

# Youthful jazz for Smokey Swallows



BackBeat  
with Cornelius Thomas

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STEVEN PRESTON



MICHELLE KNOBEL

**Y**OUTHFUL jazz excellence will be on offer this weekend for local jazz fans.

The Stirling Jazz Band will be playing standards and mellow jazz at Smokey Swallows on Sunday from 20h00 to 22h00.

Consisting of eight members — Steven Preston (alto sax); Bevan Lynch (baritone sax); Michelle Knobel and Cassandra E' Silva (tenor sax); Louise Smith (trombone); Karin Samuel (piano); Liesl Boon (bass); and Brendan Wanklin (drums) — the band will bring a full yet smooth sound.

The band is led and moulded by Stirling High educator and director of the National Youth Jazz Festival, Alan Webster.

Due to lack of space I shall only comment on three of the eight band members.

Michelle, 16, is in Grade 11 and a member of the national schools jazz band. For her "creative ideas and improvisational skill", Webster holds this classical pianist and jazz

saxophonist in high regard.

"She is naturally talented, and I will be surprised if she doesn't choose a career in music," he added.

Alto saxophonist, Steven, 17, has been a member of the schools' jazz band for the past three years. He also represented South Africa in the maths olympiad. In addition to playing in Stirling's first hockey and cricket teams, he emerged top of his grade last year.

Two weeks ago he made his professional debut when he performed as a guest for the Alan Webster Quartet. Webster, incidentally, considers him one of the best jazz players at the school.

Also in attendance will be Bevan Lynch who plays the baritone sax.

Bevan is also a multi-talented young man. He is Stirling High headboy and represented his "province", Border, in water polo. Musicwise he is the only learner in the Eastern Cape Big Band.

Matthew Boon, also an educator

at Stirling High, appears as a guest artist, playing the sax.

The band will play his composition, *Sundowner*, an aptly named number for a Sunday evening of smooth jazz.

The band has played at some of the premier jazz venues in the country, including the Green Dolphin (Cape Town) and Bassline (Mellville), as well as at the Grahamstown Festival.

It has also fronted for legends like Hotep Galeta and Jonas Gwanga — and last year opened for bass guitarist extraordinaire Spho Gumede in the Orient Theatre.

The band has toured South Africa, Zimbabwe and Europe.

Next week it will leave for a two-week tour of Namibia.

En route it will play gigs in Upington and Etosha, before taking the school and community halls of Swakopmund and Windhoek by storm.

Before that, though, you can catch them right here in East London.