

Daily News
tonight

MONDAY DECEMBER 6 1999

AMUSEMENT WAREHOUSE
 * CD JUKEBOXES * DOLL GRANES
 * POOL & SOCCER TABLES * ACCESSORIES
 * VIDEO GAMES * PIN BALLS
 * KIDDIES RIDES * GAMING MACHINES
 15 Turners Ave. (off Berea Rd)
 Tel: 031 - 3047137



ON SITE: The Zamani Dancers from Newcastle, giving journalists a taste of what can be expected at **The Greater St Lucia Wetlands Festival of Living Treasures** at the river estuary on the actual site where the stage is to be built.

TRUE TREASURES (below): Hailing from Durban are Maskandi John Gcaba and penny-whistler Sibusiso Ntuli

Pictures: COLLEEN ELS



Under African skies

Lake St Lucia now boasts new-found status after being named a World Heritage Site. It is also the venue for the St Lucia Wetlands Festival of Living Wetlands Treasures which takes place on December 15 and 16. Ailsa Windsor and Colleen Els report.

THE Lake St Lucia area has been named as one of South Africa's first three World Heritage Sites, together with Robben Island and the human fossil sites of Sterkfontein, which have all been recognised by the United Nations as having "outstanding universal value".

Adding to the enthusiasm and joy at receiving this exciting news is the fact that the St Lucia Wetlands has been chosen as the venue for a special celebration of sun, sea, sand, surf, nature, live music, story-telling and dance. Initiated as a Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (LSDD) project, to mark the millennium, *The Greater St Lucia Wetlands Festival of Living Treasures*, which will take place on December 15 and 16, is being organised by Dave Marks of 3rd Ear Music, with its satellite projects being directed by 3rd Ear Music's Chris Faya.

So, for the very first time a music festival will be held on the beach at the St Lucia estuary, bringing together international and local musicians, story-tellers and dancers.

John Gcaba, who works as a gardener in Durban, is said to be one of the finest "long distance" Zulu troubadours, or Maskandi.

He will be featured at the festival together with reed-playing "herd-boy" turned penny-whistler, Sibusiso Ntuli, who often entertains shoppers and passers-by at The Workshop and the Stables Flea market in Durban.

Visitors to the festival will be able to picnic on the beach or in the shade of the trees, swim in the sea and browse through a varied selection of stalls, accompanied by the musical strains of live musicians.

The Greater St Lucia Wetlands Festival of Living Treasures will be highlighting collaborations by Awesome Africa and 3rd Ear Music, such as Madala Kunene and

Drums Across Denmark, an eclectic mix of Maskanda rhythm (intrinsic to South Africa) and Danish drumming.

The festival at St Lucia marks the beginning of five days of musical delight, for once these two days have passed one can travel to Shongweni and continue sampling the *Living Treasures*.

Under the LSDD, directed by Andrew Zaloumis and his personal assistant, Terry Castis, a series of satellite festivals has been set up to identify new talent and provide training in the fields of local dance, music and story-telling. It is hoped that the skills-training and development will provide the incentive for people in the region to produce their own future events.

Security-wise, more than 60 part-time safety marshals are being especially trained and as part of the tendering criteria, local businesses have been invited to cooperate with the surrounding communities. Apart from the festivities at the St Lucia estuary, local entertainment spots will be providing live gigs to keep happy those who prefer to stay away from the surf, sun and sand, but who still want to be a part of this historic occasion.

In addition, the LSDD hopes to establish a platform for the community to enter into

the formal tourism industry, and as a spin-off of the festival it is hoped that communities will establish back-packing lodges or other means of providing accommodation.

This will also be the first time that many of the locals will be attending, or performing, in an event of this kind, where they will be exposed to the region's cultural diversity. For example, Zulu dance (as the type of dance differs from area to area).

Where a performance at a satellite festival has been particularly outstanding, the group/artist will have the opportunity to perform on December 15 and 16.

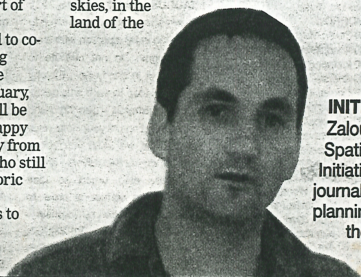
In all, the festival promises to be a fantastic experience under the beautiful African skies, in the land of the

hippopotamus. Festival-goers will have an opportunity to see the likes of Gita Baloi (Mozambique), Simba Morri (Kenya), Ray Phiri (SA), Jeremy Taylor (*Ag Pleez Daddy...*), Wendy Oldfield (SA), Bob Brosman (USA), THC (SA) and master-story-teller Gcina Mhlope. And these are only some of the wide array of artists who will be appearing.

For more information regarding Mtubatuba Tourism, bed and breakfast accommodation and festival bookings, telephone Ida Scheepers on (035) 550-4265.

For more details about the St Lucia line-up, telephone Dave Marks (3rd Ear Music) on (031) 207-5314 or:

For enquires regarding the Festival line-up at Shongweni, telephone Dan Chiorboli (Awesome Africa) on (031) 206-2494.



INITIATOR: Andrew Zaloumis, Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative director, gives journalists the run-down of planning and organising the festival.