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## Jazz

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THE Cape Town International Jazz

Festival is only a day away. For local fans, the festival offers the opportunity to catch old musical friends in new contexts and to see, live, artists known only from recordings.

But, increasingly, Cape Town is attracting overseas visitors to this event too. So what picture of South African jazz will the festival allow visitors to carry home with them?

If they come expecting the "traditional" South African jazz showcased on world music collections — those I-IV-V chords and mbaqanga jive rhythms — they will find its exponents on many of the festival's five stages.

On Friday, trumpeter Ndumiso Nyovane opens the outside Manenberg stage and guitarist Jonathan Butler — with guest Dave Koz — is second up on the Kippies stage with Cape Town's unique take on the roots style. On Saturday, veteran songstress Abigail Kubeka opens the evening on the Kippies stage, and trumpeter Hugh Masekela closes it, with a set celebrating his 70th birthday, while the Cape Town Jazz Orchestra (proteges of Abdullah Ibrahim) open Rosies with a repertoire sampling original SA composition, directed by guitarist and teacher Alvin Dyers.

What visitors may not know, however, is that these artists and this time-honoured style, represent only a fraction of the current South African jazz scene. If they move beyond the names they know, they will find three significant variations on the tradition.

First, there are artists bringing a syncretic mix of different approaches to the local sound. Siphokazi draws on the extended vocal styles of Xhosa roots; Loading Zone import a marrabenta flavour; Shannon Mowday and Sibongile Khumalo blend in opera and Russ Nerwich, this year, explores rap. Goldfish mix live instruments and electronica into a club-friendly blend. And, exporting a South African flavour to Europe, Incognito feature percussionist Thomas Dyani, son of the "Witchdoctor's Son", exile bassist Johnny Mbizo Dyani.

Then, there are the modern jazzmen: shouldering the heritage of SA's great composer/bandleaders such as Makwenkwe Davashe, but writing fresh, edgy music that speaks across borders. Pianist Kyle Shepherd (Moses Molelekwa stage, Friday) composes music that draws together spoken word, Khoisan bow and risky improvisation. McCoy Mrubata (Rosie's stage, Saturday) continues to grow in stature: his melodies recall traditional Xhosa themes, his reed improvisations become increasingly daring and assertive. What Mrubata does for saxophone, Feyza Faku (with the Maurice Gawronsky Quartet, Molelekwa stage, Saturday) does, equally fearlessly, for trumpet.

Finally, there are the artists who absolutely defy categories. On Friday on the Rosies stage, Philip Tabane's Malombo music will underline once more his originality. Many artists refuse the restrictions of the "jazz" label. Tabane sometimes even refuses the label of music, preferring to link the sounds he creates to the spiritual healing his mother practiced. The label does not matter; his haunting bluesiness will enchant any listener. And bassist Carlo Mombelli, with his Prisoners of Strange (Rosies, Friday) evokes the music of waves or birds as parallels to the soundscapes he paints with tape loops, bedsprings, plastic toys, sheet metal and more, alongside the more expected drums (Lloyd Martin), trumpet (Marcus Wyatt) and voice (Siya Makuzeni).

In terms of its South African component, this year's festival offers perhaps one of the best year's programmes yet for sampling SA's full jazz spectrum of styles and genres.