

PENNY JONES

**STADIUM THEATRE PRODUCER & MASS
DISPLAY CHOREOGRAPHER**

International expert in Stadium Theatre specializing in Mass Display choreography and logistics.

HISTORY

Penny is a University of Cape Town BA Fine-Arts graduate, businesswoman, author and public speaker. While earning her degree as a sculptor, she was introduced to the art-sport of Drum Majorettes. This newfound passion subsequently propelled her into the arena of Drill Team competitions and public shows. Her fascination for this unique sporting and entertainment movement, resulted in extensive international study. Today Penny is recognized as a global expert in Stadium Theatre specializing in Mass Display Choreography and Logistics.

During the days of apartheid, young people from disadvantaged communities were excluded from the competitive sport of Drum Majorettes and Drill Team. This resulted some 15 years ago, in Penny co-founding the economically accessible, non-sexist and non-racial Drill Team SA.

As the sole sponsor, this fledgling sport slowly grew from humble township

beginnings to a federation of over 2000 clubs with 60,000 participants in 9 provinces. Competitions included Baton Twirling, Cheerleading, Dance Drill, Drill, Individuals, Leader Group, Military, Military Prop, Mr/Miss Drill Team, Show Band, Show Novelty, Show Prop, Street Drill, Traditional Dance and Winterguard.

Due to the enormous financial burden, Penny was compelled in 1997 to withdraw as exclusive sponsor and transferred the reins of Drill Team SA to the national office bearers.

Her understanding of this art-sport was accelerated by annually attending the “Miss Dance Drill Team USA Pageant” in Los Angeles, where she was privileged to study with the “Mother of Drill Team”, the late Dr Kay Crawford and the late Ms Judy Chabola.

Armed with the latest techniques and unquenchable enthusiasm, Penny unstintingly gave of her resources, time and skills to the youth of the disadvantaged communities in South Africa and formed the “Oosrandettes Show Majorettes Squad”, the first all black, international award winning team.

In 1993, Oosrandettes walked away with every trophy available at the “SA Indoor Show Majoretting Championships” at

Sun City. The then segregated Show Majoretting fraternity was flabbergasted with their performance. It was the second year that Oosrandettes had competed, and the first time that a black team had won hands down.

Oosrandettes won numerous awards during the apartheid era and at the 1994 “International Dance Drill Team Pageant” in Nagoya Japan, they walked away with first prize in the coveted World Champion Flag Twirling category, beating countries like USA, Korea, Germany, England, Australia and Japan.

Penny continued her research and was drawn into the arena of massive spectacular stadium productions, when she was accepted as an international observer on the production of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics Opening Ceremony. Here she was able to observe the team of Executive Producer Don Mischer and Producer David Goldberg firsthand. She learnt from Artistic Directors Kenny Ortega and Peter Minshall, and was welcomed into the inner sanctum by Mass Display Choreographers the late Judy Chabola and Doug Jack. This was the turning point in Penny’s performance career as she recognised the size and importance of the craft of stadium theatre and showcasing the “Culture of Performer Volunteerism” in the context of nation building.

She was fascinated with the art of 3-dimensional Stadium Theatre; the use of thousands of performers to tell an unfolding story by creating massive coloured shapes, patterns and images on the central field of play. Supplemented by sensational music, specialized props, spectacular aerial displays, state of the art technical effects and interactive participation of the audience, a truly multi-dimensional show comes alive.

Further equipped and determined, Penny developed a reputation as a Mass Display producer and had the opportunity of involving performers of Drill Team SA in some 100 plus, large stadium shows. These included highlights such as the annual IWISA Soccer Spectaculars, the 2004 Cape Town Olympic Bid, the 2006 World Cup Soccer Logo Launch and the mass displays for the 7th All Africa Games.

Her skills were nationally showcased when, as co-founder of the Vulindlela production consortium, she directed the breath-taking stadium theatre for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the 1999 All Africa Games. This was the first time in Southern Africa that pictorial mass displays were presented on this scale.

