

A-Z Artists Biographies

Sauti za Busara 2011



AFRICAN STARS BAND (AKA TWANGA PEPETA) (Tanzania)

Sun 13, 12:25am Old Fort

Style: band, dance, rumba

The African Stars Band is one of Tanzania's most loved live performers. Based in Dar es Salaam, their 40 plus members have decades of experience in producing the popular *muziki wa dansi* (dance music); sounds that have been, and still can very much be, heard all over the country. African Stars Band are more commonly known across Tanzania as Twanga Pepeta for their unique and original dance style – *twanga* meaning “to grind or pound”, and *pepeta* meaning to “sieve”.

Over the years the group have repeatedly won an outstanding number of awards including Best Band of the Year, Best Dance Show and Best Band in Modern Music. With over eight album releases on audio tape, CDs and DVDs an overwhelming majority of these released songs have hit high in the Tanzanian charts.

The band plays Tanzanian style *rhumba*, mixed with zouk, *chacha*, *ndombolo*, blues and soca, singing in Swahili, French, English, Spanish and Lingala languages. Expect heavy electric guitars and drums with harmonious penetrating vocals. Live, each song can last over 20 minutes and is always delivered with high powered musical agility and with great dancing.

www.africanstars.net

Recordings:

Kisa cha Mpemba (1999); Jirani (2000); Fainalu Uzeeni (2001); Chuki Binafsi (2002); Ukubwa Jiwe (2003); Mtu Pesa (2004); Safari (2005)

ATEMI & THE MA3 BAND (Kenya)

Sun 13, 8:20pm Old Fort

Style: band, fusion, pop

Carol Atemi Oyungu is one of East Africa's finest neo-soul vocalists. She began singing aged 10, and made her mark in the music scene with the all-girl group, Intu. In 2003 Atemi joined Kenyan sensation, Eric Wainaina, as vocal harmony provider for his band. Together with Eric and The Mapinduzi Band she performed in Zimbabwe, Ghana, Germany, Festival Mundial and The North Sea Jazz Festival in Holland, Big Brother Africa in South Africa, and even at Sauti za Busara 2008. She played a major role in Wainaina's musical production, *Luanda*, and later in Kenya's biggest theatre production yet, *Mo Faya*. Atemi has been hosting an all-Africa TV show, *Africa Rising*, since 2009.

Releasing her first single *Happy* in 2004, she went on to launch her debut album, *Hatimaye* meaning ‘finally’ in 2008. She is currently working on her second solo album, to be released later in 2011. A mix of neo-soul and afro-fusion, Atemi's sound has been described as that of “Miriam Makeba meeting Jill Scott.” This year, Atemi is returning to Sauti za Busara's stage in her own right, backed by the Ma3 Band.

www.gatwitch.com

www.myspace.com/atemidiva

Recordings:

Hatimaye (2008)

BISMILLAHI GARGAR (Kenya)

Fri 11, 8:20pm Old Fort

Style: fusion, roots, traditional

Bismillahi Gargar is a collective group of women of Somali origin from Garissa, North Eastern Kenya. Formed in 2003 with the purpose of reminding people of their traditional culture, Bismillahi Gargar focus on their own empowerment in an area where cultural practices can sometimes marginalise women. Music is just one of the activities they engage in. Besides performing on national holidays, at weddings, harvests and other festivities, the women also run a self-help group weaving mats and ropes.

Their debut CD titled *Garissa Express* was recorded over a period of 2 years at Nairobi's Ketebul Studios, consisting of numerous trips for the ladies, shuttling back and forth between Garissa and Nairobi. It's recent release at Alliance Française, Nairobi was a huge success and saw a full house grooving to their vocals, harmonies and dancing.

Their music is uniquely traditional, in keeping with Somali language and singing style, yet arranged and recorded with modern instrumentation that allows *Garissa Express* to sit pride of place among 2010's releases in Kenya.

Recordings:

Garissa Express (2010)

BLACK ROOTS (Zanzibar)

Thu 10, 8:20pm Old Fort

Style: band, fusion, traditional

Black Roots Cultural Group has been immersed in the islands' arts scene for many years. Apart from their regular drama plays broadcast on TV Zanzibar, the group is reinterpreting local traditional dances. The potent messages they convey through their drama reach all levels of society in Tanzania and are the main reason for their success and popularity.

With the leadership and guidance of the charismatic Othman Mohamed (Makombora), the most famous actor in the Zanzibar islands, Black Roots is one of the island's leading visionary cultural groups. In recent years the group has managed to create a style representing Zanzibar contemporary society and history by mixing African, Arabic, Indian and European instruments without losing originality. Instruments used are six different traditional drums, makeshift high hat, shakers, trumpet, violin, flute, bass guitar and kit drums. Black Roots performs regularly in campaigns and cultural festivals around Zanzibar boasting freshness in every show.

BLICK BASSY (Cameroon)

Fri 11, 9:20pm Old Fort

Sun 13, 9:10pm Old Fort

Style: band, fusion, jazz, roots

Blick Bassy is the new soul voice of Cameroon - soul in the sense of vocals that come from within. Bassy says: "The soul of my music isn't so much in the words; it's in the way of singing."

On his album *Léman*, the singer-songwriter, guitarist, percussionist connects the music of Central and West Africa and mixes it with bossa nova, jazz and soul. Bassy's guitar playing and intoxicating, soft voice are enriched by the kora, calabash and a double bass resulting in a unique, haunting sound which is velvety with subtle harmonies, yet also raw with groovy rhythms.

Léman is Bassy's first solo album and was recorded in Salif Keita's studio in Bamako, Mali, and in Bassy's current hometown of Paris. Blick explains, "*Léman* means 'mirror'. For me a mirror is a reflection of what we are. You cannot lie in front of the mirror. You can also see behind you in a mirror. *Léman* is about my past, really, and about being African."

