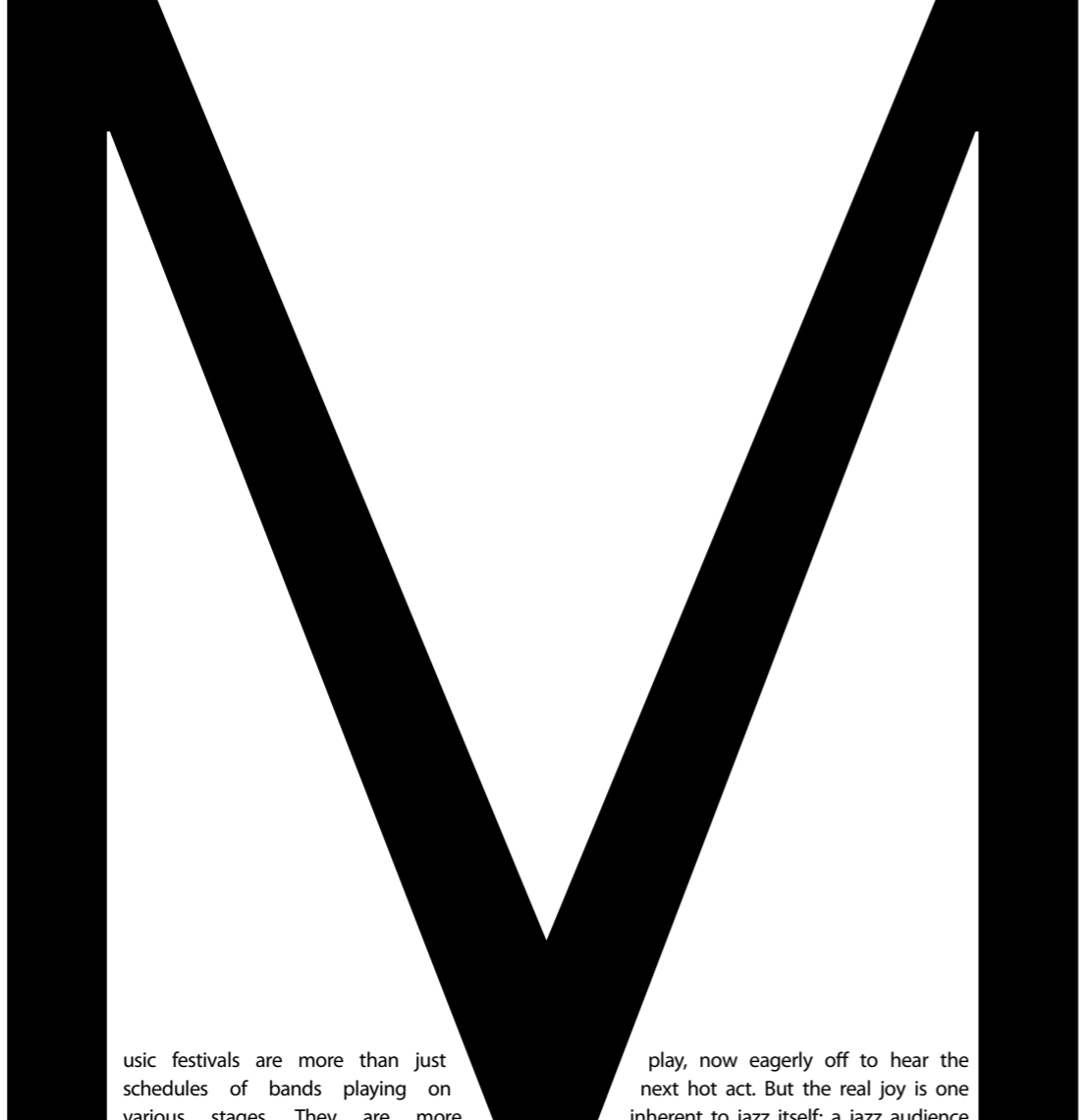


Face the Music

Music festivals create the kind of memories that can define one's lifetime. Music journalist Evan Milton narrows down the nine best places on the planet to get down and groove on a massive scale





