

Jazz, Jazz and more Jazz...

If music is food for the soul, then the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz will be a massive feast for all of us jazz lovers. Jazz enthusiasts from all across the continent will this weekend descend upon the city of Joburg to indulge themselves in the best of the best, as international and regional jazz talent will be taking to the stages at this year's Standard Bank Joy of Jazz festival. The event will be held from the 23rd to the 25th of August, and is billed to be held across 7 stages in Johannesburg's vibey historical Newtown Precinct.

As always, the event is already very highly anticipated, and proves itself once again as the *crème de la crème* of musical events in the continent, if not the world. It headlines the finest internationally and regionally renowned jazz artists such as Grace Kelly, Wycliffe Gordon and Clarence Carter, accompanied by a mouth-watering list of South African sensations such as Gloria Bosman, Thandiswa Mazwai, and Jimmy Dlodlu. This year's icing on this already decadent cake though, will be the performance of our very own Shanti Lo, whose talented self will be making his maiden appearance at the festival.

Having always been an afro jazz fundi myself from back in the day when it was all that my grandmother played from our Tempo sound system, I am particularly looking forward to catching the performances of maestros such as Caiphus Semenya, Bhudhaza from Lesotho and Mory Kante with his famous 'Yeke Yeke'. Seeing these giants on the line up takes me back to my childhood, where jazz was the family's favoured Saturday evening music. Back then Miriam Makeba, Jonas Gwangwa, Hugh Masekela and others were the very life of every social gathering and songs such as 'Angelina', 'A woman's got a right to be' by Caiphus Semenya, were and are no doubt the foundation of music for most.

The lineup also packs some contemporary and smooth jazz artists, the most well-known being guitarist Earl Klugh (pronounced Clue) who will be sharing the stage with the likes of Grammy award winning vocalist Kurt Elling. The French vocalist Cecile Verny of the Cecile Verny Quartet will also make her presence felt, along with Jamaican legend Monty Alexander and the US' Lizz Wright.

If the lineup is anything to go by, and it almost always is, the show promises an explosive 2 days that will be filled with some reminiscing, some learning, and overall an enthralling time for all. Back to the subject of Shanti Lo, I can't help but feel proud at his achievement. This takes me back to the last time I saw Shanti perform, adorned in an extravagant white winged outfit, his performance as always, nothing short of extraordinary. I have no doubt in my mind that he will be amazing, and that he will have the audience eating out of his perfectly manicured hand.

For more information, go to or www.southafrica.net/Botswana or <http://www.joyofjazz.co.za/>.