

SIMPHIWE DANA



In South Africa an incredible creative potential exists that ranks among the world's finest. One of that potential's most recent success stories bears the name Simphiwe Dana. This young vocalist with an earthy voice that gets under the skin is one of the absolute shooting stars on the South African music scene. Media in South Africa hails Simphiwe Dana as "the best thing to happen to Afro-Soul music since Miriam Makeba" and entitled her as "South Africa's Jazz Diva No#1" . Her debut album "Zandisile" has meanwhile gone platinum. During her first tour this summer 2006 in Europe she was celebrated by the audience with standing ovations wherever she performed. Her tour was probably the most successful tour of an African artist coming for the first time to Europe in decades. Just having been voted

"Newcomer Of The Year" and "Best Jazz Vocalist" in the 2005 South African Music Awards (SAMA's), Simphiwe is one of the most sought-after performers to emerge from South Africa in many years and her diligence and hard work has finally paid off for her.

"Gallo Record Company is proud to announce that jazz diva Simphiwe Dana has extended her tour of Europe after the phenomenal success of exploding onto the World Music Charts Europe at an impressive number 4 with her debut album Zandisile. Additionally Simphiwe has been featured on the German Jazz Charts Top 30 an incredible feat, as the European Stores didn't originally file her under jazz."

Please find more information about the sold out concerts during Simphiwe debut tour and also the schedule of the forthcoming tours below.

BIOGRAPHY

Dana's debut album, Zandisile, was officially launched when Dana shared the stage with Afro-pop star Angelique Kidjo during her performance at the Johannesburg Music Hall on 23 July 2004. It may sound cliché, because it has been said of so many female vocalists that come on to the scene these days, that they sound so much like the young Miriam Makebas and Dorothy Masukus, but Dana's voice does transport you to that golden era in South Africa's history.

It is credit to her immense schooling in different musical forms, not to mention her latent talent that Dana sings as if she has known a lot of pain and suffering in her life. Musically schooled in a church choir from her native East Cape, the distinct influence of gospel music can be heard on her first CD. As the apartheid era came to a close Simphiwe Dana started off by studying fashion design. But after moving to Johannesburg, the hub of the South African music industry, it was her appearances at open-mike sessions that immediately caught the attention of established musicians and producers. They eventually resulted in the recordings for her first album.

Simphiwe's album Zandisile incorporates contemporary jazz with traditional African sounds and progressive R&B, world music and pop. Her maturity shines way beyond her tender 26 years and her music is lodged firmly in her traditional African roots. Since she emerged onto the music scene in South Africa, this unassuming star has far surpassed her counterparts and pushed her way through to being one of the best performers around. At the South African Music Awards, South Africa's equivalent to the Grammy, she won in the categories "Best Newcomer" and "Best Jazz Vocal Album" for 2005, supplemented by nominations as "Best Female Composer" and "Best Female Artist". All of the songs were written by Simphiwe Dana,

some of them jointly with such major names in the South African music biz as producer Thapelo Khomo, ex-keyboarder in the cult formations Stimela and Bayete, or Carlo Mombelli, numbered among the country's top bass players. Other prominent artists to be found on "Zandisile" include Victor Masekela on bass, formerly producer for Miriam Makeba, and drummer Isaac Mtshali, whose virtuosity was heard on Paul Simon's "Graceland".

When asked about direct influences, Simphiwe Dana names the jazz legends Lena Horne and Sarah Vaughan, South African veteran vocalists like Dorothy Masuka, but also lesser greats from the realms of reggae, jive and traditional Xhosa music. She defines her own style as Modern African Soul. Her lyrics speak mainly of the significance of tradition, yet also of the struggle for self-confidence and freedom, especially freedom for women.

With the international release of "Zandisile" and a scheduled European tour this year, the vocalist from Johannesburg is now going about proving beyond her heartland what the internet magazine from MWEB, South Africa's biggest online provider, wrote about her: "The best thing to happen to Afro-Soul music since Miriam Makeba."

TOUR SCHEDULE 2006 and 2007 - MEDIA REACTION

Simphiwe Dana's debut tour in Europe was simply great and a tremendously successful. Not only the audience reacted overwhelmingly, but also media. Her German record company Skip Records wrote about the - in this dimensions - unexpected media coverage: " There is much more to come...so far Simphiwe reached more than 24 mio people in Europe !!!"

