

Cultures come together at Lake of Stars Festival

African and western musical cultures combined at this year's Lake of Stars Festival in Malawi headlined by UK pop act Noisettes, writes **Paul Watson**

Now in its seventh year, Lake of Stars Festival 2010 was the most successful yet, featuring 50 Malawian acts and 20 international artists spanning the UK, Australia and Africa, all coming together to entertain a 3,300-strong crowd for three days of music.

This year's event saw a record number of collaborations between artists, which included traditional Malawian musicians performing along UK indie act Get Cape Wear Cape Fly; and Zimbabwean artist Tinashé and UK-

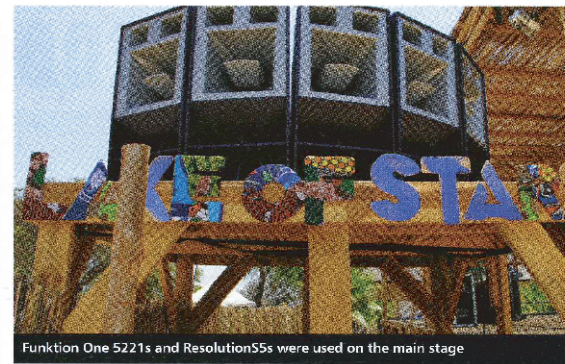
Nigerian act Afrikan Boy taking to the stage with headliners Noisettes.

This was the second year in succession that Funktion One provided the sound system, with the help of Manchester headquartered rental company Audile. The main stage featured two S221 bass enclosures and five Resolution 58 per side; all powered by one amp rack which was loaded with four MC2 amps (3x E45S and 1x F90) and an XTA DP448 X) crossover. A pair of self-powered Resolution 28 were also used on the main stage as DJ monitors; and two Resolution

38 and a couple of RM12 stage monitors (which doubled up as DJ monitors) was enough to cater for the smaller and more intimate beach stage.

"I always have an interest in bridging musical cultures," says Funktion One's David Bruml. "And being able to support an event like this which sees great African musicians in their own country on a stage that they wouldn't normally have access to is something we're delighted to be able to do."

Two Midas Venice consoles sat at FOH position, and bands played



Funktion One S221s and Resolution58s were used on the main stage

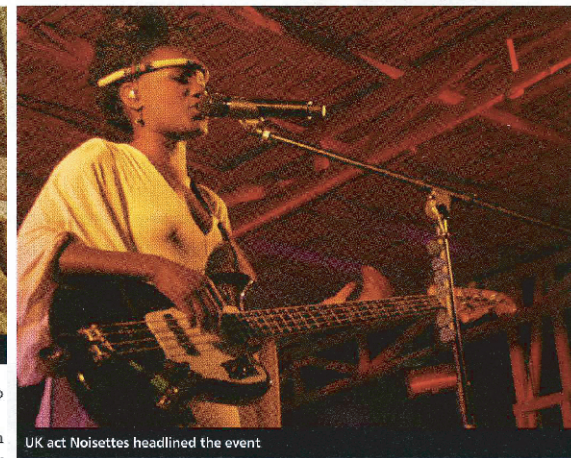
throughout the day and into the small hours, finishing around 2am. The DJs started playing around midnight and ran through to the even smaller hours (8am) using Funktion One Formula Sound SS4000 and SS6000 DJ mixers that were deployed on each stage.

Will Jamson founded Lake of Stars in 2004 and his company (Lake of Stars Ltd) is dedicated to raising the profile of Malawi and generating revenue for its economy. This year, Lake of Stars raised in excess of £100,000 (£117,861) and Jamson is enthusiastic that 2011 can yield even more.

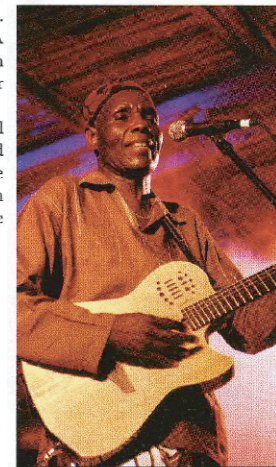
made up solely of local volunteers, who built all of the stages and the bar areas.

"It's a real wholesome feeling when you know that the artists and the crew are all doing it for free," adds Jamson. "And Funktion One is an amazing PA partner – we couldn't make it happen without those guys and Audile – their support is absolutely essential."

Lake of Stars also included a small bandstand stage this year, which hosted acoustic performances, poetry and theatre groups; and a number of free outreach events for those who couldn't afford the



UK act Noisettes headlined the event



Zimbabwean musician Oliver Mtukudzi

"It's about bringing more westerners into Africa for a life-changing cultural experience and creating an international platform for the local musicians"

£32 ticket price, which included sports tournaments and film screenings.

Bruml says it was only after talking with the local musicians that he realised the true potential of the festival, and what it really meant to the community.

"These musicians want exposure; that's what they struggle to get at the moment," insists Bruml. "It feels to me like Lake of Stars is developing into a real conduit between Africa and the west, which is fantastic."

Jamson says anyone interested in volunteering for next year's event, or any Lake of Stars UK events, please get in contact with him via the website below. 📧

www.funktion-one.com
www.lakeofstars.org

"It's about bringing more westerners into Africa for a life-changing cultural experience and creating an international platform for the local musicians," says Jamson. "This year was our best yet, and we want to build on that next year by increasing capacity and bringing in some legends of African music."

Jamson says the local community were very much involved in the event – around 70% of the crowd were Malawians and the production team was