

# THE AFRO DIASPORA CONNECTION

SOWETO PRESS RELEASE

05 May 2026

## The Afrodiaspora Connection Brings Its Biggest Edition to the Heart of Soweto

The Dig Global x Jazz re:refreshed present The Afrodiaspora Connection 2026, now in its third year at the Soweto Equestrian Centre.

The Soweto Equestrian Centre represents something far greater. As one of the few equestrian facilities located within a South African township, it stands as a powerful symbol of Black excellence, intention, and resilience. The decision to host The Afrodiaspora Connection's 2026 Johannesburg showcase at this venue is not logistical, but deeply intentional.

This year's edition carries additional significance as it commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Soweto Uprising of 16 June 1976. This historic moment saw thousands of students rise in protest against an oppressive education system, shifting the course of South African history. Figures such as Hector Pieterse and countless others became enduring symbols of courage and resistance. Their legacy lives on through creative expression, culture, and music.

Bringing the Afrodiaspora Connection to Soweto in this milestone year acknowledges the deep relationship between music and history. The sounds, stories, and cultural expressions showcased through this platform are rooted in the same spirit of resilience and creativity that defines Soweto. Jazz and alternative Black music traditions have always emerged from lived experience, struggle, and triumph.

"A defining part of South Africa's creative narrative is shaped in the streets of our townships. Our work is rooted in opening up and expanding the understanding of the Black experience, bringing together diverse voices and perspectives from across the country. When the opportunity arose to bring this project to Soweto, it was a natural step for us to take. In doing so, we aim for the work we have built over the years to be experienced as something honest, grounded, and deeply reflective of the communities it speaks to," says The Dig Global.

Now in its third year, The Afrodiaspora Connection has evolved into a multi-city cultural platform, with activations spanning Cape Town, Eswatini, and Johannesburg. The 2026 programme features Kokoroko, Summer Pearl, Zola Marcelle, Sibusile Xaba, Esinam, and Kugjenga, with additional artists still to be announced.

This is not simply a music event taking place in Soweto. It is a cultural homecoming grounded in history, memory, and an ongoing commitment to creative expression.

To stay informed and be among the first to receive updates, please follow @afrodiasporaconnection and subscribe to the mailing list.

- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/jazzrefreshed/>
- Website: <https://www.jazzrefreshed.com/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thedigglobal/>

### For media enquiries

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15 May 2026

## Three Years In, The Afrodiaspora Connection Is Redefining Music Collaboration

A growing partnership between The Dig Global and Jazz re:refreshed is building a sustainable and meaningful exchange between South Africa and the United Kingdom and other EU territories.



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Traditional international music collaborations often follow a one-directional model, where artists travel, perform, and leave with limited long-term impact. The Afrodiaspora Connection was created to challenge this approach.

The 2026 edition represents the strongest expression of this vision to date. The multi-city programme spans Cape Town, Eswatini, and Johannesburg, with the Soweto showcase intentionally aligned with the 50th anniversary of the Soweto Uprising

Now in its third year, The Afrodiaspora Connection is a dynamic, multi-year collaborative music exchange project curated by The Dig Global, a Johannesburg-based alternative music development agency, and Jazz re:freshed, a UK-based jazz and alternative music organisation. The project is designed to establish a sustainable, cross-cultural music ecosystem between South Africa and the United Kingdom, one that amplifies the voices of jazz and alternative music artists while encouraging ongoing collaboration, artist development, touring, music exchange, education, and the sharing of industry knowledge.

Kokoroko's artistry has matured to a place that's now largely representative of the musical melting point and wide range of tastes that comes as Londoners in the black diaspora. Known for her care-free live performances and to the point lyrics, Summer Pearl transcends you to a place of soul and truth. Zola Marcelle is a name that has been quietly but powerfully carving its place in the UK contemporary jazz scene. Born in Zimbabwe and situated in London, the Bantu artist has quickly emerged as a force to be reckoned with.

Beyond live performances, the programme expands into industry engagement called **"Beyond The Stage"** through workshops, panel discussions, and the Women in Music initiative in partnership with SheSaidSo South Africa. Ongoing collaborations with MTN Bushfire Festival and the addition of Sakifo Festival further reinforce the platform's growing global relevance.

Headlining the programme are international acts such as Kokoroko, Summer Pearl and Zola Marcelle alongside South African artists, with further announcements to follow.

"As we step into the third edition of the AfroDiaspora Connection in 2026, we're deeply grateful for our continued partnership with The Dig and for every artist who has shaped this journey with us. This project is more than an exchange; it's a living, evolving bridge between the UK and South Africa, deeply rooted in collaboration, community, and creative freedom. Together, we're building something that not only celebrates our shared musical heritage but actively invests in its future," says Adam Moses, Director, Jazz re:freshed

Now in its third year, The Afrodiaspora Connection has established itself as a proven model for impactful and sustainable international music collaboration. The Jazz re:freshed Outer national programme supported by the Arts Council of England and the Goethe Institute.

**Event dates:** Cape Town: 23 May 2026, Eswatini: 29 and 30 May 2026, Johannesburg: 31 May 2026 at the Soweto Equestrian Centre, Cape Town: 3 June 2026

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06 MAY 2026

The Afrodiaspora Connection 2026 Announces Headline Artists: Kokoroko, Summer Pearl, Zola Marcelle and more

Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Eswatini | May/June 2026



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The Dig Global and Jazz re:freshed have officially announced the first group of artists for The Afrodiaspora Connection 2026, setting the tone for what promises to be a standout edition.

Kokoroko, leading the lineup, the London-based collective has built a globally recognised sound, blending Afrobeat, highlife, and jazz into a distinctive musical identity. With millions of streams and a highly anticipated upcoming album, their performance marks a major highlight, including their Cape Town headline debut.

Summer Pearl brings a strong international presence, having performed at leading festivals and venues across Europe and the United States. Her growing global recognition positions her as one of the most exciting voices in contemporary jazz and alternative music.

Zola Marcelle completes the initial announcement. With roots in Zimbabwe and a base in London, her work reflects a rich cultural identity shaped by her heritage. Her music continues to gain recognition across major platforms and stages.

Additional artists will be announced in the coming weeks, further building anticipation for the 2026 edition.

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