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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Heatwave and Harmony at Gent Jazz 2026

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Scorching temperatures and outstanding performances defined 12 July at Gent Jazz 2026. Despite the heatwave, visitors of the festival filled De Bijloke to discover new artists, reconnect with familiar faces and enjoy an evening where music easily outshone the summer heat.

Canadian singer Dominique Fils-Aimé opened the Main Stage with a warm blend of blues, soul and jazz. As visitors gradually arrived after the hottest hours of the day, the audience steadily grew. Between songs, she encouraged everyone to sing along, insisting that music is about feeling good rather than being good at it. She also reflected on the challenges artists face in the age of artificial intelligence, expressing confidence that genuine human creativity will always endure. Her performance perfectly matched the relaxed atmosphere that settled over the festival.

On the Garden Stage, Kinda combined electronic music with visual projections. Although bright sunlight reduced the impact of the visuals, the trio still captivated the audience. Their appearance formed part of Gent Jazz's collaboration with KASK & Conservatorium (HOGENT and Howest), giving young musicians valuable stage experience while introducing visitors to the festival to emerging talent. Next on the Main Stage, Portuguese singer MARO, known from the 2022 Eurovision Song Contest, brought an intimate performance that effortlessly encouraged the crowd to sing along.

As the evening progressed, the festival site became increasingly crowded. By the time Belgian-Portuguese band Æo took the Main Stage, the tent was completely full. The contrast with 2023, when the band played the smaller Garden Stage, was remarkable. Performing songs from their new album Malandra, the group balanced Portuguese saudade, electronic textures and dynamic percussion. Vocalist Brenda Corijn captivated the audience with emotional intensity, while the close interaction between the band members turned the concert into one of the evening's highlights.

Tamino closed the Main Stage with a more introspective performance. His family happened to be among the audience, adding a personal touch to the concert. Alongside favorites such as Habibi and Indigo Night, he performed a cover of Arthur Russell, whose music inspired him during his first days in New York. He also announced that this would be his final concert for the time being, making the evening especially meaningful for fans. Those still eager for more music could end the night at the Garden Stage with Gala Dragot.

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The combination of a summer heatwave, a diverse program and memorable performances once again demonstrated why Gent Jazz remains one of Belgium's leading music festivals. From internationally acclaimed artists to emerging talent, the festival continues to offer audiences an experience that extends well beyond the music itself.

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