

What to expect from the Spier Jazz & Classical Encounters Fest

 By [Michael Britton](#)

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The inaugural South African Jazz & Classical Encounters Festival will take place at the Spier Amphitheatre on 23 November 2019.

The festival is set to showcase some of the best South African jazz and classical artists and the announcement of some of the works being performed puts the festival in a league of its own. The lineup of artists will alternate jazz with classical.



Kyle Shepherd Trio

Opening the festival is the Kyle Shepherd Trio with Shepherd (piano), Shane Cooper (double bass) and Jonno Sweetman (drums). They'll be playing originals rather than covers, with the selection assembled from their vast repertoire built up over the years. Both Kyle Shepherd and Shane Cooper are previous Standard Bank Young Jazz Artists of the Year – Shane Cooper in 2013 and Kyle Shepherd in 2015.

Night Light Collective

Next up will be the Night Light Collective, whose programme for Spier is an eclectic mix of original works by each member of the group. The compositions are woven together and bookended by a Matthijs van Dijk arrangement of the song *Down To The River To Pray*.

They blend jazz, free improvisation and contemporary art music elements to create their soundscapes. The instrumentation is a mix of classical instruments, such as the violin, double bass and piano, traditional African instruments such as the *nyunga nyunga* and *umrhube* bow, with an electric guitar tossed in for good measure.

Compositions include Reza Khota's "Lost Is A Place", Brydon Bolton's "Radiant Beauty", Cara Stacey's visual-score "Luhlata njengetjani" and Matthijs van Dijk's "How To Sit Underwater".

Tune Recreation Committee

The Tune Recreation Committee (TRC) sits comfortably in the middle and also features two Standard Bank Young Jazz Artists of the Year in Afrika Mkhize (2012) and Mandla Mlangeni (2019). The TRC band comprises Clement Benny on drums, Nicholas Williams on bass, Reza Khota on guitar, Mandla Mlangeni on trumpet and Afrika Mkhize on piano and keyboards.

They will be performing music from their album, *Afrika Grooves With The Tune Recreation Committee* – which was one of the five Sama-nominated Best Jazz Albums for 2019. This album, as all good jazz should, focuses on collaboration and musical exchange.

They come to Spier with the applause of the continent ringing in their ears. Says Mlangeni, “In celebration of an eventful year the Tune Recreation Committee is primed to make a grand offering at the inaugural Jazz and Classical Encounters at Spier.”

Ensemble Je ne Comprends Pas

Violist and composer Jan-Hendrik Harley’s Ensemble Je ne Comprends Pas takes to the stage next, with Liesl Stoltz (flute), Visser Liebenberg (clarinet), Dave Thompson (trumpet), Gene Kierman (French horn), Nick Green (trombone), Frank Mallows (percussion), Nina Schumann (piano), Annien Shaw (violin), Petrus Coetzee (viola), David Pinoit (cello) and Marichen Meyer (double bass).

Harley loves the idea of this festival, for it is, in his words, “a meeting place where I can hear the music ideas of others, unadulterated by the commercial elements often associated with such meetings. We have something quite fundamental in common: regardless of our genre, we have something to say. And we all chose to say it with music.”

Five of Harley’s compositions will be performed, four of them world premieres and the fifth, *Vlinder*, a revival. Harley may, although he hasn’t promised to, pick up his viola and join in.

Mandisi Dyantyis

Ending the show will be trumpeter/vocalist Mandisi Dyantyis, who is currently in the United States and will come home with four of his close collaborators to enthrall the audience as a quintet.

The schedule (doors open at 1pm):

- 2pm to 3pm – Kyle Shepherd Trio
- 3.15pm to 4.15pm – The Night Light Collective
- 4.45pm to 5.45pm – Mandla Mlangeni’s Tune Recreation Committee
- 6pm to 7pm – Jan-Hendrik Harley’s Ensemble Je ne Comprends Pas
- 7.45pm to 8.45pm – Mandisi Dyantyis Quintet

Tickets are R380 and available from [Quicket](#).

ABOUT MICHAEL BRITTON

Comfortably curious writer and editor and project manager. Constantly creative thought processes and habitually questioning attitudes are my guide.

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