



PRESS RELEASE – UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL THURSDAY 31 JULY 2014

Shifty Records, the Alliance Française of Johannesburg & the South African History Archive (SAHA) present:

SHIFTY SEPTEMBER: Celebrating 30 years of seditious sounds

A Heritage Month tribute to the Shifty Records music label, combining exhibitions, documentary screenings, panel discussions and, of course, concerts to celebrate the Shifty story of musical activism in the struggle for democracy in South Africa.

Shifty September will be taking place in Johannesburg throughout September 2014 to celebrate Shifty's 30th birthday, the 25th anniversary of the ground breaking *Voëlvry* tour and to mark 20 years of democracy in South Africa.

The Shifty September programme aims to:

- Celebrate Shifty's legacy by drawing attention to its rich history and back catalogue at events, and with multiple compilation and commemoration album releases throughout the month, culminating in **the SHIFTY HERITAGE MUSIC FESTIVAL: Viva la Différence!** at the Bassline on 24 September 2014;
- Use the Shifty Story as a lens to consider **the role of protest music in the making of democracy in South Africa** through exhibitions, discussions and screenings;
- Provide wider public access to this history of musical activism through SAHA's archives (to be available for public consultation at Constitution Hill and online from September 2014);
- Raise funds for further exciting Shifty projects beyond Shifty September.

To find out more about Shifty September, what will be happening when, and how you can join in the fun, follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

CALLING ALL MUSIC-LOVERS - HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT SHIFTY SEPTEMBER

Further funds are needed to bring as many of the Shifty musicians not based in Johannesburg to participate in Shifty September, and at the **SHIFTY HERITAGE MUSIC FESTIVAL: Viva la Différence!** In Johannesburg on 24 September.

We're also trying to raise much-needed funds to release a vinyl double album of the BEST OF SHIFTY, and produce a gorgeously subversive coffee table book showcasing the Shifty Story, and most importantly to remix and release James Phillips & the Lurchers' *The Other White Album* in 2015 to mark 20 years since his tragic death in July 1995.

We're asking all those music lovers out there to support us in different ways in the lead up to SHIFTY SEPTEMBER:

- **DONATE YOUR SHIFTY SWAG TO THE ARCHIVES**

SAHA is urgently looking for original Shifty Records and *Voëlvry* paraphernalia to add to the archive – t-shirts that bear the marks of too many late nights at Shifty haunts, crumpled flyers and dog-eared posters from gigs at the Black Sun that have been serving as bookmarks for the last 20 years, or even personal photographs from misspent Shifty youth at Jameson's or on the road with *Voëlvry* or from anywhere for that matter – these are the real Shifty stories... Please contact SAHA (archives@saha.org.za) to find out how you can add your story to the Shifty Archives.

- **SUPPORT US ON THUNDAFUND**

There will be exciting limited edition packages of Shifty tracks – advance copies of brand new digital compilations, limited copies of albums on vinyl, postcards from the Shifty vault – available for supporters of Shifty September from 31 July 2014 on South African crowd-funding site [THUNDAFUND](#). Check our social media pages for the direct link when the project goes live.

- **PAY SHIFTY TAX AT OPPIKOPPI**

Shifty September is proud to have the support of OPPIKOPPI in their 20th anniversary year. Revelers attending the OppiKoppi 20 Odyssey from 7 - 9 August 2014 can support the Shifty September programme by paying SHIFTY SIN TAX at the festival.

What is SHIFTY SIN TAX, you ask? You can choose to donate to the Shifty cause every time you buy a drink at any of the OppiKoppi bars. All Shifty Tax Payers will then stand a chance of winning tickets to the SHIFTY HERITAGE MUSIC FESTIVAL: Viva la Différence! and other fabulous Shifty swag.

Oppikoppi supremo, Carel Hoffmann said:

“For me the entire Voëlvry movement was a time of wonder and amazement.