Working closely with the exceptional leadership skills of Mass Display Director Matthews Mokome and the talents of Mass Display Choreographer Raylene Plaatjies, Penny produced a field of play extravaganza that had the then IOC Chief, Juan Antonio Samaranch declaring “The best he had ever seen on the continent!”

The show culminated in a heart-rending anti-climax, when over 3500 volunteer performers returned to the void of township life. With no formal performance infrastructure, no further monumental productions on the cards and no continuum in the development of the art-sport, the massive momentum was lost.

This resulted in the birth of a new dream. The “M.A.S.S.” Foundation (Mass Displays and Synchronized Shows). A Foundation that would leave a legacy for future generations and the formal recognition and funding of the art-sport of Drill Team, Marching Bands, Rock Eisteddfod and Dance and Performer Associations.

With the impending Sydney Olympics, Penny was honored to receive an exclusive invitation from Executive Choreographer Doug Jack, to actively participate in the production of the 2000

Sydney Olympics Opening & Closing Ceremonies.

For three months Penny contributed to the show as a member of Doug Jack’s elite Choreography team, and studied the production and methodologies of Stadium Theatre at its best. These included:

Show direction, production leadership and volunteer management. Cast-care techniques, performer rehearsals, motivation and skills development. Project management, production and rehearsal scheduling. Computerized Mass Display charting, backstage logistics and strategic traffic patterns. Establishment of departmental offices and financial, administrative, procurement procedures. Lighting, sound, pyrotechnics, aerial, projection and special effect design, scripting and TV interface. Technical standards, installation, safety procedures, rigging and integration. Accreditation, security and communication systems and “Field of Play” cover and grids. Costume and prop storage, maintenance and distribution systems, etc.

Artistic Director, David Atkins voiced his sincere appreciation for her voluntary contribution to “The biggest show on earth”. Executive Producer Ric Burch personally stated “That he had

every confidence in Penny's ability to produce outstanding stadium theatre in South Africa."

While at the 2000 Olympic Games, Penny was invited by the President of the Athens 2004 Organizing Committee, Ms Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki, to submit her credentials for inclusion in the production of the 2004 Olympic Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

During 2002 Penny had the opportunity of working on and being an accredited international observer on the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony and the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies. As part of an exclusive international network of highly skilled specialists in this unique art form and by actively participating in these world events ensures that Penny stays up to date with current technical advancements and access to global suppliers.

In 2002 Penny and her BEE company Ceremonies for Africa (Pty) LTD won the contract to produce the Opening Ceremony for the 2003 ICC Cricket World Cup. Under her leadership as Executive Producer and with Associate Producer Mark West, she delivered a multi-scened 2 hour extravaganza. It comprised of 7 Scenes, 4500 Performers,

12000 Costumes & Props, Unique Staging, 360-Degree Theatre, a 30 000 strong Audience Participation programme and a Parade of 14 Teams. It was heralded by the Sunday Times as "AWESOME" again proving that the South Africans have the talent and will to produce shows equal to if not better than most international productions of this magnitude.

It was later confirmed that the Opening Ceremony for the 2003 ICC Cricket World Cup was watched by more than 1.5 Billion viewers worldwide on more than 49 Channels and attracted positive headlines and acclaim around the world. This massive exposure and the size and scale of the show earned the event a place in history on the International Stadium Theatre Map but at the lowest budget ever recorded for a show of this nature of just on US\$ 5 million. The recognized starting budget for similar shows is currently in excess of US\$ 50 million and Athens, Asian Games and Beijing all exceed US\$ 100 million.

Accolades received for the CWC Opening Ceremony included the 2003 Cape Town Tourism Chairman's Award and The Toastmasters International Communication and Leadership Award. The later award was presented in recognition of "A significant contribution to South Africa's international standing and reputation as

a world class sporting and conference provider". Previous recipients of this award included President Nelson Mandela.

