

# Bokani Dyer



By [Martin Myers](#)

3 Nov 2021

The 2021 Jazz and Classical Encounters Festival Volume 3 at Spier Amphitheatre takes place on Saturday, 4 December 2021. The show will open with South African Music Awards (Sama) 2019 winner - pianist Bokani Dyer and his trio - who will present *Neo Native* album with Sphelelo Mazibuko on drums and Romy Brauteseth on bass.

I spoke to the master pianist last week:

## ■ ***The new decade means:***

Hopefully it means the end of Covid-19.

## ■ ***Fame is about:***

Lots of people knowing about you, I guess?

## ■ ***Retirement will happen when:***

I can't say definitively. Not anytime soon!

## ■ ***I don't do:***

Nonsense.

## ■ ***What does music mean to you?***

A lot of things. Different things at different times. It is a companion at times and also a means to express myself and also learn about myself.

## ■ ***My music is about:***

Everything. The life we live, our experiences, our solidarities, our

hopes and dreams.

■ ***I would love to co-write with:***

Laura Mvula and Oumou Sangare.

■ ***Where do you go for inspiration to create?***

It is not specific. Sometimes inspiration comes at unlikely times. I just feel the spark to create and then it happens.

■ ***What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?***

Connecting with people, whether it is fellow bandmates on stage or audiences.

■ ***The song you must do in every show:***

Mmm. I don't have one that I feel I must do, but from streaming insights, I have seen that a lot of people enjoy the song *Fola* from the *Neo Native* album.

■ ***Any funny moments on stage:***

All the time! Sometimes when you go completely blank on songs you know really well, best to find the funny side of these moments I think.

Also, sometimes audiences say some hilarious things.

■ ***My heroes:***

So many! For today, I will say Maya Angelou. So much powerful insight and inspired thought.

■ ***My style icon:***

Still looking for one.

■ ***Which living person do you admire most and why?***

I admire a lot of people and their actions. It is difficult to single out one person and say they are the best or most admired. I admire my mother for being highly principled and resolute in the things that she believes in.



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■ ***What is your most treasured possession?***

My piano.

■ ***It's your round. What are you drinking?***

Whiskey.

■ ***Dream gig to do:***

I did one of my dream gigs two years ago at Ronnie Scott's in London - a place with so much history and so many greats who have graced that stage.

■ ***What makes you stand out?***

Everyone has a unique story to tell. I have my own and this makes me stand out.

■ ***Nicknames:***

Bo, Boks, Bokso, Bokanator, Bokolosh and lots more. I am blessed to have some very creative people around me!

■ ***If you were not a musician, what would you do?***

Probably something to do with psychology research.

■ ***Who would play you in a Hollywood blockbuster and why?***

Haha, I don't know. My favorite actor is Denzel Washington, so it would be a trip to see him do it.

■ ***Pick five words to describe yourself:***

Optimistic, daring, self-critical, careful and caring.

■ ***Five favorite SA albums:***

*Genes & Spirits* - Moses Molelekwa

*Celebration* - Bheki Mseleku

*Born in a Taxi* - Blk Sonshine

*We used to dance* - Andile Yenana

*Live at the Market Theatre* - Sibongile Khumalo

📺 ***Greatest movie ever made:***

So many, but a recent one is *Parasite*.

📺 ***What books are you reading?***

*The New Apartheid* by Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh.

📺 ***What song changed your life?***

*Spanish Joint* - D'Angelo.

📺 ***Who do you love?***

My wife, family and friends.

📺 ***What is your favorite word?***

Shalom.

📺 ***Favorite fashion garment:***

Probably my hats.

📺 ***What do you complain about most often?***

I don't complain much. I would have to ask my wife about that.

📺 ***What is your fear?***

Death.

📺 ***Happiness is:***

A great feeling that I wish for everyone as much as possible.

📺 ***On stage, I tend to?***

Lick my lips.



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📺 ***The best life lesson you have been taught:***

So many. A recent one is about not being too quick to assume things. At times, I think people have the tendency to interpret things hastily, only to find that their assumptions were incorrect.

📺 ***Do you get worked up whilst watching a sports game on TV?***

Sometimes while watching soccer I get passionate.

▣ ***Where would you like to be right now?***

I am happy to be where I am.

▣ ***Do you do charity work and if you do, what do you do?***

Not really. I would like to change this. There are so many people who need help in this country.

▣ ***Wishes and dreams:***

A more accepting country and world.

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## **ABOUT MARTIN MYERS**

Co-owner at Triple M Entertainment, founder Music Exchange, manager Sipho Hlotstix Mabuse

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