

Standard Bank Joy of Jazz includes Crazy for Jazz

The hit musical stage show Crazy For Jazz: Our Journey Through Music will be included in this year's Standard Bank Joy of Jazz programme. Crazy for Jazz is an exciting programme that exposes youngsters to the magic and history of South African jazz



Standard Bank has introduced the show in its educational programme for the Joy of Jazz to encourage appreciation of the genre amongst younger fans, as well as broadening the appeal of the event.

Aimed at high schools, Crazy For Jazz: Our Journey Through Music runs in Newtown from Monday to Friday, August 24 to 28 with two shows daily as part of the build-up towards the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz. There is no charge for entrance but bookings from schools are essential.

Says Mandie van der Spuy, Standard Bank Art Sponsorship Manager: "This is a first for Standard Bank Joy of Jazz and we are delighted to incorporate this initiative in the year that we celebrate our 10th anniversary. It teaches the youth about South Africa's jazz roots and encourages them in an appreciation of jazz itself which helps build future audiences. It is also a compelling history of our country."

Crazy for Jazz is part of a wider educational programme linked to the Joy of Jazz. Also included in the programme are development workshops with the international artists appearing on the line-up who teach youngsters and musicians the intricacies of the craft. A five-day programme is also held for the upskilling of aspiring and practising women music writers and journalists.

Produced by Jazz for Juniors and supported by the Department of Arts and Culture, the City of Joburg and MMINO (the South African-Norwegian music cooperation initiative) Crazy For Jazz was "born out of the desire to educate South Africa's youth about the history of South African jazz and encourage them to appreciate jazz and other home-grown music," says Rosie Katz, who has had extensive experience in music development.

An A-list team of contributors was brought on board for the project: As musical directors - Standard Bank Young Artist

Award winner Concord Nkabinde and celebrated jazz musician Themba Mkhize - recipient of the DaimlerChrysler Award for South African Jazz 2001, multi award-winning choreographer Gregory Maqoma, and original direction by acclaimed director James Ngcobo. Scriptwriters included Tsepo wa Mamatu and Helen Hansen.

The script has been compiled with input from educators as well as assistance from jazz authorities such as Professor Hotep Galeta, Gwen Ansell, Mesh Mapetla, Stan Bodibe, and David Copland, and music archivist Rob Allingham.

The narrative is complemented by live performances of jazz classics, as well as audiovisuals featuring archive footage and historical recordings. Three actors tell the lively story through words, song and dance, aided by a five-piece band that includes one of SA's elder statesmen of jazz - double bassist Ernest Mothle, who forms part of the jazz history related in the play.

"The origins and development of South African jazz are fascinating," explains Nkabinde, "and this music genre that took root in the country less than a century ago went on to play a vital role in SA's history, providing people with a potent means of expression as they "jived their way through their misery".

High schools who would like to attend Crazy for Jazz at the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz should contact Cheryl Sack on 073 194-6532 or cheryl@artslink.co.za

Undoubtedly the premier event on Johannesburg's jazz calendar, the 2009 Standard Bank Joy of Jazz will take place in the city's Newtown precinct from August 27 to 29. For more information on the line-up go to www.standardbankjazz.co.za

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