

MUSIC

Expand your world at the Concert of Colors

BY CARA PLOWMAN
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More than 70 bands from Africa, Asia, Europe and the South Pacific will flock to Chene Park in Detroit this weekend for culture, dancing and a worldly experience.

The Concert of Colors has expanded to three days, Friday-Sunday, July 13-15, and will feature musicians on five stages.

Ishmael Ahmed, executive director of ACCESS and chair-

man of the Cultural Exchange Network, started the festival nine years ago.

"From the initiation, it was a chance for people from different kinds of communities to work together and play together. This exposes people to cultures and music in ways they may not have the opportunity to know."

It's jazz to me

Jazz gets an international make-over every time Blackman and Arnold and the World Jazz Band pick up their instruments.

The five-piece ensemble steals sounds and techniques from all over the world, adds a jazz spin and Westernizes it just a bit. Founders Sean Blackman, from Clawson, and John Arnold, Detroit, met 11 years ago and were a perfect fit from the start.

The musicians use a variety of instruments to create their guitar-driven world beat music. "Everyone we perform with has a large appreciation for all types of music," said Blackman. "We kind of open up a window in the center of our chests."

Blackman and Arnold and the World Jazz Band will perform during The Concert of Colors at 2 p.m. Sunday, July 15. They also play on Sundays at Fifth Avenue Billiards in Royal Oak.

Inspiring sounds

This will be the first time Osvaldo Rivera and his group Orquestra La Inspiracion play together, but most of the members have been in the business for a long time.

The large, Latin American ensemble features nine musicians from southwest Detroit. Rivera, who plays percussion, calls it a salsa Caribbean sound with an African influence.

Rivera is also director of multicultural affairs at Madonna University in Livonia.

"As the years go by, I think people are going to hear more authentic Latin music. We're just starting to scratch the well-spring," he said.

Horns, piano, bass and a large percussion section mix with three vocalists to create a uniquely Caribbean sound. Don't miss Inspiration at 3 p.m. Sunday, July 15.

Rhythm and Blues sensation The Sun Messengers are an eight-piece horn and vocal-driven Motown group. Often found playing at the Greentown Casino, the members have been reviving classic Detroit songs and reincarnating the sound for

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20 years.

Rick Steiger, of Detroit, said the band has an uplifting spirit and calls The Sun Messengers a premiere party band. "What we do best is represent Detroit," said Steiger, who is a saxophonist. "The music itself is bigger than all of us. It's not about any one person or personality."

Check out The Sun Messengers at 3:45 p.m., Sunday, July 15 at The Concert of Colors and noon, Friday, July 20, at the opening ceremony for Detroit's 300th birthday celebration.

Dancin' in the streets

Crowds can look forward to non-stop music on Saturday and Sunday, as well as booths, lots of dancing, local talent and well-known musicians. "These are all my favorite bands," Ahmed said. "For me, this is a dream come true."

Los Lobos, War, Cibo Matto, The Temptations Review and local bands Immigrant Sun, Robert Jones with the Son Seals Blues Band and Burnt Sugar are

among those performing during the weekend, which kicks-off Detroit's 300th birthday celebration.

"It's the only festival that represents world music and culture in Detroit, which is something I think Detroit is lacking," Blackman said.

Ahmed said the smaller stages will offer a more intimate and interactive experience. "Go see the things you've never heard of. You will see some things that will amaze you."

The Concert of Colors is a free, all ages event that runs 6-10 p.m., Friday, July 13, 2-10 p.m., Saturday, July 14, and 2-10 p.m., Sunday, July 15, in Chene Park, on the Detroit River off Jefferson between the Renaissance Center and Belle Isle Bridge to Detroit.



Celebrating: Los Lobos is among the groups performing during the Concert of Colors, which is part of Detroit's 300th birthday celebration.

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