Born in 1974, Bassy grew up with 20 siblings in Cameroon's capital Yaoundé, a city where people from all parts of the country come together. Aged 10, Bassy was sent to live with his grandparents for two years in Mintaba, a small village situated in central Cameroon. "In Mintaba, people don't talk much but they sing a lot during their daily tasks. It's in the singing that they express their emotions and show their souls. My mother used to sing from morning till night. She's the one who fired my musical aspirations and taught me how to sing. Back at my parents' home, I started listening to Marvin Gaye, Gilberto Gil and Nat King Cole. I realised I wanted to blend the beauty of my Bassa culture and its musical traditions with other music that inspired me and create my own soulful sound." Based in Paris since 2005, he has since worked with Manu Dibango, Cheikh Tidiane Seck, Lokua Kanza and Etienne Mbappé.

Text taken from www.myspace.com/blickbassy

www.worldconnection.nl/wclayout/index.php?site_id=37

Recordings:

Léman (2008)

With thanks to CULTURES FRANCE

CHRISTINE SALEM (Reunion)

Wed 9, 9:40pm Old Fort

Style: *fusion, traditional, roots*

Christine Salem's bewitching voice, accompanied by her *kayamb* (percussive instrument made of reed stems filled with seeds), takes us on a musical journey across the Indian Ocean. Her songs tell of life with all its joy, hardship and struggle, in the purest Creole and the local Malagasy, Comorian and Swahili dialects of the ancestors.

Salem Tradition is a group from the island of Reunion. Mixing *séga*, blues and *maloya*, Christine Salem started out in the street with her friends and her guitar.

As a singer-songwriter, she launched her career in 1997 with the formation of Salem Tradition subtly mixing Indian Ocean music and traditional *Réunionnais* with African instruments. Through the sensitivity and power of Christine's voice, the music of Salem Tradition found its place not only in the local landscape but beyond the shores of Reunion, thanks to an appearance at WOMEX 2002 and the release of *Krié* (2003). On *Fanm* (2006), Christine Salem continued to explore the pathways of tradition, breathing an air of modernity along the way.

In concert, Christine Salem, the youngest of the *maloya* singers, is a strong-willed woman who acts on instinct and feeling, to catalyse energy and galvanise the public. Ever close to her listeners, she draws her force from them and repays it a hundredfold.

www.myspace.com/salemtradition

Recordings:

Krié (2003); Fanm (2005); Lanbousir (2010)

CROSS BORDER (Zanzibar)

Fri 11, 4:30pm Old Fort

Style: *pop, taarab, urban*

In 2007 former solo artist Karume Shaabani, also known as Father K, joined together with keyboardist Ali Said to create Cross Border. From 2009 onwards the band of nine has been performing a huge mix of well loved rhythms from the Tanzanian coastal region, such as *msondo*, *kibati*, *umundi*, *msewe*, *chakacha* and *mduara*. Their sets also include well loved rumba tunes, hot zouk numbers and ample reggae hits too, with the aim to get everyone on their feet dancing.

CULTURE MUSICAL CLUB (Zanzibar)

Ijumaa 11, saa 1:00 usiku Old Fort

Style: *taarab, traditional*

Founded in 1958, the Culture Musical Club is Zanzibar's premier *taarab* club. The orchestra performs widely at concerts in Zanzibar town, but also frequently travels overland with a fold-up stage and an electricity generator to bring its music to the rural areas. The club has released hundreds of songs on the local market and since 1988 they have had five releases on the international market. The group have been performing in Europe regularly since 1996, and in the past few years they have done shows in United States, Dominican Republic and Japan.

Besides *taarab*, many club members are also active in *kidumbak* groups, smaller ensembles that play a more down-home, dance-focused music. Both types of music are now included in their shows, contrasting the serene sound of orchestral *taarab* to the festive and sexually charged dance that is *kidumbak*. The *taarab* orchestra includes three violins, qanun, oud, two accordions, double bass, dumbak, bongos and rika, plus singers and female chorus. The *kidumbak* side features three violins, *sanduku* (tea-chest bass), two *kidumbak* drums, *cherewa* (maracas) and *mkwasa* (claves), female chorus and dancers.

Recordings:

Taarab 4: The Music of Zanzibar – Culture Musical Club (1988, GlobeStyle), Spices of Zanzibar (1996, Network), Kidumbak Kalcha: Ng 'ambo – The Other Side of Zanzibar (1997, Dizim), Bashraf – Taarab Instrumentals from Zanzibar (2000, Dizim), Waridi – Parfums de Zanzibar (2003, Jahazi), Zanzibar – De l'âme à la danse / Zanzibar – Soul & Rhythm (2003, Jahazi)

DJAAKA (Mozambique)

Sat 12, 9:10pm Old Fort

Style: *band, roots, traditional*

Djaaka was founded in Beira, Mozambique in 2001 by members from the big traditional music and dance company "Companhia de música e dança tradicional da Beira". Not long after their formation they won the regional young musicians' festival Music Crossroads in 2002. It was here that they gained substantial regional exposure, winning several prizes, one of which was a visit to the folk music festival in Sweden, Fallun.

Their music reflects various traditions from central Mozambique. Djaaka's sound can be identified largely by their use of *marimba* which comes from one area of central Mozambique called "Timbila" is heard on many of their songs. The music is contemporary with a strong traditional touch, both funky and deeply rooted. Djaaka sing in a dialect called Massena, which is not far removed from languages of Zambia, like Bemba and Njanja.

Djaaka is a true live band, skilled musician and good dancers, with outstanding outfits. Their live performance has impressed not only their home audience; it has brought them to festivals in Reunion, Mauritius, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Italy and United Kingdom.

