

MUSIC AND ARTS OF SOUTH AFRICA

OPENINGS



Music from the Cape

South Africa's Western Cape region, which stretches from the Namibian border in the north to The Mother City of Cape Town in the south, is quite distinct from the rest of South Africa in terms of its cultural history, politics, and ethnic makeup. The region has a relatively small black population and is the only region where Afrikaans—South Africa's third most widely spoken tongue—is the primary language, spoken by both a white population and also a large *coloured* (or mixed race) community. Similarly, the region's varied musical genres are distinct from those found in the rest of the country.

Musical traditions found in the Cape emerged from the continuous overlapping and interweaving of cultures, the Dutch and British colonizations in the 17th and 18th centuries, the influx of slaves brought from the Indian Ocean basin, and political protest during the Apartheid era. Even as cultures remain divided along economic and racial lines 20 years since the collapse of Apartheid, it is widely accepted that one of the most significant elements that sets the music of the Cape apart is its rich and hybrid history.

South African singer, songwriter, playwright, historian, and director **David Kramer** is most noted for his musicals about the Cape *coloured* communities, his early opposition to Apartheid, and for being a tireless champion of Cape musical styles and explorer of indigenous genres. In 2001, he launched a show called *Karoo Kitaar Blues*, presenting the eccentric guitar styles—with unique finger-picking and tunings—of the marginalized people who live in remote villages and outposts of the semi-desert areas of the Cape region. On Saturday, October 25, Kramer performs with a lineup of top musicians from Cape Town and the Karoo desert as part of a double-bill concert with the **Young Stars: Traditional Cape Malay Singers** in Zankel Hall.

Cape Malay choirs also play a significant part of Cape musical traditions. Cape Malay refers to an ethnic group that descends from the enslaved peoples from the Indian Ocean Basin, including Southeast Asia, Arabia, and East Africa. It was also a subcategory of *coloured* in the Apartheid-era government's classifications of ethnicity. This community performs an up-tempo, energetic style

(over)



Abdullah Ibrahim

of singing that combines the harmony and language of Dutch and Afrikaans folk songs with colorful inflections and ornaments from vocal traditions as far afield as Malaysia, Arabia, and East Africa. The annual Cape Minstrel Carnival is a deep-rooted and well-known cultural event that incorporates the Cape Malay comic song (or *moppie*) and features choir competitions. On Saturday, October 25, the **Young Stars: Traditional Cape Malay Singers**—a 15-voice male choir led by **Moeniël Jacobs**—perform as part of the double bill with the David Kramer Band.

In the early part of the 20th century, American jazz’s influence fell on fertile soil both in Cape Town and throughout South Africa. Musicians of Cape Town incorporated sounds from local folk music, including the rhythm of the *ghoema* drum and influences from Cape Malay and *coloured* folk music styles. From this emerged the distinctive Cape jazz sound, which is today celebrated around the world.

Pianist and composer **Abdullah Ibrahim** (formerly known as “Dollar Brand”) was one of the leading exponents of Cape jazz. In 1974, he recorded the seminal Cape jazz song “Mannenbergh,” which was named after the crime-ridden creole working-class township created by the Apartheid regime following the notorious clearing of District Six in the 1970s. Located on the slopes of Table Mountain, District Six was the dynamic center of *coloured* and black culture in Cape Town and home to many artists and musicians. For the *UBUNTU* festival, Ibrahim performs a solo concert in Zankel Hall on Friday, October 17, leads a master class for young professional jazz musicians presented by Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute on Saturday, October 18, and gives a free performance in Harlem on Monday, October 20 as part of Carnegie Hall’s series of Neighborhood Concerts.

Representing a new generation of young Cape jazz musicians, the composer, drummer, and band leader **Kesivan Naidoo** leads his quintet **Kesivan and the Lights** in Zankel Hall on Thursday, October 30. Naidoo has performed throughout the world and has shared the stage with such luminaries as Miriam Makeba, Selaelo Selota, Feyza Faku, Abdullah Ibrahim, and Hotep Galeta, among others. Kesivan and the Lights also present a free performance in Queens as part of Carnegie Hall’s series of Neighborhood Concerts on Saturday, November 1.

Friday, October 17 at 8:30 PM
Zankel Hall

Abdullah Ibrahim, Piano

Saturday, October 18 at 5 PM
Resnick Education Wing

Abdullah Ibrahim Master Class

Workshops and master classes are made possible, in part, by Mr. and Mrs. Nicola Bulgari and The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation.

Monday, October 20 at 7 PM
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Neighborhood Concert
Abdullah Ibrahim and Friends

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Saturday, October 25 at 9 PM
Zankel Hall

David Kramer Band
Young Stars: Traditional Cape Malay Singers

Moeniël Jacobs, Music Director

Thursday, October 30 at 8:30 PM
Zankel Hall

Kesivan and the Lights

This concert and The Shape of Jazz series are made possible by The Joyce and George Wein Foundation in memory of Joyce Wein.

Saturday, November 1 at 7:30 PM
Flushing Town Hall

Neighborhood Concert
Kesivan and the Lights

Carnegie Hall’s Neighborhood Concerts are sponsored by Target®.