We had just finished school and all of a sudden there were these guys out there directly opposing the old regime, and making no qualms about it. Most of it in Afrikaans. And they were young, strong and opinionated. I did not even know that you were allowed to think like that. All of a sudden there was this great sense of freedom, and hope. Best of all is it had a phenomenal sound track, which of course is where Shifty fits in. Without Shifty and the Voëlvry movement, I seriously doubt whether OppiKoppi would exist. That is where the seeds of libertarianism was sown”

- **SHIFTY UP YOUR HOME** at a limited edition art sale at the Shifty September exhibition opening.
- **SPREAD THE WORD** - To find out more about how you can support SHIFTY SEPTEMBER and SCORE SHIFTY SWAG, follow us on [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#)

PROJECT PARTNERS AND VENUES

ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE OF JOHANNESBURG - 17 [Lower Park Drive, Corner Kerry Road, Parkview, Johannesburg](#)

The Alliance is the main venue for the Shifty September events, offering its premises for the project: gallery space for the exhibition, hall for screenings and panel discussions. Since 1960, the Alliance Française of Johannesburg is the shortest way to France, its culture and its language. Being a South African non-profit organisation, though, means that we not only focus on French events or artists but rather promote cultural dialogue and diversity.

Jean Bourdin, director of the Alliance Française of Johannesburg, said:

“The Alliance Française of Johannesburg is both excited and honoured to be hosting this incredibly interesting series of events which is Shifty September. At the crossroad between music, history and politics, Shifty September is a major contribution to the celebrations of 20 years of a democratic South Africa.”

THE BASSLINE - [10 Henry Nxumalo Street, Newtown, Johannesburg](#)

Virtually every major South Africa music star has performed on a Bassline stage. Bassline in the downtown Newtown Cultural Precinct, has become an institution amongst music fans. In its 20 year history Bassline has hosted over 3000 concerts featuring many of Africa's most famous stars and world music icons as well as most music acts that have emerged in South Africa since the 90s – South African jazz & Shifty artists such as Vusi Mahlasela, started their illustrious careers at Bassline.

Brad Holmes of the Bassline said:

"The Bassline celebrates 20 years this year. In all that time we have been driven by our motto 'In Music We Trust', and if there was ever a South African record label that epitomises that shared DNA, it's Shifty Records. The Bassline is proud and honoured to be associated with Lloyd Ross and all things Shifty, and we look forward to welcoming the Shifty Heritage event to Newtown."

SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY ARCHIVE (SAHA) – www.saha.org.za

Established in 1988 by anti-apartheid activists, SAHA is an independent non-profit human rights archive committed to documenting, supporting and promoting greater awareness of historical and, since 1994, contemporary struggles for justice and accountability. Since 2011, SAHA has been working with Lloyd Ross to preserve, organise, research and make accessible the endangered archive of Shifty Records as the formats of many of its historic audio recordings were deteriorating rapidly. With funding from the Atlantic Philanthropies, a significant collection of audio, video, photographic and documentary materials have now been digitized so as to ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of this rich historical collection of musical activism for research and education, as well as cultural and heritage events like Shifty September.

Catherine Kennedy, SAHA director, said:

“As an activist archive with a keen interest in what neglected or at-risk records can reveal about *how* people have struggled for justice in South Africa, Shifty Records has added an amazingly fitting, not to mention delightfully noisy, dimension to our archives at SAHA.

The rich archival materials deposited by Lloyd Ross with SAHA come together to form a striking musical assertion of the right to be heard, to challenge and demonstrate defiance of injustice, and to claim public space to fight for human rights in South Africa. Helping to make this proudly South African story of musical activism reach a wider audience through the Shifty September programme is both a privilege and a whole lot of fun for the SAHA team.”

SHIFTY RECORDS – www.shifty.co.za

“Even though most of the recordings took place before my time, the Shifty catalogue inspired and formed the basis for how I interact with music to this day. How it grounds us; re-affirms who we are and why we are. The music on Shifty did this better than any other label on the planet. These were artists creating music in a tumultuous time sharing tales of suffering and joy (often simultaneous). The likes of Mzwakhe Mbuli, Urban Creep and perhaps most importantly for me, Tananas, connected me with the music of South Africa before anything else. It offered a glimpse into the notion and possibility of a rainbow nation long before the term was coined. Most importantly, the recordings made me feel part of this country.”