SUMMER TOUR 2006

22nd June – Bern – Kursaal - SA Embassy
24th June – Heidelberg – Afrika Tage, Karlstorbahnhof
25th June – Langenau - Pflughoffest open air
28th June – Vienna – Birdland
30th June – Muenster - Aula am Ahsee
1st July – Berlin – Brandenburger Tor – Fifa Fan Fest (more than 200 000 people)
2nd July – Berlin – One World day – Brandenburger Tor
6th July – Berlin – Studio 54 Ultra Lounge
7th July – Nuernberg – K4
8th July – Cartagena – Mar De Musicas - open air
9th July – Hanover – Global Village Festival - open air
11th July – Karlsruhe – Zeltival Opening
14th July – Osnabrueck – Lagerhalle
15th July – Kassel – Kulturzelt
16th July – Reggio Calabria - Roots Festival

After this tour we were sure that Simphiwe Dana is a guarantee for packed venues as she performed under the most difficult circumstances: one of the hottest summers and the football world championship with football matches to watch instead of going to her concerts. Though she found sold out indoor venues and huge crowds wherever she performed. Bookings for Simphiwe were coming in for Winter 2006 very fast - and also the winter tour was a great success. As a result Simphiwe Dana can be seen on tv next year more than 30 hours. In Basel she was awarded by AVO Session with the Arising Star Award (only two awards each year - the other musician who got the award in 2006 was Elton John for his lifetime achievement)

NOVEMBER 2006

- 03rd November - Aalen - Aalener Jazzfest
- 04th November - Ingolstadt - Ingolstädter Jazztage
- 10th November - Leverkusen - Leverkusener Jazztage (concert & tv recording)
- 11th November - Frankfurt Oder - Transvocale
- 12th November - Bremen - Schlachthof
- 14th November - Kassel - Schlachthof
- 16th November - Basel - AVO Session (concert with Miriam Makeba & tv recording plus award for Simphwe Dana & Elton John by AVO Session Basel)

DECEMBER 2006

- 20 December - Prague - President's Palace

JANUARY 2007

- 27 January - Davos - World Economic Forum (Main Act - Gala WEF)

MAY 2007

- 19 Berlin - One World Village - Alexanderplatz
- 25 Las Palmas - Theater las Palmas
- 26 Barcelona - Theater / Rhythm & Blues Festival
- 27 Winterthur - Afro Pfingsten
- 28 London - The London African Music Festival

JUNE 2007

- 01 Wolfsburg - Gala Night Wolfsburger Schloss
- 02 Wolfsburg - Internationale Sommerbühne
- 09 Rubigen - Muehle Hunziken
- 14 Hamburg - Fabrik
- 15 Worpswede - Music Hall
- 16 Minden - Jazzsummer
- 17 Netherlands - Festival Mundial
- 20 Italy/Rovigo - Rovigo Villa Festival
- 21 Italy/Roma - Jazzfest
- 28 Stuttgart - open air Marktplatz

JULY 2007

- 03 Aschenburg - Colos Saal
- 05 Lugano - Estival de Jazz (concert & tv recording)
- 07 Edenkoben - Palatia Jazz Festival
- 09 Hannover - Schauspielhaus - Masala Festival
- 10 Wien – Jazzfest - Rathausplatz

OCTOBER

- 18.10 ZDF Stargala

NOVEMBER 2007

- 02. 11. Norway, Oslo Worldmusicfestival
- 03. 11. Germany , Offenburg Illmenade

JANUARY 2008

08-13 January – Senegal – Dakar – recording of a video and a song with Youssou N`Dour and Patty Smith for a worldwide campagne by Benneton (supporting micro credits in Africa)

FEBRUARY 2008

Feb 8th 2008 - Germany – Frankfurt – Africa Alive !
Feb 9th 2008 - Germany – Halle – Women in Jazz
Feb 10th 2008 - Germany – Nürnberg – Tafelhalle
Feb 12th 2008 - Italy – Rome – Rome Auditorio
Feb 13th 2008 - Netherlands – Amsterdam – Bimhuis
Feb 14th 2008 - Germany – Bochum – Bahnhof Langendreer
Feb 16th 2008 - Germany – Minden – Jazzclub Minden
Feb 17th 2008 - Germany – Heidelberg - Karlstorbahnhof
Feb 18th 2008 - Germany – Aschaffenburg – Cocos Saal
Feb 19th 2008 - Germany – Freiburg – Jazzhaus
Feb 21st 2008 - UK – London – Queen Elisabeth Hall

QUOTES

"Zandisile is a breakthrough album, and is getting attention worldwide on the Jazz / World scene as well as on more finessed pop radio stations locally. Simphiwe Dana's gorgeous voice sways center stage against sophisticated jazz piano chords, and modern dance rhythms, shivering with Sophiatown style delicate vibrato, drenched in blues." (Jean Barker, 24.com Music, South Africa)

Sensational success for Simphiwe Dana

Arising Star Award by AVO Session Basel
New Tourdates 2007



South Africa's new jazz & soul diva Simphiwe Dana had already caused a sensation during her premiere tour of Europe this summer. On her second tour in November, she added icing to the cake: Highly recognized in South Africa she has now been presented the Arising Star Award by AVO Session Basel, along with Sir Elton John (who was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award).