DJELI MOUSSA DIAWARA (Guinea)

Sun 13, 10:15pm Old Fort

Style: *fusion, jazz, roots*

Guinean singer and composer Djeli Moussa Diawara is foremost among world players of the *kora*, the African harp-lute of the Manding people of the Senegambia. Born in Guinea in 1962 into a family whose musical roots span generations, his father was a famous player of the *balafon* (African wooden cousin to the xylophone), and his mother sang.

He joined his family as a member of the djeli (or jail) caste – the honoured griots that carry a tradition of reciting town news through improvised lyrics and melody on the kora. Like his half-brother Mory Kante -sharing the same mother - he was drilled by his elders in music, instrumental technique and a millennium's worth of oral history and genealogies.

The *kora* is a demanding instrument, consisting of two parallel rows of 21 strings attached to a notched bridge on a resonating gourd. Djeli's confident command of it is the result of a lifetime of study and practice. Through the intimate bond with the kora, he has developed a rich musical talent, allowing him to wander from traditional rhythms from his *Mandingo* roots to unexpected styles, such as salsa, flamenco and jazz, always pushing the boundaries of his *kora*. In addition, he plays the guitar.

Aside from his solo career – of which he has released seven albums so far, with the eighth in the studio at the time of writing – he is also part of the Kora Jazz Trio group, which he founded together with Abdoulaye Diabaté (piano) and Moussa Cissoko (drums) and in which he composed most of the tracks of the three albums the trio have released.

Since the release of his first solo LP recorded in Abidjan in 1983, he has toured and recorded extensively meeting on stage or in the studio with many great artists such as Ali Farka Touré, Carolos Santana, Bob Brozman, Manu Dibango, Janice de Rosa, Stephan Eicher, Cheick Tidiane Seck.

Now living in Paris, Djeli Moussa Diawara will be launching his new solo work, the weekend after Sauti za Busara 2011.

www.djelimoussadiawara.com

Recordings:

Yasimika (1983); Soubindoor (1988); Cimadan (1992); Sobindo (1996); Flamenkora (1998); Ocean Blues – from Africa to Hawaii with Bob Brozman (2000); Sini (2006)

GROOVE LÉLÉ (Reunion)

Thu 10, 9:10pm Old Fort

Style: *fusion, traditional*

Native to Reunion island Groove Lélé have been playing traditional *maloya* music since 1992, sharing with the world the music first created by an emblematic legend of *maloya* music Julien Philéas Gramoun Lélé (*Grandad Blows up*). Among the 12 musicians who composed his group, four of them are his children.

Maloya music was created in hiding during the uprising of the slaves and their descendants in Reunion. It is principally centred on voices and percussion. On stage, the dances, songs and instruments combine to express a certain cry for freedom, understandably as for a long time during the slave trade this music was forbidden.

Gramoun Lélé among his many accomplishments in his lifetime recorded several CDs of singing trance *vaudou*, a musical traditional mixture with influences identifiable from Zanzibar, Mozambique, Somalia, Madagascar and in some cases even from Congo or from Cameroon. His children continue this rich musical trajectory spanning not just generations, but oceans, islands and peoples.

Recordings:

Dan kèr Lélé (1998); Trans-Mission (2008); Zembrocal Musical (2010)

JAGWA MUSIC (Tanzania)

Fri 11, 12:15am Old Fort

Style: *coastal, roots, urban*

Call it Afro punk for sheer noise, for distortion as a creative element, for attitude; there are elements of trance and minimal musics harking back to local precedents in *nzumari* (a double reed horn) playing and the hypnotic melodies of the *rimba* (called mbira elsewhere in Africa); there is the sexual energy of *kuduro* and *mapouka*; the highly charged lyrics compare well to any socially conscious tradition be it rock or rap.

Jagwa Music emerged in 1992 as a spin-off from an earlier group playing *chakacha* (locally a mixture of the bite&tunes of Mombasa taarab songs with Zaramo rhythmic and kinetic ideas) at wedding celebrations. Initially *mchiriku* was closer to *chakacha*, Jagwa developed their edge with the current members joining within the past ten years: Above all, these are the two *kinanda* (Casio) players Daliki and Diploma, intensifying the style with their minimalist end-of-day feedback and distortion deluges, Mazinge's and TP's powerful and always shifting drumming patterns; and, more recently with current front man and main attraction Jackie joining. The latter is an energetic singer and performer, belting out songs and commentaries on day-to-day street life with never-ending vigour.

Jagwa's songs typically comment on day-to-day issues of life in the city and many have become proverbial with time. One their best-loved songs is *Maisha Popote* ('One Can Live Anywhere in this World').

In terms of Tanzanian media Mchiriku & Jagwa do not exist. You can't hear their songs on the radio; their kind of entertainment is associated with *uhuni* (thuggery) and the city's low life. In the 1990s Mchiriku performances were even banned by the authorities several times. Yet they have a large following around Dar: you can see quotes from their songs painted as slogans to the sides or backs of the local *daladala* bus taxis, they have released more than a dozen cassettes. In Dar es Salaam they generally perform in street-type surroundings for local celebrations, rarely hired by a bar owner, yet Jagwa have successfully transformed their act to the grand stand.

With thanks for text to Werner Graebner

Recordings:

(cassette-only releases available in Tanzania):,Tulia Mke Wangu (1998), Bai Bai Abiola (1998), Mauaji Ya Kinyama(1999), Liwalo Na Liwe (2000), Tumechoka Hoi (2000), Jela Haina Mwenyewe (2001), Shughuli Gharama (2002), Nguzo and many more

JAHAZI MODERN TAARAB (Tanzania)

Wed 9, 11:45pm Old Fort

Style: *band, fusion, taarab*

Established in Dar es Salaam during December 2006, Jahazi Modern Taarab group is currently the leading taarab group in Tanzania, with more fans than any other. Their success story can be attributed to Mzee Yusuf, the manager and owner who is also one of the pioneer musicians of the "modern taarab" style.

