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UCT Jazz Festival returns with bold line-up



The UCT's South African College of Music is home to the continent's leading jazz training programme.

Photo: Supplied

The University of Cape Town's (UCT) [South African College of Music \(SACM\)](#) is set to bring the city alive with sounds of jazz as it announces the return of its much-anticipated annual UCT Jazz Festival. Running from 23 to 25 September 2025 – with a special lunchtime concert on 22 September – the four-day celebration will showcase the remarkable talent and creativity nurtured at UCT.

The SACM is home to the continent's leading jazz training programme, established in 1989 by Emeritus Associate Professor Michael Campbell. Over the decades, it has cultivated generations of award-winning artists who have made an indelible mark on the international stage. The UCT Jazz Festival continues this tradition by offering a platform for innovation, collaboration and the preservation of live music performance.

A recent addition to the festival features free Library Desk lunch hour concerts at the W.H. Bell Music Library, inspired by NPR's *Tiny Desk Concert Series*, alongside evening performances at the Baxter Concert Hall. Presented in continued partnership with the W.H. Bell Music Library, these concerts bring live performance into a space historically dedicated to music scholarship, creating a powerful bridge between artistic practice and research, and transforming the library into a living archive of South African jazz heritage.

The evening performances at the Baxter Concert Hall during the UCT Jazz Festival 2025 offer three distinct celebrations of jazz artistry, each approximately one hour in length. On Tuesday, 23 September, the UCT Jazz Vocal Showcase presents a diverse performance programme of select vocal students curated by Nomfundo Xaluva-Dyantyis and Abigail Houghton. Featuring the five-piece UCT Jazz Voices under the direction of Amy Campbell, this concert celebrates the rich and expansive styles of the jazz vocal tradition.

On Wednesday, 24 September, the spotlight shifts to the UCT Big Band Heritage Day Celebration, directed by Justin Bellairs. This high-energy performance honours Heritage Day through a dynamic mix of styles, blending the soulful rhythms of South African jazz with Latin influences, classic swing, and the sophistication of contemporary big band music.

The final evening, Thursday, 25 September, features the UCT Creative Collab Project, a boundary-pushing performance showcasing original works developed during the Creative Collab Project week. Born from an interdisciplinary initiative between the Jazz and African Music sections, this concert reflects the spirit of cross-cultural collaboration, highlighting new compositions created through ensemble work, improvisation and composition workshops. Together, these evening concerts promise a rich and diverse celebration of South Africa's jazz heritage.

Admission

- Lunch Hour Concerts – Free entry
- Evening Concerts at Baxter Concert Hall – Booking via [Webtickets](#)

Festival Line-up:

Monday, 22 September

- 13:00-14:00: Library Desk Lunch Hour Concert
Venue: W.H. Bell Music Library

Tuesday, 23 September

- 13:00-14:00: Library Desk Lunch Hour Concert
Venue: W.H. Bell Music Library
- 19:00-20:00: UCT Jazz Vocal Showcase
Venue: Baxter Concert Hall

Wednesday, 24 September

- 19:00-20:00: UCT Big Band Heritage Day Celebration
Venue: Baxter Concert Hall

Thursday, 25 September

- 13:00-14:00: Library Desk Lunch Hour Concert
Venue: W.H. Bell Music Library
- 19:00-20:00: UCT Creative Collab Experiment
Venue: Baxter Concert Hall

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Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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