



Bryan Mugenyi (L) performs alongside band members Sam Bisaso (C) and Hakim Kiwanuka. PHOTOS BY EDGAR R. BATTE

Mugenyi holds fort at JazzUphoria feat

Soulful music. As he played to his eager jovial fans last week, Bryan Mugenyi showed that the saxophone is not just another musical experience but a cosy moment for him as **Edgar R. Batte** writes.

By 7pm on Tuesday last week, Brevellers had started sauntering into Jazz Ville in Bugolobi, for another edition of JazzUphoria, a musical treat for patrons who appreciate the multi-stylish jazz genre.

Hand in hand, couples, mostly dressed in corporate wear, walked down the slant that leads to the main entrance of the hall where the concert was to take place.

And as they turned to the entrance, there were beautiful ushers clad in silky green dresses that were short enough to cause gentlemen to 'steal' more glances than one.

And these young, beautiful smiley ladies were willing to offer more than optical nutrition; they served each patron a bottle of cold Nile Gold, a crystal malt lager.

Saxophone player and jazz artiste Bryan Mugenyi was headlining the edition of JazzUphoria - a re-launch of sorts. It was a full house and when he got hold of his gold-coloured instrument, he asked the crowd thrice they were ready to have fun.

"Yes, we are," the audience responded amidst clapping. Mugenyi smiled back, got hold of his saxophone and pushed it up his lips. He blew through it and wafted out some

musical notes as he performed his first solo track, Dawn, which, as he explained, was symbolic of a new musical beginning for him.

Mugenyi had a plan and strategy. With his saxophone, he has travelled to Tanzania, Kenya and been on festival stages; Karibu Music Festival and Jazz Festival in Zanzibar. And last Tuesday night, the jazz artiste had a full band which did not just back him up, but also completed him.

Sam Bisaso was on the bass guitar, Nehemiah Kasika and Hakim Kiwanuka were on the drums and Pragmo (David Nsaiga) was on the keyboard.

One of the danceable tunes was titled Gold medal, a fusion of zouk and ragga in which Mugenyi goes on and on about flattering a girl that has

warmed his soul and set his heart racing.

For her looks and style, she is worth his gold medal. By the time Mugenyi played the last notes of the songs, he had done some good footwork and wiggling that when the lights flashed on his forehead, it was sweaty but with a smile of satisfaction.

But it was not just Mugenyi who was having a time of his life, in the audience were jovial patrons and among them a white couple where the lady who wore a wide smile kept removing her date's hat and wearing it and then kissing him every time the artiste hit a high note.

The musician continued flickering his hands on the saxophone buttons, and closing his eyes to show that playing the instrument is not just another musical experience but a cosy moment for him.

After about an hour of thrilling revellers on stage, he took a break and on came guest performers, Carl Winther on piano, Johnny Aman on bass and Anders Mogensen on the drums, all talented fellows.

Mugenyi returned to finish what he had started. He announced that he is putting final touches to his forthcoming album and implored fans to look out for it.

As the clock ticked away and the climax drew close, revellers who were initially seated and kept waiters busy, sending them for a drink or eats all got on their feet to dance.

Those who could not stand ululated and clapped in appreciation of good songs performed. Mugenyi ended the night with one of his favourites, a jazzy version of Radio & Weasel's Kuku, which set him on a journey of self-actualisation as a musician.

