

# Standard Bank Jazz Festival to present special jazz stage at virtual National Arts Fest

The 2021 Standard Bank Jazz Festival will present a special jazz stage during the virtual National Arts Festival from 8 to 31 July.

The performance lineup includes Grammy winner Richard Bona and eight-time Grammy nominee Gerald Albright, along with Mzansi's own Marcus Wyatt, Nduduzo Makhathini, Lira and Judith Sephuma, Sisonke Xonti and Bokani Dyer.



Richard Bona - Image: sourced

The Standard Bank Jazz Festival Makhanda is defined by an exciting programme of world-class jazz musicians performed in a rare and accessible context alongside the Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Festival (SBNYJF).

This unique developmental part of the festival brings an annual gathering of about 400 young musicians buoyed by dreams and a commitment to their talents. Customarily, the SBNYJF comprises a series of life-changing workshops and rigorous auditions. This year it was important to find a way (even during this time of social distancing) for these young musicians from across the country to pursue their dreams and for the first time for the SBNYJF, auditions were held online with participants submitting videos of themselves to a panel of judges. The best among these young musicians are selected into the yearly constituted band, the Standard Bank Youth Jazz Band (SBNYJB), which this year will be conducted by multi-award-winning producer, pianist and composer Nduduzo Makhathini.

The Standard Bank National School's Jazz Band (SBNSJB) will be conducted by one of Cape Town's most sought-after session bassists, and highly regarded jazz educator Shaun Johannes, who is also an alumnus of the SBNYJF programme. The school's jazz band has been reduced to a smaller version in keeping with Covid-19 safety protocols.



Judith Sephuma - Image: Supplied

Along with these two flagship performances by the youth and schools jazz bands, the festival will showcase performances by youth bands from Sweden, Brazil, Spain, UK and elsewhere. Another treat presentation not to be missed is a collaborative performance with Berklee school of music.

*“ It is exactly during challenging times such as we find ourselves that we get to test the best parts of our heritage and tradition. Jazz music is an art form that teaches us that we can always improvise beyond a bad situation in the pursuit of our dreams. This year's festival allows us to live up to this principle and keep presenting the best of our local musicians alongside their international counterparts for new and returning audiences,” says Standard Bank Jazz Festival director Alan Webster. ”*

“Our festival has always been a uniquely international offering. Over the years, we've brought world-class jazz musicians from across Europe, the Americas and from across the African continent to the small town of Makhanda for a unique jazz experience that is centred on the development of young people and their dreams.

“This year, we've once again found a way to respond to the limitations imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic by reaching out to a larger global audience through the power of digital,” says Standard Bank head of sponsorship and events, Desiree Poee.

Tickets to the online shows are available through [www.nationalartsfestival.co.za](http://www.nationalartsfestival.co.za)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>