



Cool cats
... Darius
Brubeck,
Lulu
Gonstana,
Victor
Ntoni
and
Barney
Rachabane
of jazz
group
Afro Cool
Concept

Afro Cool: part of cultural and artistic family

AFRO Cool Concept, the jazz foursome led by Victor Ntoni and Darius Brubeck, is an example of positive cultural and musical fusion that has won both local and international recognition and respect.

The four have recently returned from impressive stints in the United States, the highlight being a major ovation at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, selected for coast-to-coast National Public Radio Broadcast.

Brubeck, who performs in the quartet courtesy of The Centre for Jazz and Popular Music, University of Natal, is the son of the famous jazzologist and musician Dave Brubeck whose *Take Five* has become as popularly memorable in South Africa as Duke Ellington's *A-Train*.

The group played at the launch of *The Daily Mail* and will be headlining at the Grahamstown Festival's jazz encounter.

Said Brubeck: "We are just going great guns. Afro Cool has been invited to a jazz thing at the Le Grande Parade du Jazz in Nice, France. The quartet, which includes Barney Rachabane, sax,

Jazz group Afro Cool Concept have been successful in America, and are heading for Nice's jazz festival soon. But they'll be in Grahamstown in the meantime. Co-leader

Darius Brubeck spoke to

DON MATTERA

and Lulu Gontsana on drums, is symbolic of our commitment to keeping jazz alive Southern Africa."

Veteran bassist and composer Ntoni, who toured South Africa in 1976 with the New Brubeck Quartet (Dave and the Brubeck sons, Darius, Chris and Dan) is a respected name in jazz and television circles.

Ntoni's 1975 musical *Meropa* was selected for a Royal Command Performance in London. Film director Maurice Jarre offered Bra Vic — as he is affably known — a music score commission on *Shout at the Devil*, shot in South Africa.

The diminutive Rachabane has been blowing

around for a long time.

His sizzling interpretation of Charlie Parker's bebop style, as well as his playing the West Coast idiom, has rated him among the best alto sax-men in the country.

His classy performance in the ill-fated *Phiri, the Musical*, alongside the late Cyril Magubane and other jazz greats, placed Rachabane a cut above his contemporaries — almost in the league of Kippie Morolong Moeketsi.

The youngest of the crew, ace drummer Gontsana, a permanent member of the Afro Cool Concept, also beat the skins in the States with the Jazzanians, and has backed many top jazz acts here.

Added Brubeck: "Afro Cool has an extended social and human responsibility in that we do charity shows like the drought relief concert at the University of Zululand. We have sound interactions with community groups and lend a hand where we can. It's all part of being family; part of cultural and artistic co-existence, you might say."