

Cricket World Cup ceremony to go Olympic

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Allister Arendse

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It's all systems go with rehearsals for the 2003 Cricket World Cup opening ceremony - the first "Olympic-style" showcase for such a tournament.

About 5 200 volunteers travelling from as far as George and Worcester are participating in the show's six scenes.

The opening ceremony is to be a two-hour live spectacular, the largest live production South Africa has ever put on, and will be screened on SABC and broadcast to almost one and half billion viewers worldwide.

This is followed by the first game at Newlands the next day (February 9) when South Africa plays the West Indies.

'A real stadium theatre production celebrating Africa, South Africa and Cape Town'

Rehearsals started in June and have been scheduled around school holidays.

At Youngsfield on Sunday, volunteers went through the motions to the voice of stadium theatre expert Doug Jack - from the United States - the world's foremost expert on mass display. He worked on the Atlanta, Barcelona, Sydney and Salt Lake City Olympic opening and closing ceremonies, as well as the Manchester Commonwealth Games.

So what can people expect from the show?

"A real stadium theatre production celebrating Africa, South Africa and Cape Town," said executive producer Penny Jones, who has worked on numerous Olympic opening ceremonies and put together the opening production for the All Africa Games 1999.

South African television producer Mark West - who has produced numerous Miss South Africa and Miss World pageants - heads up the 22-camera production while Emmy Award winner, Marilyn Lowey, heads up the lighting team.

The opening ceremony on February 8 is sold out, but the final dress rehearsal at Newlands on February 5 will be the Cape Town Gala Preview.