usic festivals are more than just schedules of bands playing on various stages. They are more than the friendships made in the front row, the camaraderie of the beer garden, the conversations at the info tents and the mutual commiseration in the toilet and shower queues. At a music festival, one leaves the tribulations of the real world at the door and enters a space where concerns are few and rewards are many. The inevitable niggles with cold or heat or queues add to the overall experience, and are a small price to pay for suddenly, gloriously, having the complexities of adult life reduced to a single, simple question: What will I watch next, and is there time to swing past the bar en route? It's all about the memories – instants when, even months later, your eyes glaze over for just a second during a dull meeting and you're back among hundreds of other music lovers, applauding and whooping with delight at some transporting piece of live music magic that was, somehow, uniquely yours but also shared.

1 CAPE TOWN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL, SOUTH AFRICA
Billed as 'Africa's grandest gathering', this event is in its 10th year of providing jazz in its myriad forms – and music that stretches the term. Local and international stars over five stages, named after cornerstone venues in South Africa's jazz history, offer a choice of styles and contexts to suit different tastes. There's sit-down 'head' jazz, outdoor groove-along sounds and a main stage that feels like a standalone grandstand concert. Expect to see MPs and a who's who of corporate names rubbing shoulders with backpacking Euro-tourists, high-flying African-continent tourists and the musicians you've just seen

play, now eagerly off to hear the next hot act. But the real joy is one inherent to jazz itself: a jazz audience is one that loves its music, and sharing that love, so expect comfortable conversations, broad smiles and, quite literally, a bonhomie born of the music. Also on offer are a photographic gallery (with a tribute to Miriam Makeba this year), satellite workshops and master classes, a music industry conference and a head-stretching seven hours of music per day. The free community concert (1 April this year) in Greenmarket Square that precedes the festival is very popular, and features selected headline artists.
2009 HIGHLIGHTS 'The thinking man's hip-hopper' Mos Def; the sublime vocal tapestry of Zap Mama; Hugh Masekela's on-stage 70th birthday celebration; Cape Town supergroup Loading Zone's 20th anniversary; Carlo Mombelli, Pete Philly, Goldfish, Shakatak, The Stylistics, Dr Phillip 'Malombo' Tabane, Siphokazi, 340ML, Freshlyground, Jonathan Butler, Maceo Parker.
DATES 3 and 4 April 2009
TICKETS R330 (single day) or R485 (weekend pass); additional entry charge for Rosie's stage. For travel and corporate hospitality packages, call 021-422-5653.
MORE INFO www.capetownjazzfest.com

2 BAYREUTH WAGNER FESTIVAL, GERMANY
Not for the faint-hearted, the Bayreuth festival is a month-long performance of the works of Richard Wagner. The northern Bavarian town was home to Wagner from 1872 until his death in 1883, and the annual festival has played to sold-out audiences since 1876. The opera house can be seen as a physical ►



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PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK JONES (OPENER); GALLO IMAGES; SUPPLIED

PREVIOUS SPREAD

Young Chilaga & the Black Survivors embrace the festival spirit at Malawi's Lake of Stars
OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) Hugh Masekela will be celebrating his birthday at the Cape Town International Jazz Festival; the opera Lohengrin in rehearsal at the Bayreuth Wagner Festival, which features a performance cycle that lasts a month; soak up big marching-band sounds in New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz; edgy electronica and fireworks on the final night at Bestival on the Isle of Wight



At Sonar, party like it's 2099 in one of the world's most beautiful historical cities (Barcelona)



monument to Wagner's revolutionary musical notion of gesamtkunstwerk ('total artwork'), a synthesis of the poetic, visual, musical and dramatic arts that culminated in his famous Ring opera cycle. History buffs may enjoy the relationship between the composer and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, pondering Hitler's fascination with Wagner's work, and visiting Wagner's old villa, Wahnfried, now a museum. Bayreuth also has a museum to pianist and composer Franz Liszt, who died in the town in 1886 due, it is said, to pneumonia contracted during the festival. The festival website offers a comprehensive virtual video tour, and runs podcasts during the festival.