Modern taarab is a style which gained popularity in the late 90s by some taarab musicians who were trying to find a way of building a new generation of fans. Unlike in traditional taarab, this modern version, where most of the music comes from keyboards rather than "real instruments", allows fans to "get up and dance". Most of the songs are

about how one boasts of enjoying his or her love life. Modern taarab groups are often in the headlines, and have attracted criticism for promoting hatred and jealousy, especially among women.

"To avoid being misunderstood we decided to write songs which speak about realities in love life, like how to mend broken affairs as well as unifying and strengthening relationships" claims Mzee Yusuf, explaining that his modern taarab style does not promote hatred..."

Recordings:

2 in 1 (2006); Kazi ya Mungu Haiingiliwi (2007); Tupendane Wabaya Waulizane (2007)

KWANI EXPERIENCE (South Africa)

Fri 11, 10:15pm Old Fort

Style: *fusion, hiphop, jazz, urban*

Kwani Experience is a 6-piece band from Johannesburg, South Africa. The band's unique and eclectic sound is no less difficult to pigeon-hole and categorize now, as ever, with strong elements of funk, rap, acid jazz, soul, African Indigenous and afro-pop, all coming into play in an exciting and groundbreaking mix, an accessible wall of sound.

Kwani comprises: a soulful lead female vocalist and dancer Nkoto Keitu Malebye, lead rapper and poet, Kwelagobe Po Box Sekele, industrial percussionist and wailer Bafana Nhlapo, drummer Monde Mkhizwana, bassist Frank Magongwa and keyboardist Mahlatse Riba.

In the past five years, Kwani have released two albums, *The Birth of the Mudaland Funk* and *Live After Birth* and have since been collaborating with many "big names". Having done a couple of European tours around France, Norway, Belgium, Netherlands (which has become the band's second home), Bosnia-Herzegovina, along with performances in Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho, Angola and Cape Verde, Kwani Experience is proving to be one of South Africa's greatest musical exports.

Aiming to educate, elevate and entertain both young and old, Kwani Experience pays tribute to their legacy and heritage and chants the future.

www.myspace.com/kwaniexp

Recordings:

The Birth of the Mudaland Funk (2005); Live After Birth (2009)

LELELELE AFRICA (Kenya)

Sat 12, 7:00pm Old Fort

Style: *coastal, pop, taarab*

Mombasa based *taarab* group Lelelele Africa, formally known as Diamond Star, formed in 1995. The band's passion lies in keeping alive traditional *taarab* music from the Kenyan Swahili-speaking coast of East Africa. Composed of seven members, the group uses harmonium, violins, tambourines, and bongos fused with more modern instruments - electric, acoustic and bass guitars and keyboard. Along with vocals and the chorus, Lelelele Africa truly represents the richness and renewal of *taarab* music from the Kenyan side.

At present, the band has recently been creating modern digital recordings and music videos of their past work, which were originally recorded in cassette format. In addition to this project they continue to rework traditional songs and styles that producer Elchie says "would otherwise disappear if not recorded and stored for posterity".

www.rootscampkenya.com

LES FRÈRES SISSOKO (Senegal)

Wed 9, 5:55pm Old Fort

Thu 10, 5:55pm Old Fort

Style: *acoustic, roots, traditional*

Bao and Sadio Sissoko were born in Senegal to a *griot* family. Following in the footsteps of the Sissoko family both brothers have been learning *kora* since the age of seven at first by observing their father's playing as he was accompanied by their mother, a traditional singer. For a long while their musical paths were separated as Bao travelled Europe, while Sadio remained in Senegal. Finally, in 2003 the brothers came together again where both decided to settle in Belgium and establish the group The Sissoko Brothers - Les Frères Sissoko.

Aside from the *kora*, both brothers are skilled in other musical instruments, able to improvise on guitar, percussion, violin and saxophone. Les Frères Sissoko mix their traditional techniques from their Manding heritage with various styles such as jazz, reggae, zouk and salsa. Although the main source of their inspiration is still their West African roots, these new combinations and instruments enrich their sound, with inspiration, improvisation and variety. Joined by Komlan Octave on percussion and Wouter Van den Abeele on violin this quartet is set to rock the stage.

MAULIDI YA HOMU YA MTENDENI (Zanzibar)

Wed 9, 9:10pm Old Fort

Style: *spiritual*

Welcome to one of the world's best kept secrets – from Zanzibar. The Maulidi ya Homu is a visually spectacular and spiritually uplifting experience. In the 21st Century there are only three remaining groups in the world still practising this religious art form – all based in Zanzibar.

Maulidi ya Homu comes from a centuries-old tradition with roots in the Arab World. Ustadh Majid Said Mansour founded the group in the mid-1960s after learning the traditions from his grandfather.

The musicians play percussion instruments only. Starting very softly and almost motionless the music and singing slowly unfolds and encapsulates, weaving its spell among both artists and audience. Slowly the rhythm and music build in intensity, until the right moment, when the musicians take everything to another completely higher level. The impression given is of beauty and unity, visually arresting, soul-stirring and completely unique.

"It is rare that a religiously inspired display can convey such depth of feeling to outsiders. This group could do more than any politician or spokesman to communicate to Westerners the sweetness and elegance inherent in Islam."
Banning Eyre, www.afropop.org, 2004

MAUREEN LUPO LILANDA (Zambia)

Sat 12, 8:20pm Old Fort

Style: *band, pop, traditional, urban*

Maureen Lupo Lilanda aka "Mama Zambia" or fondly known in Zambia as "Aunty Maureen" is a singer-songwriter from Lusaka. Endurance, patience and generosity characterize Maureen best. Her music is warm, vibrant, and soulful; she covers decades of African inspiration but is nicely grounded in her motherland Zambia. Some of her songs are home grown – they are a piece of Zambian soil, traditional music that has been through a musical blender of jazz, soul and various African music styles such as rumba, kisumba, kalendula, and even mbalax. Other songs are from Maureen's own hand, African contemporary, soul ballads, pop and reggae.