After the 2003 ICC Cricket World Cup Penny took some time out from her career to be with her mother who was diagnosed with terminal cancer. As a result she turned down several top international show positions including the opportunity to be involved in the 2004 Athens Olympics Production Team.

To renew her interest in Stadium Theatre, Penny visited the Opening Ceremony Production for the 2006 Turino Winter Olympics as an accredited observer. There she was reunited with Mass Display Choreographer Extraordinaire Doug Jack and the top international Production team headed by Ric Birch.

Penny's skills as a Mass Display Choreographer were in demand for international TV ads and in 2006 she choreographed two television adverts for AKBANK, a Turkish bank using hundreds of performers. These TV ads have won global acclaim. Several other local and International TV adverts have resulted from this successful project.

In the same year, Penny was head hunted by Glen Masokane on behalf of the

Department of Arts and Culture of the South African Government to co-produce almost a dozen shows around the 2006 Soccer World Cup in Germany.

As Production Director and with little more than 6 weeks to prepare, she co-produced 11 shows in Cologne and Berlin in collaboration with Artistic Director Tyrone Watkins and Chairman Gerry Mofokeng. This was achieved by doing so under the allocated budget.

They also supplied the dancers and production numbers for the official unveiling of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Logo on July 7th at the Tempodrome in Berlin which was broadcast live to millions around the world.

A highlight of 2007 was her appointment as International Performance Auditor for the 15th Asian Games held in Doha, Qatar, in December of 2006. Penny conducted an extensive performance audit for the State Audit Bureau of Qatar over a period of 3 x weeks. Lauded as the world's most expensive, lavish and technically advanced Stadium Theatre Production ever. Penny had full access to the intellectual property. In particular her skills with international tendering processes, procurement procedures, contracts, budgets, legacy projects and show evaluation were greatly enhanced.

The result of this audit was a comparative study of Stadium Theatre events between the 2000 Sydney Olympics until Beijing 2008. These findings were submitted to the Olympic Museum in Lauzanne.

2008 started off with the successful presentation of the Opening Ceremony for the Africa Cup of Nations Tournament held in Ghana 20 January. Penny was brought in as a Stadium theatre consultant in December 2007 and was able to empower an exciting and talented Creative Team from Ghana in the production of a short but beautiful show which had Sepp Blatter exclaiming that “this was the best Opening Ceremony he had experienced!”

In-between TV ads and publishing her book on her experiences in the arena of Stadium Theatre called ‘Awesome’, Penny is also looking forward to spending some valuable time with the team under Ric Birch and Steven Spielberg who are producing the Ceremonies for the Beijing Olympics in August of this year.

Penny’s contemporary expertise and 20 years plus experience guarantees her standing as South Africa's top producer of Stadium Theatre and Mass Displays and that of one of the premier international proponents of her profession.

Penny Jones’ vision for the future is to continue being a part of South Africa’s contribution to Global Culture, by producing World Class Stadium Theatre and establishing her legacy project the M.A.S.S. Foundation to support and promote the growth of Drill Team in South Africa and Africa for current and future generations.

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Mass Display Events Observed, Produced or Staged

1988

- First Ever choreographed Show Majoretting Spectaculars in South Africa -Rand Show

1989

- Yardley Gold Final – Rugby
- John Player Special Final – Soccer
- Ohlssons Challenge – Soccer
- ‘Do It’ – M-Net TV Production

1991

- M-Net Red Nose Day Parade
- Castle Challenge Final – Soccer
- John Player Special Final – Soccer
- Miss SA 1991 – TV Production
- Renfreight American Football display
- Caltex Final – Soccer

1992

- Grand Prix '92 – Parade
- Unity Games – Athletics
- Coca Cola Cup Final – Soccer
- SAFA Launch – Soccer
- Transnet Final – Soccer
- BP Top 8 Final – Soccer
- Sparletta Final – Soccer
- Castle Challenge – Soccer
- Cameroon Tour – Soccer