HIGHLIGHTS The full Ring of the Nibelung cycle, with tickets only sold for the complete cycle; the fanfares played from the balcony of the opera house, indicating the opera or act about to commence inside; the inevitable tension between tradition and experimentation.

DATES 25 July to 28 August 2009

TICKETS From €14 to €225/R180 to R2 880, ordered in writing (no email or faxes) from Box Office, Postfach 100262, D-95402, Bayreuth. The waiting list can stretch to 10 years, although unclaimed tickets are offered at the box office.

Enquiries: +49-92-178-780 (weekdays 11am to noon only).

MORE INFO bayreuther-festspiele.de

3 BESTIVAL, UNITED KINGDOM

Imagine the dirty young brat that was Glastonbury grew up and realised that you can still have thousands of music fans having fun without biohazard-level Portalooos, mud, scuffles and vomit. BBC1 DJ Rob da Bank started Bestival in 2004, situating the deliberately left-field line-up in a park called Robin Hill on the Isle of Wight, chosen for its natural beauty. Described as a 'boutique' festival, it still draws around 20 000 party-goers but is characterised by, dare we say it, more mature attractions such as wine- and coffee-tasting, cuisine rather than festival slop, the Breastival yurt (tent) for mothers who are breast-feeding, and madcap innovations such as an inflatable church for couples to get married. Each year features a fancy-dress theme (this year's is Outer Space), with music ranging from the contemporary classical of Michael Nyman (best-known for scoring Peter Greenaway's films) to edgy electronica by Squarepusher and Dub Pistols' straight-ahead dance rock.

HIGHLIGHTS Kraftwerk, Massive Attack, Future Sound Of London, Bjorn Again, Soulwax/2manydjs, Klaxons, The Beat, Dan Le Sac vs Scroobius Pip, Gilles Peterson, Grooverider and, of course, Rob da Bank's 'Sunday Best'.

DATES 11 to 13 September 2009

TICKETS £140/R1 970; teens (ages 13 to 15) £70/R980; under-12s free. Children must be accompanied by a legal guardian; no more than four under-18s per guardian. Camper vans £50/R700 (with stringent rules on what constitutes a camper van). From ticketline.co.uk or call 0844-888-4410. **MORE INFO** bestival.net

4 NEW ORLEANS JAZZ & HERITAGE FESTIVAL, UNITED STATES

Staged over two weekends, the Jazz Fest (as locals call it) this year celebrates '40 years of peace, love and crawfish' in grand style befitting the city dubbed the birthplace of jazz. It's not just trumpet-tooting, either, with a line-up that includes everything from rockers such as Kings of Leon and Dave Matthews to legends such as Neil Young, Joe Cocker and James Taylor. The festival was conceived by George Wein, the impresario behind the groundbreaking 1950s Newport Folk and Newport Jazz festivals, in 1970 and featured Mahalia Jackson and Duke Ellington. History was made when Ms Jackson, considered by many as the greatest-ever gospel singer, chanced upon one of the city's many marching bands and, handed a microphone by the opportunity-seizing Wein, proceeded to join the band in

leading a procession of revellers on a musical parade. The modern-day festival keeps that spirit alive.

HIGHLIGHTS Wynton Marsalis, Tony Bennett, Wilco, Erykah Badu, Ben Harper, Bonnie Raitt, Los Lobos, Pete Seeger, Terence Blanchard, the Buckwheat Zydeco anniversary, New Orleans Night Crawlers, Hugh Masekela.

DATES 24 to 26 April, 30 April to 3 May 2009

TICKETS From \$40/R405 per day to the deluxe \$1 100/R11 190 'Krewe of Jazz' and 'Big Chief' weekend experience with special viewing areas and VIP lounge. From ticketmaster.com or call +1-800-745-3000. Official host hotel, the French Quarter Sheraton, offers packages and transport (sheraton.com/neworleansspecials).