For the past twenty years she has travelled extensively both locally and internationally consistently grabbing the attention of listeners and fans. Broadening her musical genres from a subdued cabaret-jazz singer to an African vocalist, Maureen blends modern beats and rhythms with authentic sounds from Zambia. A four time recipient of

the National Arts Council Award for Best Female Artist, she continues to give her time and experience to musical peers. She spent time as leader of the accapella group Amashiwi and during her long and illustrious career has shared stage with Black Voices (UK), Oliver Mtukudzi (Zimbabwe), Magic System (Cote d'Ivoire) and Baaba Maal (Senegal).

www.myspace.com/maureenzammo

Recordings:

Evolution (2002); Tetwe (2005); Soul Masala (2007)

MLIMANI PARK ORCHESTRA (Tanzania)

Thu 10, 12:20pm Old Fort

Style: *band, rumba*

Ever since their formation in 1978 Mlimani Park Orchestra have been Tanzania's most popular band, easily verified by their audience turnouts and the amount of radio play they get. Mlimani have cooed their way into the hearts of Tanzanians with an endless string of hits sung and composed by the likes of Hassani Bitchuka, Muhiddin Maalim Gurumo, Cosmas Chidumule or Shaaban Dede. In Tanzania the first and foremost way of appreciating a song is through its lyrics. Mlimani are famous for their themes and the intricate poetry delivered by their lead singers. Good, topical lyrics are a general feature of Tanzanian music, however, and it is really Mlimani's instrumental sounds – the interplay of the guitars and the finely honed horn arrangements - that are their trademark, qualifying them as one of Africa's outstanding bands.

Their Dar es Salaam night club performances reach their peak well past midnight as the solo guitar, second solo and rhythm guitars work into each other in the *chemko* climax section, while current bass player Mabuyu or Ngosha add yet more rhythmic excitement for the dancers to follow. Most of the dancing is based on popular street ngoma like the *mdundiko*, or the audience may do a *gwaride*, a line dance, which will soon include the stage as well.

With thanks for text to Werner Graebner

MOHAMED ILYAS NA NYOTA ZA ZAMEREMETA (Zanzibar)

Wed 9, 7:00pm Old Fort

Style: *pop, taarab, traditional*

Mohamed Ilyas embodies the culture and history of the Zanzibar island unlike few other musicians of his generation. He comes from the great tradition of *taarab* singers who took the Arabic origin of the art form and transformed it to a uniquely Zanzibar experience.

Mohamed Ilyas began his musical career with the *nai* (Arabic bamboo flute) and has been a lead singer with Zanzibar's oldest *taarab* club Nadi Ikhwan Safaa for many years. He composed his first song at the age of 14 and at the age of 18 he began learning accordion and keyboard. When his beloved teacher and mentor Seif Salim died in 2000 he took up playing the violin.

In 1988 he recorded for GlobeStyle Records of London as singer and violinist with Nadi Ikhwan Safaa. His big breakthrough came with his own band Nyota Zameremeta (Twinkling Stars) after a two-year stay in Cologne, Germany where he received coaching in voice and much encouragement to pursue his independent career as a musician. Twinkling Stars went through all the ups and downs of an independent band but achieved great recognition, travelled and performed internationally and remains a fixture of Zanzibar's cultural scene up to today. Recent success came their way in 2009 after the international release of the album *Taarab*, selling hundreds of CDs around the world.

The group will be joined on stage by Zanzibar's legendary and most famous icon, Bi Kidude.

MUTHONI THE DRUMMER QUEEN (Kenya)

Sat 12, 10:00pm Old Fort

Style: *floetry, fusion, roots, urban*

Nairobi born and raised singer-songwriter, flow-poet, drummer, and creative social entrepreneur, Muthoni Ndonga, is already poised to become a leading presence in the world of African entertainment and social development. Muthoni's music is an innovative approach to fusing African melodies and rhythms with daily experiences that resonate with urban youth across the African continent delivered in a blend of English, Kikuyu and Swahili languages.

Muthoni mixes diverse styles such as salsa, *kwaito*, afro-rock, *taarab*, rap, floetry and R&B into an intoxicating fusion of sounds. Inspired by love, relationships, politics, and new spirituality, her sound is a conscious call to live, dream and hope in curiosity, courage and strength. Delivered sometimes in song and floetry (spoken poetry) her work is an experimental, entertaining and stirring display of artistry. By blending the musical traditions of East African with the experiences of the modern African youth, it is at once ancient, contemporary and futuristic.

www.penyafrika.com

Recordings:

Mambo Bado (2008); The Human Condition (2010)

NEWS QUARTET (Various)

Fri 11, 6:05pm Old Fort

Style: *fusion, traditional*

Becaye Aw is a guitarist from Mauritania, now living and playing in Norway. He has been able to integrate his African music traditions well with Norwegian traditional music, and has been playing with many of the most respected musicians both Europe, and famous African musicians like Baaba Maal and Ali Farka Toure.

Matona is a highly respected musician (violin/oud) from Zanzibar, key teacher at Zanzibar's music school DCMA, and participant in many international music projects. Anne Hytta is one of Norway's leading younger players of the *Hardanger* Fiddle, winner of numerous awards and well established concert and recording artist.

Supplemented by Rajab Suleiman, an accomplished player of the *qanun*, who has already been playing with Norwegian musicians both in Zanzibar and in Norway, this quartet will be able to link together music from East, West, North and South in a unique way.

