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**AFRICAN
NATIONAL CONGRESS**
DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE(DAC)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

TESTIMONIAL ON VUSI SYDNEY MAHLASELA:

This letter serves as recommendation for Vusi Sydney Mahlasela.

We have known Vusi S. Mahlasela for a number of years as a musician, poet, activist and imparter of skills. He is a committed and dedicated person to be relied on to play his music and poetry at venues - big and small - at events organised by, among others: the ANC, SACP, COSATU, COSAW, SAMA at different levels of operation(ie: at branch, regional, national and inter-organisational levels).

His music is enjoyed by thousands of people, because of its clearness, immediacy and nearness to our people's feelings of joy and frustrations.

We - in the ANC's Department Of Arts and Culture(DAC) - had the opportunity of meeting and knowing Vusi Mahlasela through, among other contacts, his participation in the DAC-organised ZABALAZA FESTIVAL in the United Kingdom in June-July 1990. His dedication to his first love: music, is unquestionable.

We thank you very much for taking our recommendations for Vusi into account.

Best and Warmest Regards.

Yours Sincerely

Wally M. Serote
Co-ordinator - DAC ANC

The People Shall Govern!

Congress of South African Writers

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Patrons:
Dennis Brutus,
Jeremy Cronin,
Nadine Gordimer,
Mi Hlatshwayo,
Dikobe Martins,
James Matthews,
Govan Mbeki,
Mongane Serote,
Zwelakhe Sisulu,
Gladys Thomas

04 July 1991

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION - VUSI MAHLASELA:

Vusi Mahlasela is an extremely talented poet, musician and grassroots cultural activist. His work for grassroots cultural organisations, through workshops and performance, has elevated him to the position of one of our most committed and progressive artists in this country.

Battling against extreme odds - the threat of detention during the state of emergency, sporadic employment, the legacies of apartheid education - Vusi Mahlasela has persevered. His poems, and especially his songs, have rejuvenated flagging spirits and bolstered the struggle for freedom in this country. He has been honoured by being one of the few performers to participate in the historic rallies, particularly the release of Nelson Mandela, and the other Rivonia trialists.

Mr Mahlasela has been a stalwart in our organisation, the Congress Of South African Writers, which represents writers from our disadvantaged communities. He has always been ready to participate in our various programmes, and has imparted valuable skills to our members. He has enhanced our understanding and appreciation of vital issues through his thought-provoking lyrics - issues of underdevelopment, rural isolation, gender, unemployment, devastation of township life etc.

Vusi's skill as a musician/composer has ensured his popularity not only in South Africa, but internationally as well. During the latter part of 1990, he took England by storm, performing in such prestigious venues as the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), Riverside Studios and Battersea Arts Centre.

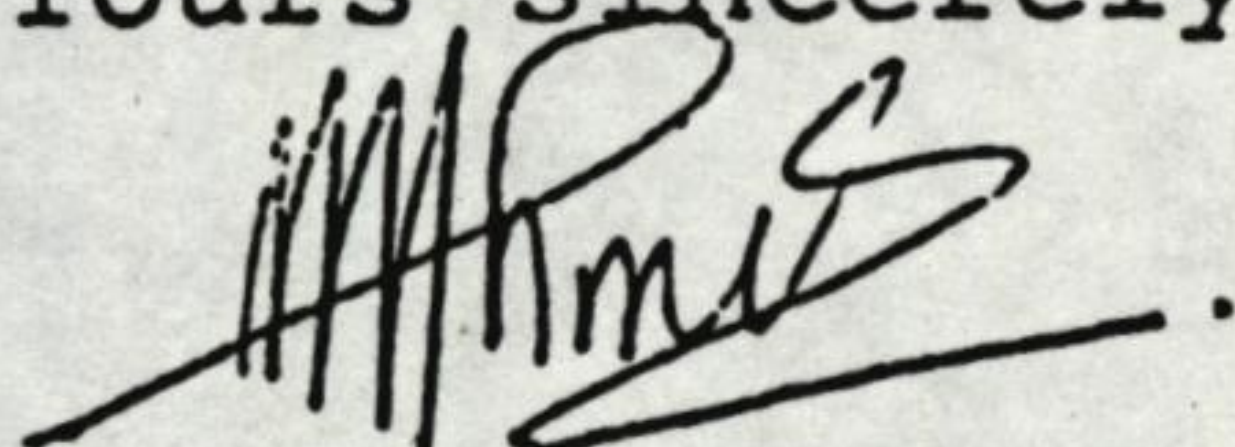
The invitation to Vusi Mahlasela, by Karin Vadfors (President of the Africa Group in Falun), to perform at the Falun Folk Music Festival, increasingly shows his popularity as a legitimate voice of the oppressed in South Africa. Besides the opportunity to perform (and thereby give Swedes an understanding and appreciation of powerful, grassroots protest music), Vusi will have the incredible opportunity to link up with Nordic, Asian and African musicians at the Festival. Our artists have been so insulated, that such an opportunity to experience a blend of music forms at the Festival can only enhance and enrich Vusi's musical expertise.

It is fitting to note that Mr Mahlasela has been accorded the honour of opening the Festival. He has also been asked to speak about the importance of culture, especially in the struggle against apartheid.

The National Committee of COSAW, comprising of illustrious writers such as Nadine Gordimer and Professor Njabulo Ndebele, have complete faith in Mr Mahlasela being a great ambassador of the democratic movement to more than adequately fulfill these important and significant tasks.

Many thanks and best regards

Yours sincerely



Junaid Ahmed
SECRETARY GENERAL
CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN WRITERS.