MORE INFO www.NOJazzfest.com

5 SONAR, SPAIN

Party like it's 2099 in one of the world's most beautiful historical cities (Barcelona), to the sounds of the electronic present and future. Sonar is Europe's premier electronic music festival, drawing 80 000 to a multi-stage event with more than 600 artists playing more than 150 concerts and DJ sessions. Think of it as the Cannes of electronic music, with debuts and launches mingled with wild ▶

ABOVE It's all-night raving at Sonar Club followed by day-long partying at Sonar Village at Europe's premier electronic music festival in Spain

PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED



FujiRock emphasises respect for nature and includes walking through pristine mountain passes to get from stage to stage

parties and, behind the scenes, SonarPro, a gathering of the electronic music industry's finest for both sales and planning sessions. Established acts rub shoulders with the emerging elite, and cutting-edge multimedia experimentation exists side-by-side with massive hitmakers. Sonar sees the Catalanian capital given over to electronic music at the festival, and with satellite events at museums, halls, bars and the city's many discotheques. Expect 'a mix of thought-provoking digital art and hedonistic club nights'.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS Grace Jones unleashing her comeback album Hurricane (crafted with the help of über-producers Brian Eno and Tricky of Massive Attack). Also Dan Le Sac vs Scroobius Pip, Orbital, Deadmau5, Moderat, SebastiAn, Late of the Pier, the BBC stage, the Red Bull Music Academy, SA's own DJ Mujava and MC Mzura (Warp).

DATES 18 to 20 June 2009

TICKETS €30/R390 per day, €48/R620 per night or €140/R1 815 (3 day and 2 night pass). From www.ticketmaster.es or call +34-934-451-613 (weekdays 9am to 10pm; weekends 10am to 10pm).

MORE INFO sonarbarcelona.com; sonar.es

6 FUJI ROCK FESTIVAL, JAPAN

Keeping the name of the inaugural festival in 1997, Fuji Rock is now held at the Naeba Ski Resort in the Niigata Prefecture of Japan, 200km northwest of Tokyo. It has gained an international reputation as one of the best rock festivals in the world, especially among British critics, who marvel at the cleanliness and organisational efficiency. With around 200 Japanese and international acts spread over seven stages, Fuji Rock emphasises 'independence, cooperation and respect for



ABOVE (from left) Horsing around at Fuji Rock in Japan; heading along a pristine path to another performance – Fuji Rock is clean and efficient and focuses on respect for nature; shaking it up on stage at Rock In Rio

nature', and includes such delights as a free pre-festival party with traditional bon-odori folk dancing and the Dragondola, the longest gondola lift in the world, which affords mountain views of the area's natural beauty. Travelling to Naeba on the JR Shinkansen bullet train (300km/hour), walking through pristine mountain passes to get from stage to stage, and the innate politeness and courtesy of the Japanese fans and staff make for an unforgettable experience – even before the guitars and drums have started.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS Bad Brains, Basement Jaxx, Bloody Beetroots, Ben Harper, Franz Ferdinand, Melvins, Royskopp, Fallout Boy, Weezer, Aggrolites, Japanese Popstars, Justin Nozuka, Simian Mobile Disco.

DATES 24 to 26 July 2009

TICKETS Day pass ¥16 800/R1 750, weekend pass ¥39 800/R4 140; additional ¥3 000/R310 each for a car-park pass and campsite pass; from ganban.net

MORE INFO www.smash-UK.com; myspace.com/fujirock09

7 ROCK IN RIO, THE LATIN WORLD

The 'world's biggest rock festival' is now so big it's spread to other locales – notably Lisbon, Madrid and Puerto Rico. The first in Rio, in January 1985, attracted 1.5 million fans and boasted Queen, Rod Stewart, AC/DC and Yes, playing over 10 nights at the specially constructed City of Rock venue. The last incarnations in Lisbon (May 2008) and Madrid (June 2008) saw Metallica, Lenny Kravitz, Amy Winehouse, Joss Stone, teen idols Tokio Hotel and a reunion show by The Police, among others. The series has spawned a brace of live album releases – most notable being the Iron Maiden and Queen sets – and history-book reunions and collaborations, such as WHAM! co-founder