- *Guy Buttery, multi-instrumentalist and double South African Music Award winner.*

The key player in this project, Shifty Records is an independent South African record label founded by Lloyd Ross and Ivan Kadey during the dark beginnings of the turbulent 1980s. From the release of its first full-length album thirty years ago until the dawn of the new dispensation in South Africa, Shifty Records set out to document the songs of South African musicians that felt compelled to comment on the difficult times that they were living through.

Operating for many years from a studio in a caravan hitched to a Ford V6 truck, the Shifty studio produced an album every two months until 1993. These recordings resulted in the most comprehensive collection of South African political and social commentary music in existence. *Kaapse goema*, *mbaqanga* jive, rock, folk, avant-garde, *isicathamiya*, worker songs, poetry, *boere* punk, jazz, *maskande* - this range of genres reflects the diverse cultures and influences from which these artists drew their inspiration. The reason for this eclecticism in the Shifty catalogue is easily explained - no other institution would do it within the context of state repression and censorship at the time, so Shifty virtually did it all. While Shifty struggled to gain exposure on SABC radio stations, its anti-establishment stance was appealing to young and politically marginalised South Africans, as was evidenced when poet Mzwakhe Mbuli's unadvertised *Change is Pain* went gold despite having had no radio exposure.

In 1989, Shifty Records, in partnership with *Vrye Weekblad*, organized the nation-wide Voëlvry Toer. This tour of young Afrikaner South African musicians, recorded exclusively by Shifty Records, has been described by *Vrye Weekblad* editor Max du Preez as follows:

“It is tempting to overemphasize the political impact of Voëlvry. Still, I think it is safe to say that it definitely played a role in sufficiently exercising the Afrikaner’s political synapses to accept an end to apartheid and a negotiated democratic solution by 1994... It certainly helped undermine the unholy traditional Afrikaner

culture of respect for authority and older people. It boosted the Afrikaans language like few events before it... And it proved that Boere can rock in their taal, after all.”

- Foreword to *Voëlvry: the movement that rocked South Africa* by Pat Hopkins, Zebra Press, 2006.

Artists recorded by Shifty Records include:

Andre Letoit (also recorded as Koos Kombuis); Corporal Punishment; Draadloos; Illegal Gathering; ISJA, James Phillips (also recorded as Bernoldus Niemand); Jennifer Ferguson; Jo’burg City Stars; Johannes Kerkorrel; Die Gereformeerde Blues Band;Kalahari Surfers; Khaki Monitor; Koos; Kgwanype Band, MAMU Players; Mapuntsula; Matthew van der Want and Chris Letcher; Mzwakhe Mbuli; National Wake; Noise Khanyile; Radio Rats; Randy Rambo en die Rough Riders; Robin Auld; Roger Lucey; Sankomota; Simba Morri; Stan James; Tananas; The Aeroplanes; The Cherry Faced Lurchers; The Facts; The Genuines; The Happy Ships; The Kêrels; The Softies, Tony Cox; Urban Creep; Vusi Mahlasela; Various workers choirs including K-Team, Clover, DTMB, Mooi River Textiles, I&J, Simba Quix, Sizanani; Warrick Sony and Winston’s Jive Mix-up.

FUNDING

The following organisations have generously contributed towards the costs of Shifty September to date: Alliance Française; Atlantic Philanthropies (through SAHA); Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) Foundation; National Arts Council (NAC); Business and Arts South Africa (BASA); Spier.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The SAHA archives have a selection of images available for press – please contact them directly on +27 11 718 2564 or email: archives@saha.org.za

Please credit all images as follows (including links): Courtesy of [Shifty Records](#), archived at [SAHA](#)

For all other information about the Shifty September programme, please contact:

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