

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE FOREST BRINGS UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE, SOUTH AFRICAN RHYTHMS AND INTERACTIVE DANCE TO THE CRADLE OF CREATIVITY FESTIVAL

Johannesburg, South Africa – September 2026 — Award-winning interactive dance production ***The Forest*** will take young audiences on an imaginative journey through **nature, storytelling, movement and music** at the **Cradle of Creativity Festival** at the Market Theatre (Ramolao Makhene, Market Square, Johannesburg) on **1 Sep 12:00 | 2 Sep 14:30 | 3 Sep 10:00** | [Webtickets](#) | [Family Visit Guide](#)
Watch What Our Audiences Say [click here](#)

Created by Ukrainian-born choreographer **Kateryna Aloshyna**, *The Forest* is a family-friendly performance for children that brings together **contemporary dance, vivid animation, authentic music and audience participation**. Rather than simply watching the story unfold, children are invited to become co-creators, making choices and experiencing the performance in their own way.

The Johannesburg performances come at a particularly meaningful time, as South Africa marks **Heritage Month** and Ukraine celebrates its **35th Independence Day on 24 August**. *The Forest* offers a vibrant example of how artistic collaboration can connect cultures, histories and generations.

Inspired by ***The Forest Song***, the celebrated 19th century poetic drama by Ukrainian writer and cultural figure **Lesya Ukrainka**, the performance explores the relationship between humanity and the natural world through two interconnected realms: the mystical world of nature and mythical beings, and the human world of choices, ambition, love and resilience.

The production features **South African Amapiano-inspired dance grooves alongside Ukrainian folklore**, with a specially composed score combining the distinctive sound of the **sopilka**, a traditional Ukrainian flute, with contemporary beatboxing. Animation adds another dimension to the performance, creating an immersive forest world that children can enter through movement and imagination.

“We bring Ukrainian folklore and the original music of Lesya Ukrainka into dialogue with the vibrant rhythms of South African amapiano, creating a space where different cultural traditions can meet and inspire one another. For us, cultural heritage is not something frozen in the past — it is something we can reinterpret, share and (re)discover together.” - **Kateryna Aloshyna, choreographer and co-founder of Contemporary Dance Laboratory**

At the heart of *The Forest* is a simple but powerful message: **when we lose our connection with nature, we lose a part of ourselves**. The theme resonates strongly in a world facing climate change, displacement and uncertainty, while offering children a space to explore creativity, empathy, decision-making and resilience.

The Johannesburg performances of *The Forest* are organised with the support of the Embassy of Ukraine to the Republic of South Africa.

CRADLE OF CREATIVITY FESTIVAL PERFORMANCES

The Market Theatre, Johannesburg

 **Tuesday, 1 September 2026**

 12:00

 **Wednesday, 2 September 2026**

 14:30

 **Thursday, 3 September 2026**

 10:00

Duration: 50 minutes, no interval

Recommended age: Children from 5+ years old and families

 Book tickets at [Webtickets](https://www.webtickets.co.za)

For media interviews, please contact **+27 82 722 7231** or aleshyna@gmail.com.

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About the Project

Inspired by the timeless literary masterpiece *The Forest Song* by **Lesya Ukrainka**, this production was created in 2021 to commemorate the **150th anniversary of the legendary Ukrainian poet**. Blending contemporary dance with powerful storytelling, the performance bridges cultures, generations, and artistic expression.

"I'm alive! I'll live eternally! I have that in my heart which cannot die!"
excerpt from the book *"Forest song"* by Lesya Ukrainka — a writer, translator, folklorist, public and cultural activist, a world-class figure, her portrait appears on Ukraine's 200 hryvnia note (valued at approximately R100).

The Forest was presented at the **National Arts Festival Fringe 2025** as part of **ASSITEJ South Africa's Family Fare Hub**, where it received an **Ovation Award 2025**, recognising its artistic excellence and impact.

Creative Team

Idea & Choreography: Kateryna Aloshyna (Ukraine/South Africa)

Dancers: Carren Johannisen (Wellington, SA), Abigail Johnson (Paarl, SA), Tyla Kleyn (Cape Town, SA) and Jayden Cloete (Paarl, SA)

Music: Maksym Berezhnyuk (Ukrainian sopilka) & Dmytro Aleksienko (beatboxing)

Animation: Mykyta Budantsov (Ukraine)

Partners Bios

About Contemporary Dance Laboratory (CDL) Established in 2023, CDL is dedicated to promoting contemporary dance as an innovative art form that fosters professional collaboration and social reflection. Through various artistic mediums, CDL advocates for the **rights and well-being of children and youth**, recognising the transformative power of the arts. CDL is an affiliate of the Paarl Valley Eisteddfod (PVE) and a proud member of ASSITEJ South Africa. For more information follow us on [social media](#).

About ASSITEJ South Africa Founded in 2007, ASSITEJ SA is committed to nurturing theatre for young audiences by supporting artists, integrating performing arts into education, and advocating for every child's right to creative expression. For more information, please visit www.assitej.org.za.

About Ukrainian Association of South Africa UAZA (NPO 189-705) is a collaborative association registered in May 2017 that promotes networks between Ukrainians and South Africans for mutual development, increased awareness and inner growth of individuals and societies. For more information, please visit www.uaza.co.za.