

# FIFA concert wows world on eve of kick-off

JOHANNESBURG: World Cup celebrations got off to a sizzling start in South Africa ahead of today's kick-off as thousands rocked the Orlando Stadium in Soweto last night, Thursday, 10 June 2010. [poll](#)



The event, widely seen as a uniting force, for a nation rocked with decades of racial divisions, was broadcast to millions of people across the world. A crowd of around 30 000 people waved flags and screamed their approval as president Jacob Zuma, FIFA president Sepp Blatter and later Nobel Laureate archbishop emeritus Desmond Tutu, emerged on stage to address them.

"I would like to thank you all but especially I would like to thank South Africans for welcoming our visitors so warmly and please continue that spirit. Africa is showing the world that it is capable of holding any matter of the world like any other region," said Zuma.

He thanked FIFA for "believing" in South Africa by bringing the first African World Cup to the country of Nelson Mandela.

## "It's like I'm dreaming"

Sporting a green and yellow striped hat and scarf, Tutu told the people of the world that they were welcome in South Africa. "It's like I'm dreaming, man, wake me up!" he said to loud ululations.

The party got underway in style with a joyous and truly African rhythm provided by veteran South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela and Afro-pop sensation Lira. But it was when US group Black Eyed Peas entered the stage that things really warmed up. The group performed three songs, including their popular offering 'I've got a feeling'.

Colombian pop star Shakira and South Africa's Freshlyground wowed the crowd with their performance of the official anthem for the tournament Waka Waka (It's time for Africa).

The concert had everything you needed to make a really enjoyable and exciting evening and South African artists did not disappoint and proved themselves to be among the best in the world.

When United States R&B sensation John Legend bounced onto the stage, it was a very public confirmation of something those in music have been aware of for a while - that this singer, songwriter and producer packs a musical talent of staggering proportions. A six-time Grammy winning recording artist and acclaimed concert performer, Legend did well with his collaboration with Angelique Kijo of Benin, producing a rare African American mix.

## Night belonged to

But no doubt the night belonged to the US's Alicia Keys with her splendid performances from her latest album 'Element of Freedom'. It has been a long time since fans had seen the pregnant Keys on stage and they clearly loved her last night.

It was clear that not even the freezing Johannesburg night could divert concert-goers from their jovial mood.

"I am extremely happy to be part of this, this is history my brother, no world cup concert of this magnitude had ever taken

place anywhere in the world before, it starts here," said Cedric Ndlovu, who works for a law firm in Zimbabwe. He had traveled all the way from Zim to see his favourite stars, like Legend and the Black Eyed Peas, perform live in his neighbouring country.

"I love what I saw tonight. The performances were good and the concert really brought us together as Africans," said Ndlo

Angela Ludek of Benoni said: "I don't care what anyone else says but I think South African artists were great. The whole thing was great, I loved every moment".

FIFA had hoped that the concert would break television viewership records.

**For more:**

- Bizcommunity Poll: [How do you rate the 2010 FIFA Kick-off Concert?](#)
- Vevo.com: [FIFA World Cup Kick-off Concert](#) - watch the concert online

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