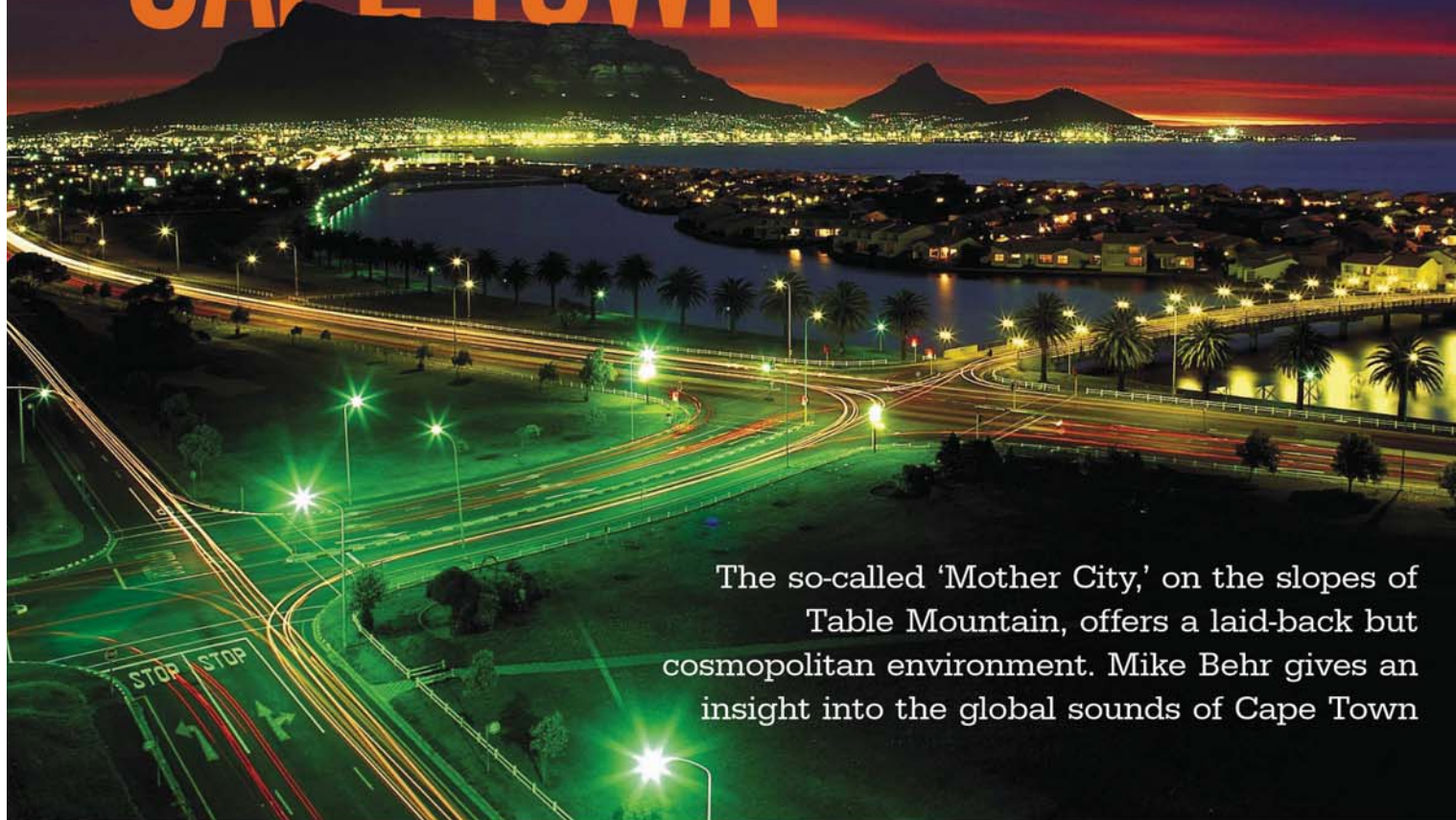


SOUNDING OUT...

