



ADDRESS BY- ACTING PREMIER K MOSENOGI

ON THE OCASSION

OF

PRESLEY CHWENEYAGAE MEMORIAL SERVICE

DATE: 02 JUNE 2025

TIME: 11:00

VENUE: MMABATHO CONVENTION CENTRE

Members of the Executive Council present here today

The Executive Mayor of Mahikeng Local Municipality, Cllr Tshepiso Mphehlo

The Executive Mayor of Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality, Cllr Khumalo Molefe

Kgosi Jeff Montshioa-The Paramount of Chief of Barolong boo Ratshidi

Family and Friends of the late Presley Chweneyagae,

Members of the arts and culture fraternity,

Leaders of Faith-based organisations,

The North West House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Guests,

Bagaetsho ke a le dumedisa,

Programme Director, we meet here today on a sombre mood to pay homage to a husband, father, son, uncle, friend, comrade, and colleague to all of us who are gathered here.

Our meeting today is enjoined by the weight of grief but also by the strength of love and admiration we still have for Presley.

We are gathered here today, to honour a son of the soil.

A talent born out of the dusty streets of the Barolong Land.

It is their resilience and fortitude as captured in Sol Plaatje's seminal work titled **Mhudi** which gave impetus to the freedom we enjoy today.

Mhudi was the first English novel to be written by an African and echoed through the hinterlands of our beloved continent and diaspora.

Similarly, Presley's meticulous role on Tsotsi, won South Africa its first ever Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

These two events though recorded at different epochs of our history indicates to us that modern political science as President Mbeki once observed “**recognises the fact that social systems are founded on definite historical origins. If the saying ‘out of nothing, nothing comes’ is true, then it must follow that the future is formed and derives its first impulse in the womb of the present. All societies therefore necessarily bear the imprint, the birth-marks of their own past”**

Bagaetsho, we meet here today guided by the revolutionary spirit of **Ngugi wa Thiong'o** who sadly passed away a day after Presley's untimely death.

Through his literary work, Ngugi saw film and performing arts, particularly theatre as a platform that can be used to address cultural, social, and political issues affecting society.

Cobrizi wa Le Eazy was a rose which grew from the concrete and epitomised the aforementioned.

His talent raised awareness on a number of issues afflicting our communities.

Programme Director, in understanding what motivated him in the performing arts and in particular Drama & Film, I recently delved into my archives and came across a film by **Oliver Schmitz** titled **Mapantsula** which starred the late **Thomas Mogotlane**.

This includes **Hijack Stories** whose lead character is **Rapulana Seiphemo**.

The two films, which were shot and produced at different periods of the country's Popular Culture, exposed the harsh realities confronting African people and their daily struggles such as crime, poverty, gangsterism, racial oppression and exclusion.

These socio-economic challenges speak to the legacy of our unjust past and the disenfranchisement of our people by Colonial-Apartheid Rule.

Bagaetsho, Presley's upbringing was not different from the afore-said.

Like many of us, he was born in the 1980's where violence had engulfed many of our townships and villages.

The Apartheid government had declared a State of Emergency to squash nationwide uprisings.

Our country was gripped by protests and the call for freedom was gaining momentum by day. This socio-political narrative trickled down all the way to our democratic breakthrough in 1994.

This opened a world of opportunities for all irrespective of **race, class, gender or creed**.

Presley would seize this moment and enrol at Mmabana Mahikeng at the age of ten.

A trajectory that would culminate in breaking into international stardom when Tsotsi won an Oscar in 2006.

Programme Director, during this period young people of Mahikeng had taken it upon themselves to reposition the country's arts culture fraternity through drama, film, poetry and music.

Through a fusion of Setswana, English and Afrikaans and other indigenous languages a new Hip-Hop sub-genre known as **Motswako** took the country by storm garnering both domestic and international prominence.

Today our province and in particular Mahikeng has several SAMA and SAFTA Awards owing to people like **Jabulani Tsambo, Khuli Chana, Motlapele Morule, KB Motsilanyane, Lerothodi Moagi** and many others whose effortless yet outstanding lyrical content was inspired by Professor Keorapetse Kgosietsile and Don Matera who are the country's National Poet Laureate.

Programme Director I want to believe that Presley through his character in **Tsotsi** saw in himself, **Thomas Mogotlane**.

He gave meaning to the issues confronting our communities as portrayed by **Panic** in Mapantsula, a film I referred to earlier on.

He defied the odds and wanted to be part of a broader epistemological question founded on what Chinua Achebe defines as concentric nature of identity.

This assertion is given credence by the fact that he was from the streets of our province to the global stage but never forgot where he came from.

He was more than an actor. He was a mirror of our identity, a champion of our people, and a symbol of what is possible for every young boy and girl from the rural heart of the North West.

He did not just act; he represented.

He stood as an ambassador of the people of this province, embodying our values, our struggles, and our dreams.

He was not born with privilege. He was born with purpose. And he carried that purpose with dignity that inspired millions.

Presley's journey started right here at the Mmabana Mahikeng Arts Centre, where his gift was discovered, nurtured, and sharpened into a craft that would one day command the attention of the world.

From the very beginning, Presley wore the face of the township youth; brilliant, bruised, ambitious, and full of untold stories.

His breakout role in **Tsotsi**, was raw and unforgettable.

He played not just a character, but an entire generation of young people trying to break free from the shackles of poverty, crime, and hopelessness.

Presley represented the aspirations of the many young, disadvantaged people from our rural villages and township yearning to be seen, heard, and given a chance.

But Presley's brilliance extended far beyond a single film. He remained deeply grounded, involved in theatre, television, and mentorship.

His performances which spanned theatre, television and film showcased his pragmatism and reaffirmed his status as one of South Africa's most compelling actors.

He was not just a performer, he was a builder of dreams, a beacon for youth, and a fierce believer in the power of storytelling.

He knew that the arts could do more than entertainment, they could liberate, educate, and transform. He gave his time and his voice to campaigns for youth empowerment, substance abuse prevention, and community upliftment.

Presley never allowed his success to distance him from the struggles of ordinary people. In fact, he leaned in. He kept the doors open. He pulled others up.

He stood proudly as a representative of the rural, the disadvantaged, the underestimated.

As Acting Premier of the North West Province, I stand here to say: Presley Chweneyagae was one of our finest.

He carried the heart of the North West wherever he went, whether on international red carpets or community stages in Mahikeng. He was ours, and through his achievements, he reminded the world of who we are and our capabilities.

To his family, thank you for raising a giant. To the young dreamers of the North West, may you look to his life as a blueprint of possibility. Let us honour his memory not only in mourning, but in motion, in how we support the arts, empower our youth, and tell our stories.

Re tsaya sebaka seno, re eme mo leineng la puso ya Bokone Bophirima, go leboga le go lebedisa matshidiso le kgomotso mo ba lapeng la ga Presley, masika, ditsala, le badiramмого ba gagwe.

A mowa wa gagwe o robale ka kagiso, o bone tapologo e e nnetseng ruri, mme re rapelela gore Modimo a nne le lona mo nakong eno ya kutlobotlhoko.

Tsamaya ka kagiso Cobrizi wa le Easy...May your beautiful soul rest in peace
Tobetsa...

I thank you!