PHOTOGRAPHS GREAT STOCK, SUPPLIED

THE PICK OF LOCAL FESTIVALS

- OppiKoppi in Limpopo. Voted one of the world's best festivals by the UK media. oppikoppi.co.za
- Arts Alive in Joburg's Newtown. Music from across Africa. www.artsalive.co.za
- AfrikaBurn in the Karoo. One of the few official satellite events of the massive Nevada Burning Man festival; requires completely self-sustaining extreme camping. afrikaburn.com
- Splashy Fen in KwaZulu-Natal. An Easter tradition set in the foothills of the southern Drakensberg; galoshes recommended. www.splashyfen.co.za
- Awesome Africa in Durban. Something like a local WOMAD (World Music & Dance) and lives up to its first name, 'Festival of Living Treasures'. www.cca.ukzn.ac.za
- Rocking The Daisies in the Western Cape. SA's first 'green' festival leapt from a few hundred campers three years ago to more than 10 000 in 2008. rockingthedaisies.com
- National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. Forget the art and culture and look at the bands that are playing, especially on a jazzy tip. www.NAfest.co.za



Andrew Ridgeley joining George Michael, and Talking Heads playing with the B-52s at the inaugural event. It's rumoured to be taking place in Buenos Aires this year.

HIGHLIGHTS This year's programme and dates have not yet been released, but Rock In Rio makes our list because it's the Olympics of music festivals – something you'll want to tell the grandchildren about.

TICKETS Around €55/R715 per night from the website.

MORE INFO rockinrio.com

8 GLADE, UNITED KINGDOM

Glade was born from the dance-music stage at Glastonbury and has grown to be voted Best Dance Music Festival at the 2008 UK Festival Awards. It features multiple open-air stages, with music running the gamut of the dance genres: live acts, house, psy-trance, breakbeat, techno, ambient and chill-out, as well as newcomer styles like breakcore, dubstep and mash-ups. There's also an acoustic tent and a stage devoted to roots, reggae, soul and world music. This year's festival moves from Berkshire to a new venue an hour's drive from London, in Hampshire near Winchester – still with green glens and dales, but now without the neighbouring manor houses who've tried to halt the festival in the past. The 2009 tagline is 'Louder, Later and Longer'.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS Underworld is confirmed as the main-stage headliner; Femi Kuti, Booka Shade, Finlaye Quaye; BLOC to host the 'Vapor' stage; new 'Carmaggedon' area (featuring Fabric, Overkill and KissFM); Japanese Popstars, Squarepusher, Mutant Clan, Krafty Kuts, Venetian Snares; Mutoid Waste Company scrapyards creations.

DATES 16 to 19 July 2009

TICKETS £125/R1 750 (includes camping, which is all around the arena); camper vans and caravans pay an extra £45/R630. All from gtickets.co.uk.

MORE INFO gladefestival.com

9 LAKE OF STARS, MALAWI

Something of an undiscovered gem, this three-day festival was conceived as a way of raising funds for local charities and to boost the image of Malawi as a tourist destination – and to offer a mix of African musicians and British DJs and acts in a bewitchingly exotic and beautiful setting. Following a visit to Malawi in 1998 as a Wildlife Society volunteer, Will Jameson returned to the UK with a souvenir Chibuku Shake Shake beer bottle that was used as the name of a series of award-winning club nights. In 2004, he returned to Malawi with Chibuku headliner Andy Cato (Groove Armada) for the first Lake Of Stars, which won a Malawi Tourism Award. Expect a unique diversity of African reggae, Afropop, jazz and traditional music rubbing shoulders with some of the UK's best DJs, beatboxers and folk-rock acts – and a South African act or two. The venue is the Livingstonia Beach Hotel, Senga Bay, on the shores of Lake Malawi. Accommodation ranges from island-style rustic to nearby top-dollar hotels.

HIGHLIGHTS Previous headliners have included Basement Jaxx's Felix B, Seth Lakeman, Ali b (Fabric), Mary Anne Hobbs (BBC1) and Scratch Perverts; Malawi's Wambali, Swahili Hip Hop Foundation, Joseph Tembo and Sally Nyundo; SA's Goldfish, Blue African Skies and Oskido.

DATES October 2009

TICKETS £45/R630 from the website.

MORE INFO lakeofstars.org