CAPE TOWN



The so-called 'Mother City,' on the slopes of Table Mountain, offers a laid-back but cosmopolitan environment. Mike Behr gives an insight into the global sounds of Cape Town

One of the world's eight new cultural meccas,' trumpeted *Newsweek* in September. Even if you're the kind of traveller who takes these kinds of nominations with a pinch of salt, enough praises were sung about Cape Town last year by the global media to put it top of a lot of people's must-see lists, not least for tourists wanting value for money for their dollars or sterling. So, take it for granted, a holiday in Cape Town guarantees a good time.

The moment you step out of your hotel, you'll feel that music is integral to the city's heartbeat, whether it's buskers on the street or top-flight African talent at a live music mecca like Manenberg's in the beautiful V&A Waterfront complex.

The city echoes with a host of music forms, including cutting-edge dance with an ethnic flavour, a variety of world and, of course, jazz. For this is the city that gave birth to Abdullah Ibrahim, the godfather of jazz.

No matter when you visit, you'll always find good music in Cape Town and beyond, but the best month is March. Come then and you not only get some of the finest weather

of the year, but also the African version of the North Sea Jazz Festival, the arts-abundant Cape Town Festival and the tail end of the summer picnic concerts that run at the breathtaking Kirstenbosch Gardens.

LISTINGS

The best way of finding out what's on when before you arrive is to contact Cape Town Tourism (+27 (0)21 426 4260, www.cape-town.org). They are always prepared to bend over backwards to help tourists. Also try the *Mail & Guardian Online* at www.mg.co.za. Click on 'Cape Town' and then 'Music' in the 'What's On' box and it will take you to a comprehensive, regularly updated listing of all the best music venues in the city.

Another good source of listings can be found in Friday's edition of the city's morning paper, the *Cape Times*, in the 'Top of the Times' supplement, a decent guide to weekend entertainment.

It's also worth checking out the very informative www.afribeat.com, a pan-African music website based in Cape Town.

VENUES

➤ **Manenberg's** Named after the classic Abdullah Ibrahim anthem, this legendary Cape Town jazz club prides itself as the premier live music venue in the city. Whether you're sitting at its colourful, elevated bar or dining out in the restaurant area or out on the deck overlooking the charming working harbour scenes of the V&A Waterfront, you can be assured of a top-notch jazz or world music act any night of the year and on weekend afternoons. The best time to visit, though, is late March, when artists on the North Sea Jazz Festival bill come to let their hair down and jam into the small hours. (Clock Tower Centre, V&A Waterfront, +27 (0)21 421 5639)

➤ **The Green Dolphin Restaurant** This popular V&A Waterfront restaurant opened in 1990 and has played host to a number of international jazz luminaries. Most nights you'll dine to the kind of indigenous jazz sounds that have made Cape Town one of the jazz capitals of the world. (Alfred Mall, Pierhead, V&A Waterfront, +27 (0)21 421 7471, www.greenolphin.co.za)

👉 **Club Africa: Club de Danse et Musique Africaine** *Kizomba, kwaito, marabenta, rai, soukous...* you name it, if it's from Africa, the DJs play it. Realising that there was a need for a dance venue catering for Cape Town's Pan African community, a group of passionate music researchers launched this very authentic, vibey club that's fast gaining in popularity. It's open at the weekend from 9pm but really only starts cooking from midnight, simmering down around 4am. (Corner of Lower Main & Station Roads, Observatory, +27 (0)21 447 8774)

SPECIALISED MUSIC STORES

👉 **CD Wherehouse** Located in a beautifully renovated, original harbour warehouse, this must rank as one of the most impressive music shops in the world. Amongst one of the biggest selections of South African and African music on CD, video and DVD, the store boasts a fine collection of world music. The intimate in-store stage features regular live gigs. (Dock Road Complex, V&A Waterfront, +27 (0)21 425 6300/3, www.cdwherehouse.co.za)

👉 **African Music Store** This specialist African music store recently had to move to accommodate its growing archive of contemporary and traditional titles which now number over 1,400. A range of traditional African instruments will also appeal to the collector. (134 Long Street, +27 (0)21 426 0857, info@africanmusic.co.za)

