

The Dig and Jazz re:freshed launch the AfroDiaspora Connection

The Dig, a South Africa's alternative music development agency, and Jazz re:freshed, a pioneering grassroots jazz organisation, have launched a collaborative music exchange project, the AfroDiaspora Connection.



Image supplied. The Dig and Jazz re:freshed have joined forces to launch the AfroDiaspora Connection

The event aims to establish a cross-cultural music community between South Africa, the UK and African diaspora communities. It seeks to bridge cultural divides, spark creative dialogue, and showcase the vibrant talent of African and Afrodiasporic artists to a global audience.

The event

The event will culminate in a series of couch sessions, workshops, performances, and studio sessions, taking place in Cape Town and Johannesburg from 23 to 26 May.

- The first performance will take place in Cape Town and features Kozo Zwane and Cape Town-based Afro jazz artist Kujenga, who are galvanising the Cape Town alternative music community and taking South Africa By storm.

- Durban-born trumpet player, composer, arranger and multi-award award winner Ndabo Zulu. and Soshanguve-born vocalist, pianist, composer and innovator Thandi Ntuli will perform at the Joburg show taking place on 26 May in Constitutional Hill.
- The 23 May features a couch session and DJ Night @Gorgeous George (7 pm -11 pm)
- The 24 May is the main event in Cape Town at Youngblood Gallery (7 pm -till late).
- The 26 May leg of the event takes place at Constitution Hill (Woman Jail) between 12 and 10 pm.
- Both events will feature the London-based Jazztronica duo and Grammy award winner Blue Lab Beats as well Nigerian-born Saxophone player, composer, band leader and educator, Camila George.

Increase artist access

Yvette Griffith, chief executive and executive director, Jazz re:freshed says, "As a Black-led music organisation in the diaspora, Jazz re:freshed touching down in the motherland is an exciting and important milestone in our 20-year journey.

"We're very proud to be heading to both South Africa and Eswatini with two trailblazers of Jazz in the UK alongside Sifiso Gcabashe and The Dig whose work we deeply admire and hope to build long-lasting fruitful connections."

The Afrodiaspora connection will celebrate and highlight the growing jazz and alternative music scene from both countries.

It also seeks to foster long-term impact-driven opportunities for the UK, the diaspora and the Southern African music community. The long-term vision is to increase artist access for opportunities, touring, music exchange, music education and knowledge sharing.

Not a new phenomenon

Making music and cultural connections between African artists and Afrodiasporic artists is not a new phenomenon says the Dig's founder, Sifiso Gcabashe.

"With this event, we aim to open up market access and performance opportunities for UK artists to perform in South Africa and for South African artists to gain exposure to the UK alternative music scene.

"Increasing opportunities for young creatives and marginalised communities to gain first-hand experience and share their talent on a global scale is the ultimate goal," explains Gcabashe.

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