

ROLL CALL OF SOUL

A ONE-OF-A-KIND SHOWCASE OF SOME OF the world's finest talent, the all-ages event marks Maxwell and D'Angelo's first visits to New Zealand. Godfathers of contemporary soul and R&B, they are joined by Common, Mos Def, Anthony Hamilton, Angie Stone and Musiq Soulchild.

The Auckland leg will also feature some of our best local artists, including Aaradhna, Bella Kalolo, TDK and a DJ set by Che Fu, rounding out the line-up.

It's an amazing roll-call of acts, the likes of which rarely feature together on one bill. Promoter John Denison says he specifically set out to curate a focused line-up.

"I have a firm belief that when you're putting together something, you should be committed to that genre, and put as many of those artists on a bill, so you can draw the maximum audience [of that genre] out."

Soulfest tickets have been selling like hotcakes since they were released at the start of June, proving John's so-called niche approach 'has legs'.

He was helped along, though, by a little 'star magic'. On meeting Jill Scott at one of her first-ever Australia shows in 2013, John asked if she thought getting Maxwell and D'Angelo on the same bill was possible.

"We asked what kind of line-up she thought would work out here. That's how it really came about, Jill and I talking backstage," he recounts. "I asked what it would take to get Maxwell and D'Angelo on one bill, and she said, 'I suppose – I speak to them all the time – I could help out.'"

"She did speak to Maxwell on our behalf, and that was the catalyst, getting Maxwell to say yes. Because everything else fell into place."

"It just turned out to be a fantastic mix," he continues, "to the point that when we announced the line-up, I think people all over the US, and pockets of Europe and Asia, were just wetting themselves over it."

When asked his reaction to the line-up, Che Fu, New Zealand's own Don of hip hop, said:

"I was pretty ecstatic and visibly relieved at the notion that I would finally be able to see D'Angelo live, and in my own country no less. He has a huge following here in New Zealand, and it was almost



***Soulfest*, Australasia's first-ever neo-soul, jazz and hip hop festival is set to take over Western Springs Stadium on Sunday 26 October writes Sarah Illingworth.**

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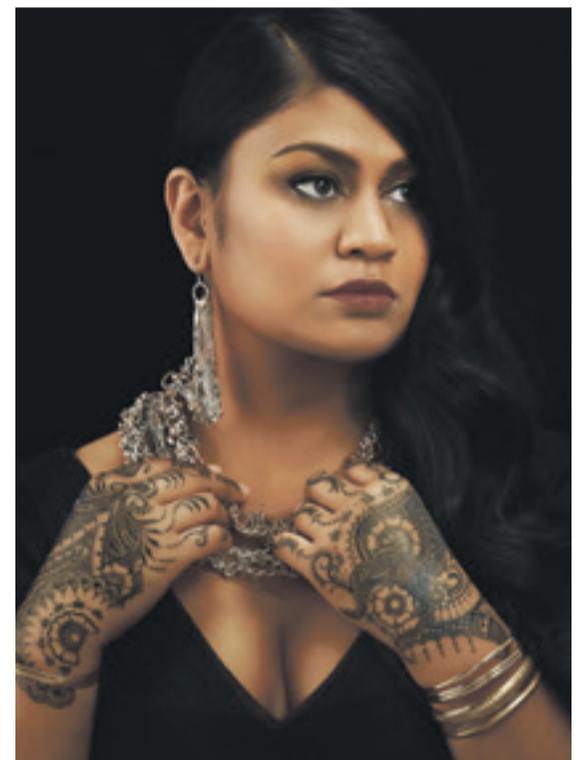
like – is he ever going to perform here? I'd almost resigned myself to thinking I would only see him overseas, so I'm hella stoked right now."

Reflecting on New Zealanders' love for soul music, Che responded: "Bands like the Māori Volcanics in the '60s, Sir Howard Morrison, Prince Tui Teke, the Five Stars, Ardijah, and those alike from Aotearoa and the Pacific have all contributed to the New Zealand psyche when it comes to soul and R&B. This type of history has helped form the foundation for which whole industries in this country have been created. We also continue the tradition of writing and performing in this style of music, to where it is – alongside hip hop and reggae – almost synonymous with contemporary Māori/Pacific/Aotearoa music."

Featuring all acts back-to-back on one mainstage, *Soulfest* will occupy a specially configured area in the bottom Speedway area of Western Springs Stadium.

The event will also feature 'Eat Street', a strip of street vendors curated by Britomart eatery Orleans. Serving up everything from Louisiana po' boys to tacos and fried chicken, the food alley will be an opportunity to sample some of the best soul and streetfood Auckland has to offer.

Limited-capacity VIP tickets are also available, offering access to an exclusive front-of-stage area, which will house a VIP bar, food outlets and toilets.



John says he's been amazed at ticket sales so far, and the all-round response of New Zealanders to the event.

"We actually believe that Auckland will be the biggest show of the tour – more so than Sydney and Melbourne. I personally believe the spiritual home of this event is Auckland, is New Zealand. New Zealand gets it, and that's it."

SOULFEST
26 October
LIVE AT WESTERN SPRINGS STADIUM