

# Jazz quartet heading for the Traverse

Cape Town-born pianist Philip Clouts celebrates his quartet's tenth anniversary with a 13-date tour that includes a concert at the Traverse Theatre on Monday, October 30.

Clouts formed the quartet – originally a trio – to create a more intimate contrast to the band he'd been working with since the turn of the millennium, the jazz and world-beat ensemble Zubop, which had expanded to a nine-piece through collaborations with Gambian master musicians Juldeh Camara and Njega Sohna.



“We've had a few changes in personnel over these ten years but bassist Alex Keen has been in the group since the start, which gives a great sense of continuity, and I'm really pleased with the current line-up as saxophonist Samuel Eagles and drummer David Ingamells have brought some great input,” says Clouts.

“Samuel's sense of phrasing is unique, and apart from being a great jazz player, he also brings his experience of playing Afrobeat on the London scene. David, who played on the quartet's most recent album, Umoya, has phenomenal technique and can go from total sensitivity to powerhouse in an instant. That's very inspiring.”

While Clouts retains a strong love for the jazz tradition and acknowledges heroes including Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett, his compositions have always tended to look further afield. Umoya spans a range of inspirations from Moroccan Gnawa music to Italian tarantella and as well as playing music from that album on tour, the quartet will be featuring newer material including a blues inspired by the biram, a five-stringed harp used by the Boudouma people of Eastern Niger. These world music influences, added to Clouts' interest in the music of his birthplace, South Africa, have created a style of jazz that's aimed at the hips and feet as well as head and heart.

“Someone recently told me they found my music life-affirming,”

he says.

“So I hope that the quartet’s melodic groove-oriented approach will have that effect on the people who come to hear us.”