The NEWS Quartet will enjoy accompaniment from four guest musicians of the RNK Symphony Orchestre in Oslo, on violin, viola, cello and double bass.

www.myspace.com/becayeaw

www.annehytta.com

www.myspace.com/matonahajji

Recordings:

Becaye Aw: Sibi (2009)

Matona: Matona & Friends; Zanzibar (2008), Ikhwani Safaa Musical Club: Made in Zanzibar (2009)

Anne Hytta: Dag, kveld,natt (2006), Symbiosis (2008)

NOMAKANJANI ARTS (Zambia)

Sun 13, 7:00pm Old Fort

Style: *traditional*

Nomakanjani is a Zambian NGO that uses music, dance and theatre to entertain and educate audiences about the issues that affect their lives and their communities. The dynamic group of performers use performing arts as a tool for creating positive change, delivering vital life and behavioural changing messages to its audiences in an original and entertaining form.

Nomakanjani means “no matter what - we will overcome the challenges that our generation faces, we will be the change we want to see.” Their amazing story from humble beginnings with nowhere to rehearse, the group has grown quickly and now has 19 active members, aged between 15 and 24.

Nomakanjani have over 100 years of collective experience in the arts of Zambia. The vibrant performing arts company utilises its knowledge of traditional Zambian and sub-Saharan dance and its unique contemporary edge to deliver powerful messages and create memorable and distinctive performances every time they appear.

www.nomaarts.co.uk

NYOTA KALI BAND (Tanzania)

Sat 12, 5:00pm Old Fort

Style: *acrobats, roots, traditional*

Nyota Kali, meaning “bright star” are a dance band of ten Dar es Salaam based dancers and musicians who fuse modern and traditional *ngoma* music together with acrobatic dexterity for a unique and striking show.

Nyota Kali has been performing together since 2008 started and has ten members now, seven men and three women. Using traditional rhythms and instruments from different ethnic groups in Tanzania – such as the *marimba*, a variety of drums and *manyanga* (handmade shakers) - the group aims to entertain and teach lessons for society.

Their prowess and unity as a group is outstanding live. In 2009 they participated in the Music Crossroads winning first place and the chance to perform in Zambia. From there they were awarded more prizes in the regional championship and then were invited to perform in Sweden and Croatia, a total of 11 shows stunning audiences there. They continue to tour internationally and perform regularly at shows, festivals and other occasions around Dar es Salaam.

ORCHESTRE POLY RYTHMO DE COTONOU (Benin)

Thu 10, 10:15pm Old Fort

Sat 12, 11:00pm Old Fort

Style: *afrobeat, roots, fusion*

Le Tout Puissant Orchestre Poly Rythmo De Cotonou are one of the best kept secrets of West Africa. Orchestre Poly-Rythmo de Cotonou was formed in 1969, anchoring their sound in the complex rhythms of the sacred *Vodoun* ceremonies of Benin, which have had far less exposure than the music of Cuban *Santeria*, Haitian *Vodoun*, or Brazilian *Candomblé*. They would put a Beninese spin on the hits of the day by Johnny Hallyday, Dalida or James Brown and created a repertoire which was as unique as it was explosive.

Poly-Rythmo eventually became house-hold names in Benin and earned a huge reputation throughout West Africa, recording over 500 songs, including the massive hits ‘Gbeti Madjro’ and ‘Mille Fois Merci’. The band created an irresistible sound and frequently opened for Fela Kuti. “We supported Fela many times whenever he played in

Cotonou, and we used to meet him at the EMI studio in Lagos where we did lots of recordings”, says Clément, “we loved his music”.

Right up until the 1980s the band was still successful and touring in Niger, Togo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Angola and Côte d’Ivoire. But with political upheavals in Benin, increasing financial pressures, and the deaths of guitarist Bernard ‘Papillon’ Zoundegnon and vocalist Yehoussi Leopold, Poly-Rythmo seemed destined to ease gently into musical history. However, deep in the heart of Cotonou, a core of original band-members were still playing that transcendent mix of heavy funk and Benin psych.

Forty years since their beginnings, the group is ready for their debut European tour, (and a visit to Zanzibar along the way). “To be honest, we’d had so many broken promises down the years that we didn’t believe this would happen!” says singer Vincent Ahehehinnou, one of the defining voices of the original line-up. “But now we’ve finally got our passports and visas in our hands I think this is going to be one of the best times in Poly-Rythmo’s history – a surprise renaissance!”

Some text taken from original article [Orchestre Poly-Rythmo de Cotonou by Gbeti Madjro](#) (MONDOMIX)

www.polyrythmo.com

OTENTIKK STREET BROTHERS (Mauritius)

Fri 11, 11:20pm Old Fort

Sat 12, 12:15am Old Fort

Style: reggae, roots, urban

The history of the Mauritian reggae-creole group Otentikk Street Brothers begins in 1992. When hanging around in the streets of their hometown, like many other youngsters around the globe the two brothers Bruno and Koeny Raya got infected with the hiphop virus, being spread by acts like Public Enemy, Run DMC, or LL Cool J.

The state of the Mauritian society as well as the death of reggae musician and folk hero KAYA, who died under unexplained circumstances in police custody, lead to a change in the music and attitude of Otentikk Street Brothers. They turned away from hiphop, a culture they felt to be based on machismo and violence. From the beginning it was as important to the Otentikk Street Brothers to direct a growing audience’s focus on political and social problems as was having fun making their music.

After some member-changes the group released their first album *Ragga Kreol* under the name Otentikk Street Brothers in 1994. Between 1994 and 1998 the current line-up gradually took shape. First came BLAKKAYO a gifted toaster, then TIKKENZO, who brought back some hiphop flavour with his rap-oriented style, and finally “singjay” DAGGER KKILA, responsible mostly for catchy hook lines. With this line-up they soon became one of the most successful acts in the whole Indian Ocean region. In 2004 the fourth - and latest – album *Rewey Twa* was recorded and showed a group that had finally found their own unique style.