Only two acts per year are presented with the AVO Session Award (winners last year: Sigorino TJ & Herbert Grönemeyer - winners the year before: Lucio Dalla & Lionel Richie). In paying tribute to Simphiwe Dana the jury expressed their wish, that after her big success in RSA she might come off with flying colours in Europe as well. As she is in such good company this wish might come true sooner or later. If you believe the press, who were so enthusiastic in their praise of her concerts, she has taken a giant step forward in that direction.

Dana was booked together with Miriam Makeba for November 16, 2006 in the sold out "Festsaal" of The Basel Fair. Expectations for this concert ran high: Simphiwe Dana was announced as the youngest heir to the legendary

Mama Africa. Such expectations could have gone awry. Luckily, Simphiwe Dana's concert did not only justify such praise, but surpassed all expectations: the press described the evening in headlines like these: "Sometimes wonders still happen - the performance of the South African singer Simphiwe Dana at AVO Session Basel".

"In Basel the "super-mother" of South African music, Miriam Makeba, did another farewell concert – not for the first time in her career. Whilst the musical presence of this country goes by the name of Simphiwe Dana. On that very evening she managed to sing herself into the hearts of the audience.

Thus, regrets about Miriam Makeba's farewell were sweetened by the glamorous performance of the young lady who took care of the first half of the African Night. Her name: Simphiwe Dana.

Her most striking asset is a voice to be marvelled at, something in a class of its own on the stages of this world. It is a deep and dark voice, yet mildly tempered, equipped with the most enticing vibrato since Erykah Badu. And, whenever the dramaturgy of her songs calls for it, that voice can belt out a tune that leaves the audience awe-struck.

Simphiwe Dana is not the kind of performer to hop about the stage in a frock of bast. And shaking to hot rhythms isn't her thing, either. Rather, she relies on singing her African version of staggering soul, black to the core, and resplendent with mysterious and exceptional beauty. It is not your run-of-the-mill tourists' Africa that is being put on stage here, but an Africa both proud and urbane.

In South Africa Simphiwe Dana has been famous for quite some time. At the South African Music Awards ceremony last year she was nominated „Best Newcomer“, and „Best Jazz Vocalist for her platinum album „Zandisile“. This does not mean that the soft-spoken 26-year-old singer of fragile and graceful appearance would be writing songs that conform to tried and proven chart requirements. There is something very special about her songs: from an opulent overture they will dissolve into an effortless airiness, turning from gospel to jazz, from *kitsch* to soul. Those who have seen her will not forget that performance. Why, then, is it that we listen to songs from far-away countries? Because there is always hope of witnessing a new approach in a genre that has had little surprise in store recently. One doesn't have to wait for long for such surprise in Simphiwe Dana's music." (quoted after Ane Hebeisen).

Her performance in Basel, greeted with standing ovations, was recorded for television, and is scheduled to be shown in the coming year.

Also, Dana's concert at the *Leverkusener Jazztage* will be on TV almost everywhere, from April of next year. According to the papers, „the South African singer Simphiwe Dana was "the secret star of the 27th *Leverkusener Jazztage*" – and there is more to come.

„Simphiwe Dana, who was presented with a South African Music Award stood on stage with such adorable pride, that it could make you weak in the knees. She is a ravishing beauty with a penchant for extravagant clothes and steeple hats. At the soirée she had donned a gown that was reminiscent of an artfully arranged giant napkin, an extraordinary sight to behold. To say that Simphiwe Dana is a second Ella Fitzgerald would not do her justice, for Dana is without equal. Provided there was another Gershwin, his musical „Porgy and Bess“ would probably be dominated by her extraordinary presence.“ (quoted after Jan Sting of the „Kölner Stadtanzeiger“)

At the „Jazztage“-Festival in Ingolstadt the press regretted that an Al di Meola concert was taking place in an adjoining hall at the same time (that Simphiwe Dana was singing). They rejoiced, however, over the fact that „the young group of nine artists succeeded in winning over more and more of the audience with their mixture of Afro Pop and R & B“ (quoted after DK, Norbert Schmidt).

Likewise, Simphiwe Dana got another invitation to the Aalen „Jazzfest“, where she was brilliant on this year’s brief November tour. It goes without saying, more invitations are to follow.

To cut a long story short: Simphiwe Dana had her hosts, her audience and the press reeling with enthusiasm, when she once more displayed her extraordinary talent this year , following her highly successful summer tour.

The booking situation is a reflection of that success: there are firm bookings for numerous concerts in Germany and Switzerland, as well as Italy, Spain and the UK. In December there will be a performance in Prague. For February, there are plans for a further highlight in Germany, more is to come in April of 2007. The culmination of her European tour will be the concerts during the summer months of May, June and July. To conclude the season, there will be a club tour in the winter of 2007, covering various *European* countries.

Should you as an organizer of events be interested, we shall be pleased to send you a DVD of the Leverkusen concert and the AVO session at Basel, as well as audio material, information and handouts.

(Sources: Gallo Music, Skip Records, BAT Centre South Africa)

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