



Jazz lovers gear up for International Jazz Day

by [Mumbua Nzula Nzyoka](#) | April 16, 2019

The line-up for the upcoming International Jazz Day concert is out

International Jazz Day is a global event that was ratified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on November 2011 and officially designated April 30th in order to highlight this genre of music and its diplomatic role of uniting people in all corners of the globe.

Kenya and specifically Nairobi will join in the Jazz day celebration through Safaricom who are hosting the event at the Carnivore grounds. This year's event themed "Celebrating African Jazz" will be headlined by renowned drummer Paco Sery from Ivory Coast and noted keyboardist and vocalist Cheick Tidiane Seck from Mali. They will be joined on stage by Mandla Mlangeni and The Tune Creation Committee from South Africa and Kenyan acts Nairobi Horns Project, Shamsi Music, Kato Change and the Change Experience, Jacob and Kavutha Asiyu, and the Ghetto Classics. This year's event will celebrate the best of African Jazz.

"Over the years, Safaricom International Jazz Festival has been headlined by a stellar line-up of African musicians including Salif Keita and Fatoumata Diawara from Mali, Jimmy Dlodlu and the late Hugh Masekela from South Africa, Kunle Ayo from Nigeria and New-York based Cameroonian artiste Richard Bona. The Festival has become more than a music concert; it is also a platform through which Kenyan jazz artists can reach a wider audience, connect and exchange ideas with their contemporaries," said Bob Collymore, Safaricom CEO and the Festival's Founder.

Last year's celebrations were marked with a live music extravaganza featuring Manu Dibango and the Soul Makossa Gang (Cameroon), who shared the stage with some of Kenya's top artists including Edward Parseen, Afro Sync Band, James Gogo, Shamsi Music, Eddie Grey and Chris Bittok.

"It's great to see more Kenyans appreciating homegrown jazz talent, and we are honoured to be part of the growth of the local jazz scene. Nairobi Horns Project released their debut album "Black in Gold" in February, Shamsi Music has performed in Festival Jazzy Koum Ben in Bamako, Mali and the number of young musicians enrolled in the Ghetto Classics music programme has grown from about 300 when we started supporting them in 2014, to about 1,500," said Mr Collymore.

This year's headline act, Sery, began his career in 1980 when respected French organist Eddy Louiss sent out a call for artistes for a record he was making. He successfully played on the record and has been active as a musician ever since. He got a break in his career when Austrian-American synthesizer virtuoso Joe Zawinul took him under his wing.

Fellow performer Seck is a Malian composer who has written for and played with world-famous African musicians such as Fela Kuti, Salif Keita, Youssou N'Dour and American maestros Dee Dee Bridgewater and the late Hank Jones.

Safaricom International Jazz Festival has partnered with a project known as the Jazz Sister Cities. This organization promotes Jazz as a tool for building cultural bridges globally through engagement and

collaboration with cities, programs, and artists. Nairobi, through the festival, will officially join the Jazz Sister Cities Network on this day and will present Sylwester Ostrowski & The Jazz Brigade ft. Dorota Miskiewicz – Freddie Hendrix to perform at the International Jazz Day celebrations.

All proceeds from ticket sales will go towards supporting the [Ghetto Classics](#) music programme, which has received approximately KSh 60 million since the inception of the [Safaricom International Jazz Festival](#) in 2014. These funds cater to music training, schooling and basic needs for members of the programme, most of whom are at-risk pre-teens and teenagers from low-income neighbourhoods in Nairobi and Mombasa.

The programme will expand to Kisumu this year, where it aims to transform the lives of more youth through music.