Though all songs are clearly based on reggae and dancehall tunes the album is still uniquely different from typical Jamaican and European productions, not only because of the language of the lyrics. The subtle use of traditional Mauritian elements and musical styles like *séga* and outstanding song-writing skills make the songs special and original. Otentikk Street Brothers are a grown identity, with a charismatic live show, outstanding musical skills, a singular approach to song-writing and – last but not least – a whole bag full of great songs that have the power to inspire people far beyond the boundaries of the reggae and dancehall community.

www.myspace.com/osbcrewms

Recordings:

Ragga Kreol (1994); Expresyon Libere (1997); Nou Kkila (2001); Rewey Twa (2004); Rewey Twa European Edition (2007)

PERCUSSION DISCUSSION AFRIKA (Uganda)

Wed 9, 10:45pm Old Fort

Style: *fusion, traditional, roots*

Percussion Discussion Afrika was founded in 1997 by Herman Ssewanyana. Already a celebrity in the Ugandan community, Herman has been performing and recording for over 25 years, renowned for his work with dancehall giants the Afrigo Band.

Percussion Discussion Afrika bases its music on original Ugandan tunes for traditional African instruments, and is now firmly at the forefront of Uganda in developing an amalgamation of contemporary instruments and traditional African rhythms. Ssewanyana has sought continuous collaboration with artists from other genres and other countries. Recent performances in Uganda have featured regular hiphop night collaborations, as well as storytellers, poets, and contemporary dancers and performing internationally in UK, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe. Their track 'Nakawunde' featured in the blockbuster movie 'The Last King of Scotland', released in 2006.

As cultural ambassadors of Uganda, Percussion Discussion Afrika promotes the rich music and rhythms of Uganda. With the colourful and lively presentation of the stage show, audiences experience an unforgettable performance.

www.pdasewi.net

SAUDA (Tanzania)

Thu 10, 5:00pm Old Fort

Style: *band, fusion, pop*

Born in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, Sauda Jasmine Simba's love for music began in her early years. Studying in Ireland in her early 20s, Sauda naturally gravitated to jazz and blues. One of her major influences was Billie Holiday, whose music and history had a profound impact on her, and led her to form her first jazz band, Cheza. Having spent a number of years abroad, Sauda finally returned to her beloved homeland. Now a successful career woman and mother of daughter Maya, Sauda's enduring passion for jazz has evolved into her first release *Simply Jazzmin*.

However in recent years Sauda decisively began to take her music in a new direction, mixing jazz with more traditional sounds of Tanzania. This progression can be heard on her latest CD, *Sauti ya Sauda* which was released at the end of 2009. The album produced by Ambrose "Dunga" Akwabi features fellow singer-songwriter Enika, along with guitarist Ashimba, and Msafiri Zawose on *ilimba* (thumb piano) and *zeze* (Gogo two-stringed violin). Sauda is bringing a refreshing edge to music as we know it in Tanzania.

www.sauda-jazzmin.com

Recordings:

Simply Jazzmin (2006); Sauti ya Sauda (2009)

SINACHUKI KIDUMBAK (Zanzibar)

Thu 10, 11:25pm Old Fort

Style: *kidumbak, roots*

With creativity, Makame Faki's Sinachuki Kidumbak Group has been at the forefront in Zanzibar's most popular roots based music for many years. Contemporary kidumbak music often makes use of the latest taarab hit songs. In contrast to taarab, kidumbak is much more rhythmic and the lyrics more drastic than the poetic subtlety of the taarab songs, often criticising other peoples' social behaviour. At Zanzibar weddings, birthdays and other cultural performances the singer has to be able to string together a well-timed medley of ngoma songs, and she or he has

the ability to compose lyrics on the spot. One kidumbak set can last anything between one and six hours and as one song joins the next, the intensity heats up, with the main attraction being the interplay between the players and the raunchy dancing and chorus response by the wedding guests. Fronted by the charismatic singer and legend Makame Faki “sauti ya zege” (gravelly voice), Sinachuki Kidumbak is the best of its kind.

Recordings:

Ramlakaolewa (1990); Hujahitmu Kusoma (1996); Ukitakakula Muhogo (2003); Nifanye Nini (2004)

SOUSOU & MAHER CISSOKO (Senegal / Sweden)

Sat 12, 5:55pm Old Fort

Style: *band, jazz, roots, traditional*

Expressive singing and rhythmically rocking kora music define this unique and charismatic duo. With their groovy band they bring beautiful West African music with influences from reggae, mbalax, pop and blues closer to you. Since the release of their debut album Adouna (2008) they have been touring in Scandinavia, Senegal and South Africa.

Maher Cissoko was born to be a kora player in a great griot family in Casamance, Senegal, that has seen the art of kora playing being passed from generation to generation through more than 700 years. Maher has embellished the tradition and developed his own explosive and danceable style.

Sousou Cissoko, a singer from Sweden is one of few female kora players in the world. She fell in love with the kora at an early age and when she was 19 she travelled to Gambia to study with the kora master Alagi Mbye. Some years later she continued her studies with the Cissokho family in Senegal where she met Maher and the duo was born.

The story of this young couple is unique which clearly shows in their work. They share an individual musical heritage and destiny which travels through different worlds and musical styles. Together with their Adouna Band they line up well-known artists from Senegal and Sweden on kora, guitar, percussion and bass.

www.sousoumaher.com

www.ajabu.com

Recordings:

Adouna (2008)

STAFF BAND NAMASABO (Tanzania)

Sun 13, 5:55pm Old Fort

Style: *traditional, roots*

Over 70 years ago in 1936 Staff Band Namasabo was first formed, known then as the Huni Band. The aim was to bring together people in celebration of the customs and culture of Ukerewe. Just 45km off the coast of Mwanza, Ukerewe is the largest island of Lake Victoria and home to Staff Band Namasabo.

In its early stages, it assembled young people together with the islands’ elders in a variety of artistic activities to entertain at various events and festivals at the village level.

