

African spectacular to set World Cup stage

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A R24-million extravaganza is planned for the opening of next year's Cricket World Cup.

The organisers have commissioned some of the world's top producers of mass opening ceremonies for the occasion.

More than 5 800 children will take part in the ceremony, which will be choreographed by American Doug Jack, who recently won an Emmy award for his work on the opening ceremony of the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics.

On Sunday, the producers were seen putting the children through their paces at the Youngsfield Military Base in Cape Town.

'I love Jonty Rhodes, so this is like a dream for me' The opening ceremony takes place at Newlands cricket ground on February 8, one day before the opening match between South Africa and the West Indies.

Producer Penny Jones said: "It is our intention to stage a truly African spectacular, showcasing the continent, our country and our city.

"I have assembled the best team in the country and I am confident that the show we will stage will have a positive impact on Cape Town, South Africa and Africa."

Final rehearsals will start in December at Newlands, where a gigantic stage erected over the cricket pitch will have to be built and removed every day to accommodate preparation of the cricket ground for the opening match.

One of the children taking part, Malowande Phendu, 16, said: "I am the biggest cricket fan in the world, and I love Jonty Rhodes, so this is like a dream for me."