

## VUSI MAHLASELA'S COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Vusi has proposed the establishment of two types of workshops to be conducted by himself in various communities around Pretoria and Johannesburg.

The aim of these workshops will be to encourage amateur musicians/ playwrights to meet and discuss their art with a number of professionals. This will facilitate open communication between a wide variety of creative people as well as begin to challenge the mystique of the professional artist - an image which can be misleading for young artists wishing to embark on a career in music or the theatre.

These workshops will therefore provide an opportunity for the less streetwise in the entertainment business to learn about the business realities of their skills as well as develop their skills in the presence of professionals. All workshops will be documented on video so that others can benefit from the exchange of information <sup>and</sup> for the purposes of feedback research (i.e. allowing individuals who were involved to comment retrospectively on the workshops. Proceedings and on their own performance.) Video documentation will also allow workshop co-ordinators to better their communication and organizational skills.

## 1. ARTIST GUMBA

The first type of workshop, referred to by Vusi as Artist Gumba (or party) will be set up in order to provide an opportunity for open communication between amateur and professional musicians. These workshops will include the general public, local musicians (approximately 8 in one sitting) and two to three well-known BMG artists. The amateur musicians will be invited to briefly perform their music which will allow them to be heard by experienced and well-connected professional artists. This will also encourage professionals to establish links within the communities and discover new talent.

The workshop will provide a platform for the general exchange of musical ideas with potentially positive implications for both BMG and the aspiring young artists involved.

The Artist Gumba workshops have already been established by Vusi in Pretoria and have followed a format previously established by writers and playwrights in this country. They will take place once a month in a community hall or a similar public setting. Dates, times and venues for meetings will be advertised in local newspapers or on flyers and pamphlets and distributed throughout the community.



## The Review:

like the Artist-Gumba workshops. The Review will be composed of a mixture of amateur and professional artists. However, these groups will meet in shebeens, taverns, bars and other designated locations to work on the development of a performance.

These workshops will take place once every three months and each meeting will carry a different theme based on actual events which have taken place in that community. People will be elected to research and lay down a loose plot of a story prior to the meeting. Thereafter, members of the workshop will discuss and refine the script (which is intended to be both socially relevant and humorous) and begin to develop a performance. The performance will involve both amateur and professional actors and musicians and may even include individuals involved in the actual events from which the script has been developed.

The idea hereafter is to perform the play to a paying audience so that artists have the opportunity to perform in public and at the same time generate some income from their work.

## Implications of these workshops for the BMG (Africa) Journal.

These workshops will be of great benefit to BMG (Africa) as a company.

Meetings will provide the opportunity for BMG personnel to conduct informal market research by witnessing and participating in discussions regarding the musical tastes and demands of select communities. These communities may represent a significant buying power of legal music, yet may also constitute a group who are not readily accessible to market researchers within the company.

Workshops will also be a platform from which to discover new talent in the more remote and less represented communities.

The implication of these workshops for the magazine are numerous.

The discussions and musical or theatrical performances which take place in the workshops will be valuable material for the proposed articles in the journal. They will reflect market trends and taste cultures of a representative sector of the South African market as well as reveal interesting information about individuals or groups who are creating music away from the commercial mainstream.

The journal should ideally also include stories about unusual trends (musical genres, dance forms, ritual performances, youth groups, home-made instruments and instrument makers etc.) which don't necessarily fall under the BMG label but which demonstrate the company's engagement in the general creative development of the communities in which it operates.