In 1968, the group gained national recognition in their participation of the lake region contest, which they won. Some twenty years later, the group continued to participate in traditional dance competitions around the province, and even won the state tournament show put on in honour of the arrival on Pope John II in 1990. Staff Band Namasabo now with 34 group members share celebratory songs and dances unique to Ukerewe, 14 of whom will perform during this year’s festival.

SUKIAFRICA SUKIYAKI ALLSTARS (Various)

Thu 10, 7:00pm Old Fort

Style: *band, fusion*

Three rising stars from Africa and three leaders of Asian music-renewal merge their creativity into a unique performance; singing, dancing and forging a new musical relationship between these two continents. The idea to create a new artistic collaboration between artists from Africa and Asia was first born during the Japanese festival "Sukiyaki Meets The World".

Sukiafrika is a special unit composed by vocalist and *mbira* player Chiwoniso from Zimbabwe, guitarist Peter Solo from Togo, Erik Aliana from Cameroon on guitar and vocals, and three new talents from Asia: vocalist and central Tanzania thumb pianist Sakaki Mango and percussionists Ndana from Japan and Chang Jaehyo from Korea. After many meetings and rehearsals, summer 2010 saw members gathering in Japan to practice and prepare the last details of their performance. They then went on to perform at the 20th anniversary of the "Sukiyaki Festival" and then tour Japan and Korea's biggest events until September 2010. Their appearance in Sauti za Busara 2011 is part of the Sukiyaki Sukiafrika Africa tour where their electric live show will light up the stages of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland.

www.sukiyaki.cc/artists/index.html

Recordings:

Chiwoniso: Ancient Voices (2003), Timeless (2006), Rebel Women (2009)

Peter Solo: Miadome (2006)

Erik Aliana: Just Africa (2005)

Chang Jaehyo: Barambe Soop (2008)

Sakaki Mango: Limba Train (2006), Limba Rock (2008)

Ndana: Sound of Africa (2006), Inochi no Uta (2009)

TUNAWEZA BAND (Tanzania)

Wed 9, 5:00pm Old Fort

Style: *band, pop, roots*

The Dar es Salaam based group started in 2008, with ten musicians, the majority of whom are physically disabled. They chose the name Tunaweza, to make a point – it roughly translates as "Yes, We Can!"

The group consists of thirteen members, who between them play a variety of instruments. Masoud Wanani, the group's founder and director says "Our aims are to help ourselves by earning a living through doing something creative and expressing ourselves. At the same time we can educate the youth about important issues like HIV or the need to respect albinos."

Since their performance in the seventh edition of Sauti za Busara they have added four new band members who have allowed the group to develop new material "with a new flavour" says Kudra Abdullah, one of the founding members.

VUSA MKHAYA & BAND (Zimbabwe / Various)

Sun 13, 5:00pm Old Fort

Style: *jazz, roots, urban*

Zimbabwean musician Vusa Mkhaya is propelled by the need to foster African culture through music and dance, and works wholeheartedly on improving people's appreciation of traditional African music. "Some traditional forms of

expression are already being threatened with extinction as people; mostly youngsters prefer modern, predominantly western cultural forms. As Africans we need to proudly excel in expressing ourselves in our own values”, says Vusa, who decidedly intends to do just that.

Vusa Mkhaya & Band are based in Vienna, Austria and are known for their live and energetic stage performances. With band members from Zimbabwe, DRC, Austria and Germany their diverse backgrounds have allowed them to weave a musical magic that is highly infectious and undeniably groovy.

www.vusamkhaya.net

Recordings:

The Spirit Of Ubuntu (2007)

WANYAMBUKWA ARTIST GROUP (Tanzania)

Wed 9, 8:20pm Old Fort

Style: *roots, traditional*

The three original members Juma Sabe, Albert Magana and Willy Kamwaya have seen the group grow in just over two short years to 13 active members. The group was established with the aim to maintain the traditions of various ethnic groups, especially traditions of the Gogo people of the Dodoma region.

Made famous worldwide by such groups as Chibite and the late legend Dr Hukwe Ubi Zawose (1938 - 2003) the Gogo are renowned for their unique vocal harmonies and instruments including *marimba* (balafon), *zeze* (Gogo two-stringed violin), *irimba* (pentatonically tuned thumb piano) and *ngoma* (different types of traditional drums). What makes Gogo music extra special is the singing which is so haunting and captivating - it doesn't matter if you don't understand the language, the power is in its intensity of feeling. Also spectacular and unique to their performance is the dancing, mainly done by women, doing elegant shoulder and neck movements.

YAABA FUNK (UK)

Sun 13, 11:20pm Old Fort

Style: *afrobeat, band*

Yaaba Funk, renowned for tearing up dance floors with their upbeat *highlife*, broken beats, funk, highly energised live set, are rightly known as South London's funkiest and most popular band.

The core members of Yaaba Funk met on the London African drum and dance scene in the 1990s where together they learned from master African and Latin American musicians. Many nights were spent jamming at parties where African drummers and dancers would mix and blend with the DJs flinging tunes from anywhere and everywhere. In 2006, Yaaba Funk was created in Brixton, London by this group of friends.

The name Yaaba Funk comes from an album called Yaba Funk Roots, the only album ever released outside of Africa by Captain Yaba, a musician from northern Ghana and exponent of the 2-string 'guitar' called the *koliko*. Though sadly no longer with us, Captain Yaba influenced the band's Ghanaian lead vocalist and founding member, Richmond Kessie, with his mix of Ghanaian roots music and modern funk grooves. Their debut album *Afrobeat* was officially released in May 2010 on their own label Yaabaphone.

With members from across the planet - Ghana, America, Martinique, Jamaica, Italy, Germany, and UK – Yaaba Funk, using a mix of African proverbs and modern day politics, have created a punky Afro roots music for the 21st century.

www.yaabafunk.com

Recordings: Afrobeat (2010)
