

Before Innibos this year, a look back in history!



Innibos stage in 2004

This year's Innibos Festival will be hosted from 5 to 8 July in Nelspruit, South Africa. Sandra Jacobs, media and marketing manager of Innibos, gives insight to the early days when, through hard work and passion, ideas turned into reality. It's amazing how the festival has grown and if you like a bit of history, you'll enjoy the Q & A below.

How did the idea come about to start Innibos and when was the very first festival held?

The first festival was held in 2004. Andy Lubbe and I (Sandra Jacobs) were friends and singing partners. We always thought that the Lowveld would be a fantastic place to host a festival. In 2003, we decided to make the dream a reality and started the festival!

Who were the first artists to perform?

We immediately positioned the festival as one of the “big 5” together with festivals such as Aardklop, the KKNK and others. In the first year the festival boasted 70 productions on the programme. Amongst the artists who performed were favourites such as Riana Nel (then relatively unknown) and Dozi, who is still on the circuit today!

What were the largest challenges faced back then?

Starting a festival with no major sponsors on board! Making the festival financially viable in year one took some courage and hard work. The management and staff worked free of charge in those years to make their dream a reality.

How have you seen the show grow over the years and what are the main changes?

In 2004, 25 000 people attended the festival. Today, more than 100 000 people attend annually. The main changes were that the focus of the festival shifted to providing an excellent festival terrain experience (5 stages, a mini theatre, movie festival and children's theatre venue all included in the gate entry fee). The main stage concerts have changed dramatically over the years and now offer the country's best open-air Afrikaans festival concerts annually.

One of the transformations must be the technical side. Do you remember who built and handled the tech for the very first show?

Sound Corporation assisted us in the first years of Innibos and helped us through our initial growth phases. We had virtually no budget in the first year, so the stage was very basic.

How many performance areas did you have back then and how many do you have now?

We started off with one stage on the festival grounds. Today we have 5 stages including a magnificent main stage.

The technical rig has become a huge part of festivals. What do you like about the stages you are now able to present to the audience in regards to lighting, AV and sound?

I believe that we now have some of the best available in the country in terms of the quality of the rig and the sound and lighting. It is a world class set-up.

Who will be supplying most of the technical in the upcoming show for the stages and is there anything you would like to mention about them?

Over the years we have made use of several different sound, lighting and staging service providers. Our requirements have grown with time and necessitates using more than one company. For sound and lighting, we use MGG Productions for the main stage and one other, EPH for four other stages, AVS (local company) for

several smaller jobs, Sound Corporation for all the theatre productions and Stage Structures for the main stage. Apart from these there are several other companies providing sound engineers, lighting and AV engineers and technicians, etc.

What are the highlights people can look forward to at this year's Innibos?

We have a fantastic line-up on the Standard Bank stage this year. The rock concert on Thursday evening promises to be a show stopper with Arno Carstens, Majozi, VanFokkingtasties, HemelBesem and Mathew Mole in the line-up. Saturday night's JacarandaFM concert will once again attract huge crowds and some of the country's best popular singers will be on stage including Elvis Blue, Refentse, Kurt Darren, Riana Nel, Jo Black and many others. The special effects and surprise elements in the show make it a highlight on the programme every year.

If there are any special memories over the years, any funny stories you want to incorporate, people you want to mention, we would love to hear.

We can probably write a book of funny (and not so funny) incidents over the past 14 years but one that springs to mind: We had a rock group called "Taxi Violence" at the festival in 2015. They put up some posters all over town reading, "Taxi Violence expected at Innibos". Next thing we know – we get a call from the Provincial Government's disaster management department offering their assistance in case of the taxi violence spilling over to us and becoming a threat to Innibos festival goers!