

## Standard Bank Jazz Festival to celebrate jazz legacies

The 2018 Standard Bank Jazz Festival (SBJF) will be held in Grahamstown from 28 June-7 July 2018. This year's programme is aimed at celebrating jazz legacies with a focus on the future.

"This year's programme will celebrate key jazz milestones, give a nod to great musical traditions from across the African continent and showcase some of the best among what Europe and the United States has to offer today," says Alan Webster, director of the Standard Bank Jazz Festival.

Classics from the great pool of hip-hop and soul music genius are given a jazz treatment by the Rebirth of Cool led by pianist Thandi Ntuli - the current Standard Bank Young Artist for Jazz (SBYA) – and DJ Kenzhero. The lofty legacy of the historic band, the Blue Notes is revisited with dexterous musical adoration by star-studded Blue Notes Tribute Orchestra led by trumpeter Marcus Wyatt. Award-winning writer Percy Mabandu will lead an interdisciplinary performance to mark the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Yakhal'inkomo, the historic record released in 1968 by the late saxophonist, Winston Mankunku Ngozi. The project will bring together literature with the masterful jazz musicianship of Andile Yenana, Shane Cooper, Ayanda Sikade and Linda Sikhakhane and Sisonke Xonti.



Thandi Ntuli

The late, great John Coltrane devotee, American saxophonist Michael Brecker will have his music reimagined by a band led by Norwegian saxophonist Petter Wettre in a project titled Don't try this at home - A Tribute to Michael Brecker. Well-known American pianist Aaron Goldberg has toured the world with Joshua Redman for two decades and brings his trio to Africa for the first time.

In one of the longest-running musical partnerships in the festival's history, saxophonist McCoy Mrubata and pianist Paul Hanmer will give a performance that reflects their influences on each other in celebration of 30 years of collaboration.

Northern Europe has been a leading region in jazz innovation for years. South African jazz has shared in that glory thanks to partnerships and investments made by organisations like the Swiss state arts funding organization Pro Helvetia, which will celebrate a 20-year presence in SA. In recognition of this lengthy role in support of the collaboration between the artists of South Africa and Switzerland, 12 Swiss musicians perform in Grahamstown this year over the course of the festival, sometimes offering their original music and at other times collaborating with South African musicians.

The festival is going to be a rare feast for jazz piano enthusiasts too. Pianist and composer Thandi Ntuli will showcase music from her new genre-defying album *Exile* at DSG Hall on 29 June 2018. Andile Yenana's sextet Umnqongqo Wabantu will ascend the DSG Hall stage on 1 July 2018. The band will include both the best SA and Swiss players like bassist Christoph King-Utzinger and drummer Michi Stulz on the rhythm section and a local horn line that includes Wyatt and Sikhakhane.

On 29 June 2018 at the DSG Hall, American composer and pianist Aaron Goldberg will lead his trio with Matt Penman on bass and Leon Parker on drums and percussions. Afrika Mkhize will be on stage with Zenzi Makeba Lee and Amanda Tiffin as they break new ground with their collaboration on 30 June 2018. SBYA alumnus and visionary pianist Nduduzo Makhathini will also set the piano on fire when he plays music from his latest album *Ikhambi* on 4 July 2018.



Nduduzo Makhathini

## Youth development and education

In keeping with the festival's focus on youth development and education, this year will mark 30 years of jazz education from Mike Campbell. The renowned bassist-guitarist and professor was the founding head of the UCT Jazz School, which has produced a lion's share of young professional jazz musicians that has included the likes of Marcus Wyatt and Buddy Wells. He will present the UCT Big Band at the DSG Auditorium on 28 June 2018.

The Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Festival (SBNYJF) has been investing in the country's young musicians for the past 26 years. The best among these will be on stage with the Standard Bank National Schools Big Band conducted by Dr Gordon Vernick, Professor of Music and Coordinator of Jazz Studies at Georgia State University. The Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Band is made up of musicians between the ages of 19 and 25 years from across the country conducted by pianist, vocalist, composer, arranger and educator Amanda Tiffin, who is Head of Jazz Singing and Acting Head of Jazz Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

"There's a reason SBJF has a global reputation as a barometer of not only the current quality of jazz musicianship in South Africa but a launching ground for future industry leaders too. The focus on the development of young musicians and the way the festival celebrates our jazz heritage exemplifies our values captured by our campaign call for this year; Art\_is! We are convinced art and jazz music, in particular, are central to building a healthy society," says Jenny Pheiffer, head of brand and sponsorship at Standard Bank.

Tickets go on sale from 7 May 2018. Find out more at [www.NationalArtsFestival.co.za/events](http://www.NationalArtsFestival.co.za/events).