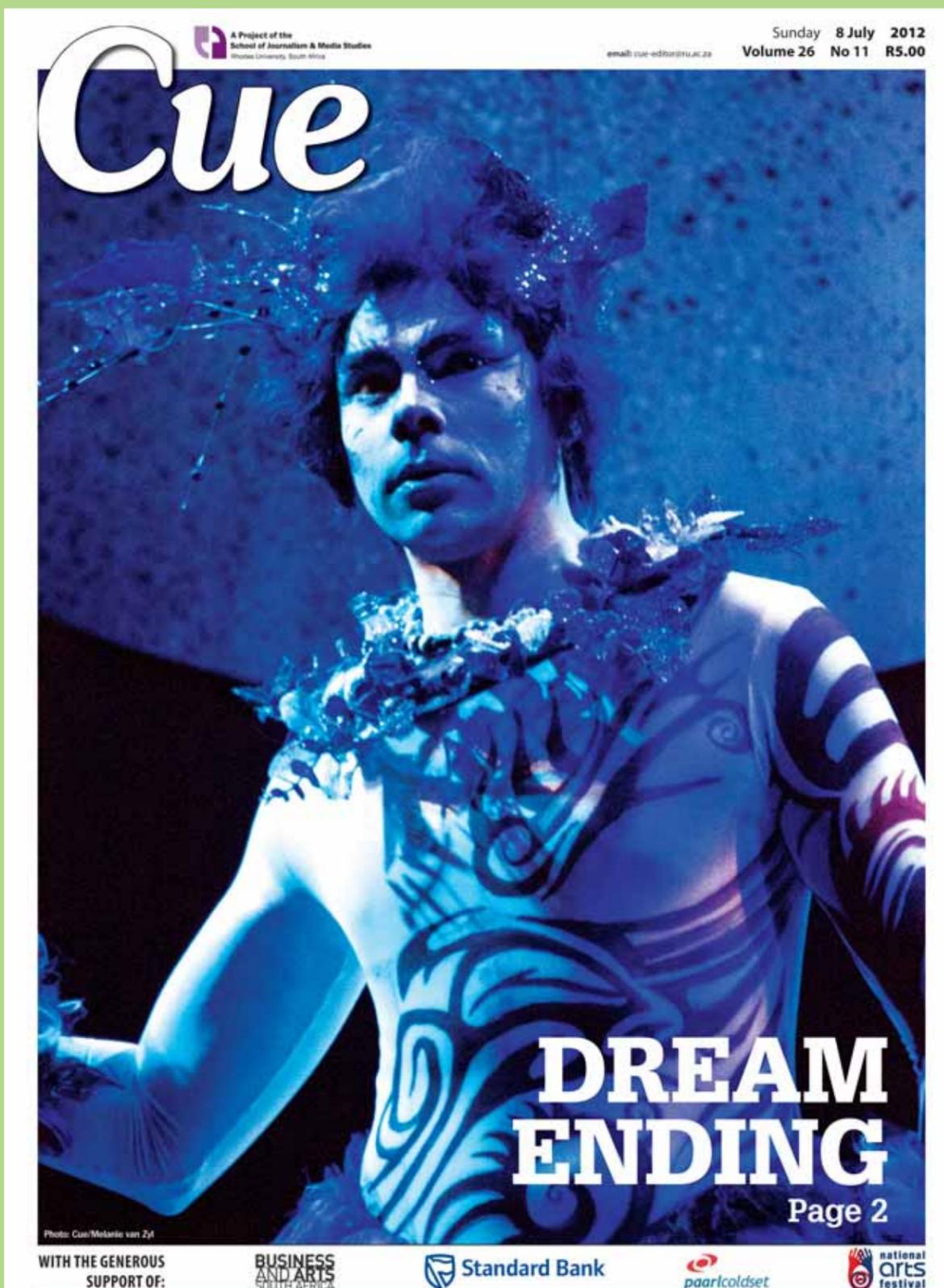
Nowadays, the Festival office pays Cue Pix a lump sum so that the photos can be made available to the artists for any further publicity. Teigue Blokpoel is one of the Photo-Journ students who will be returning to join the team again this year. He found it rather

daunting at first when confronted with the unenviable task of taking some decent shots with very low light conditions, "as well as not irritating people around you with the sound of your shutter, which people seem to think can be turned off!"

He feels that the experience significantly improved his skills as a photographer in many ways, including the etiquette, which taught him to be very selective and careful with his shots and keep them to a minimum. "By the end of it I was very confident shooting in these conditions and landed up producing some of

my strongest work of the year from it. With digital photography too little thought is put into each photograph, as you can simply delete the extras but I felt these conditions really make you think and compose a picture carefully before capturing it."

Fellow student, Michelle Morgan, says she enjoyed being able to go to so many shows. "As a student I would not have been able to afford to go to half as many shows as I did with Cue Pix. I also gained a lot of valuable experience photographing theatre which was very useful."



CueTV – the vision behind action

“Cue is a massively successful experiential learning project, tried and tested for years,” is how Paul Hills puts it. Having been the cueTV executive producer since 2005, he established www.cueTV.ru.ac.za in 2006, which he describes as “surprisingly good arts journalism, and there’s a lot of it banking up over the years”.