FESTIVALS

👉 **North Sea Jazz Festival Cape Town** Aiming to become one of the top jazz festivals in the world guarantees a top-flight roster. The Cape Town cousin of the prestigious Dutch jazz festival is now into its fourth year and guarantees a 50/50 split of African and international artists. The organisers have also tried to sign up a mix of jazz and world music acts for its four distinctly different stages, which are named after legendary South African jazz clubs. So if you're planning to be in Cape Town between March 27 and 29, book your tickets now. So far the 2003 line-up includes Andreas Vollenweider, Jonas Gwangwa, Marcus Wyatt, Bayete featuring Jabu Khanyile and Moses Khumalo,

a stunning South African saxophonist on the rise. (Good Hope Centre, Cape Town, +27 (0)21 422 5651, www.nsjfcapetown.com)

👉 **Appletiser Summer Sunset Concerts** This series of concerts at the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens runs on Sundays between December and March. For less than £3, you get superb music in a staggeringly beautiful natural amphitheatre that has Table Mountain as its backdrop. Amongst this year's highlights were the spicy Afro-Cuban rhythms of Salsa Candela and the marimba fusion of Phambili. Lined up for March 2003 are The Congolese Band, a ten-piece outfit that plays a variety of Central African music, and the Latin-American band Los Gitanos. (Rhodes Drive, Newlands, +27 (0)21 799 8783, www.nbi.ac.za/frames/kirstfram.htm)

👉 **Spier Summer Arts Festival** Combine African song and dance with a wine farm visit by dropping in at Spier, in the heart of the Stellenbosch winelands, in late January during the Summer Arts Festival. Pick of the festival for world music fans is the BMG Records Africa-sponsored Giant Steps African Music Festival. It's staged in a superb open-air auditorium that makes for a memorable night out.

This year's line-up included the globe-trotting Soweto String Quartet, jazz diva Judith Sephuma, Afro folk artist Umanji and jazz newcomer Sasha Sonnichler. (Spier wine estate, +27 (0)21 809 1158/36, www.spier.co.za)

👉 **Cape Minstrels' Carnival** Every January 2, a day traditionally known as *Tweede Nuwe Jaar* (Afrikaans for second

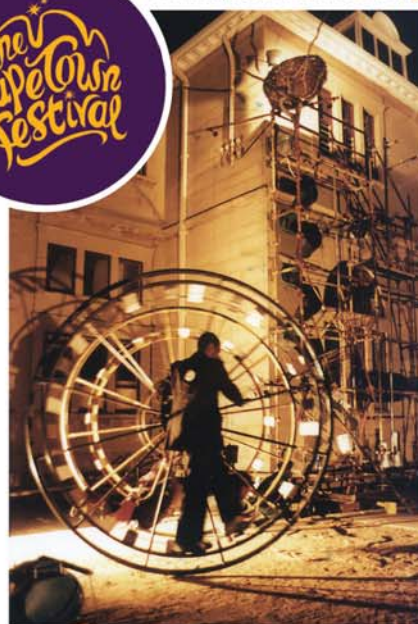
New Year), the streets of Cape Town come alive in a loud blaze of colour, song and dance that the locals refer to as the Kaapse Klopse Carnival. This year saw 44 troupes wind their way through the city streets playing traditional *goema* rhythms. This tradition has its roots in the late 1800s when an American jazz group, The Alabama Singers, docked in Cape Town and introduced the concept of a musical street parade.



ABOVE: **Concert in Kirstenbosch Gardens** (South Africa Tourism)

👉 **The Standard Bank Jazzathon** This long-running, four-day, free-to-public jazz festival held at the V&A Waterfront's popular outdoor amphitheatre every January always guarantees a strong line-up. (V&A Waterfront, +27 (0)21 683 2201, www.joyofjazz.co.za)

👉 **Cape Town Festival** Staged throughout the city, March's annual arts and heritage festival always dishes up some fine music fare, particularly on the African Summer Stage in the historic Companies Gardens. (+27 (0)21 448 2020, www.capetownfestival.co.za)



ABOVE: **Performers at last year's Cape Town Festival, the Odd Enginears**
LEFT: **The Green Dolphin Restaurant**