1993

- IWISA Spectacular – Soccer
- Coca Cola Cup Final – Soccer
- ‘Miss World 1993’ –TV production
- Naas Botha Invitational – Rugby
- BP Top 8 Final – Soccer
- French TV commercial – over 1000 extras
- Grand Prix '93 – Parade
- French vs. Springboks – Rugby
- Sun City – Opening of Dance Championships
- Sparletta Final – Soccer
- Chappies Little league Final – Soccer

1994

- Inauguration of Nelson Mandela Stage performance
- Springbok Hockey International
- Lion Cup Final – Rugby
- SA Basketball Launch
- BP Top 8 Final – Soccer
- IWISA Spectacular - Soccer
- England vs. South Africa – Rugby
- Transnet Final Soccer
- US Africa Launch – Pom Pom display
- Coca Cola u17 Final – Soccer

1995

- BP Top 8 Final – Soccer
- Miss SA – Air force Display
- Super 10 Final Rugby
- United Nations 50th birthday

- TV Draw – Africa Cup of Nations

- IWISA Spectacular – Soccer

1996

- SABC Re-launch – Olympic Scene
- BP Top 8 - Final
- Caltex Soccer

- IWISA Soccer Charity Spectacular
- Bankfin Currie Cup - Final
- Atlanta Olympic Games Opening Ceremony

1997

- J&B Drill Teams
- Standard Bank Cricket Professional Cheerleaders
- Cape Town 2004 Olympic Bid Opening Ceremony – Weightlifting World Championships
- Cape Town 2004 Olympic Bid Opening Ceremony – Cycling World Championships Daewoo Launch
- Goodyear Expo
- Bankfin Currie Cup Final

- Victor Awards
- IWISA '97 – Soccer
- Cape Town 2004 Olympic Bid Opening Ceremony - Fencing World Championships
- Cape Town 2004 Olympic Bid Olympic Announcement – Drill Team, Lauzanne, Switzerland
- Nike – Bafana vs. Brazil – Soccer Half Time Show

1998

- Bankfin Golden Dealer Awards
- J&B Drill Teams

- Goodyear Launch
- IWISA Soccer Spectacular

1999

- 2006 Soccer World Cup Logo Launch
- Goodyear Driver Of The Year
- J & B Met Drill Team & Harley Davidson parade

- 7th All Africa Games Opening & Closing Ceremonies
- IWISA Soccer Spectacular

2000

- 2000 Sydney Olympics Opening and Closing Ceremony
- J & B Drill Team Productions

2001

- Bidding Process-2003 ICC Cricket World Cup Opening Ceremony
- J & B Drill Team Productions

2002

- 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics
- 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games

Opening Ceremony

- Contract awarded to produce the 2003 ICC Cricket World Cup Opening Ceremony

Opening and Closing Ceremonies

- J & B Drill Team Productions

2003

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- 2003 ICC Cricket World Cup Opening Ceremony
 - Awarded Cape Town Tourism Chairman's Award

- Awarded Toastmasters International Communication and Leadership Award.

2006

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- 2006 Turino Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony
 - AKBANK 1 Turkey Television Advertisement. Shot in studio in Cape Town South Africa

- 11 Shows surrounding the 2006 Soccer World Cup in Cologne and Berlin, Germany
- 2010 FIFA World Cup Logo Reveal
- AKBANK 2 Turkey Television Advertisement. Shot in studio in Bucharest Romania

2007

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- 2006 15th Asian Games Opening and Closing Ceremony Performance Audit in Doha Qatar
 - Nestle Italy Television Advertisement. Shot in studio in Bucharest Romania

- Sanlam Television Advertisement "Herds". Shot on location in South Africa

2008

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- Stadium Theatre Consultant and Staging Director for the Opening Ceremony of the Ghana 2008 Africa Cup of Nations.
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