During Festival each year, the Journ TV students produce short documentaries on various productions, people or what’s happening at Festival. “CueTV works with Cue newspaper much like in industry: the newspaper is used as a source for a lot of our story research, and they carry our daily output schedule. Cue newspaper is print oriented, and other Cue platforms exist to carry multi-media. “This means that the students get to present their own ideas for projects, unlike the other aspects of Cue which is mostly directed by the Festival programme.”

“CueTV has always been cutting edge, and students enjoy being part of that. That drives the project’s success. For both Production Manager Paddy Donnelly, who runs cueTV with me, and, the National Arts Festival is synonymous with cueTV, we do it every year. I personally often only experience the

shows and events through the lenses of my students’ pieces. I find I can trust their reporting.”

He says a lot of their work is shown on CTV Cape Town and the work stays posted on the website, both as a record and for showcasing the students’ work. “The whole process of production and story selection is driven by students’ own interests, so that gives the coverage flair. What students get out of it, is just such a rich experience!”

Palesa Mashigo worked for cueTV last year and describes it as a fruitful experience, saying that she found partnering with the fourth year TV students to be especially valuable.

“I enjoyed every aspect of cueTV; from the high-pressured shoots to the late-night editing. Having to produce high-quality pieces every second day, if not daily, proved to be quite challenging but this forced us to hone our editing skills, which is so beneficial in the industry.”

Mr Hills says the really exciting development to watch is cueTV’s relationship with Grocott’s Online. There are possible synergies with emerging student media too, like with Oppi



TV, the SRC and so on making an appearance in the local multi-mediascape.

“CueTV is a landmark in student learning, it’s like there’s pre- and post- cueTV in terms of quality, and the maturity of the work. And it’s not only about learning - it’s just loads of fun working at that intensity, and everything we produce can go into the final portfolios, which acts as a calling card for prospective employers, so that’s quite cool.”

He says what he most enjoys about the experience is how effective it is as a teaching tool; building up a community of practice as TV arts journalists, as well as giving students a taste of how to be professional. A big challenge has been sustainability, being able to pay decent rates (the students are paid a token stipend of R100 a day), and getting mentors to contribute to the programme.

“Also, we don’t get enough exposure for our work, we really do need to get external funding to take cueTV to the next level. But the main thing is that we actually do it, so I’ll continue to run it even if there are no wages, it’s still worth it, for staff and students.”

Visit <http://cuetv.ru.ac.za/> for more.

Wat die hart...

Based on the Afrikaans expression “wat die hart van vol is, loop die mond van oor...” (what is in the heart will come out of the mouth) Maude Sandham’s *Wat Die Hart* is a three part exploration of some of the strangest and most beautiful pieces of Afrikaans literature.

“The concept behind the play and the production is based on our love for the Afrikaans language and an on-going feeling of discomfort at the lack of Afrikaans theatre productions at the Festival as well as a lack of new, and lively Afrikaans theatre productions nationally,” said Sandham.

Through the production of this piece the cast wishes to “enlighten and embolden” contemporary Afrikaans culture to diverse audiences, and to “break away from common conceptions which hold Afrikaans at a distance, due to its negative background, associated with oppression and conservatism”.

According to Sandham, “We would like to reiterate that this piece is by no means founded on any political messages,

but rather on a young generation’s love for a dynamic and beautiful language and literary history”.

Directed and produced by Maude Sandham, an Honours Directing student at Rhodes University’s Drama department and featuring Ester Van der Walt, Amy Nicol, Daniel Whitehorn, Gerhard De Lange, Rhowan Johannes, Megan Wright, Gerhard De Lange, Geoff Smuts, Jeanne-Mari Van Niekerk and Jesika Killian (Stage Manager) the production is student based and is organised, directed, scripted and managed by students ranging from their first year of study up to post-graduate level.

Sandham has been involved in various stage productions and has successfully directed *The Jay Authenticity* (2009), *Agamemnon* (2010), *An Education*, *Kopstukke*, *Trilogie* (2012), *Three Women* (2013). She has also performed in over 14 plays, two of which featured during previous Festivals including *Do you come here often* (2010) and *Tender* (2013). She was awarded the Leon Gluckman Scholarship for the Arts, is currently on the Rhodes University Deans List for Academic Merit and has been granted an Honours Scholarship in Drama. She is currently the Graduate Assistant to Professor Juanita Finestone-Praeg.

Along with the production of *Wat Die Hart*, Sandham will be involved in *Tender, Drifting* a Rhodes University Departmental production in honour of Reza de Wet and the production ‘*Rabbit Hole*’ which will form part of the Rhodes University Drama Department’s Young Directors Season.

Wat Die Hart is co-produced by Hancu Louw, a fourth year Journalism student at Rhodes University, who has been involved in the campus based newspaper *Activate* for the past three years and currently holds the position of Chief Media Supervisor (CMS).

He has spent the past three years actively engaged in the production of journalistic material ranging from radio broadcast to various print and online based outputs. He has graduated with a BA degree majoring in Politics and International Relations. Louw believes his personal history has given him an insight into the workings of the Afrikaans community, legacy and psyche. The piece as a whole will require the translation of well-known English literature and the re-mastering of Afrikaans literature so as to script an innovative piece still to be workshopped.