

STAR
19.9.
63

15,000 AT ORLANDO JAZZ FEAST

BAD SOUND AMPLIFICATION spoiled what was a very promising Jazz Festival at Orlando Stadium on Saturday. This is the second jazz festival held in Africa, the first was last year in Moroka Jabavu, when 4,000 people came. This year there were over 15,000.

It was held in an open-air stadium and the main competition was for jazz bands from all over the country. Nine competed in the final: two from Cape Town, the Swinging City Six and the Jazz Ambassadors; one from Port Elizabeth, the Friendly City Five; one from Durban, the Shange Brothers; from Pretoria, the Jazz Profound, and from Johannesburg, the Blue Notes, the New Jazz Dazzlers and the Kloox Group.

10 hours

The vast crowd made it extremely difficult for the music to be heard and a better system of amplification will certainly have to be found in future.

The music went on for 10 hours and the crowd was in festive mood, families picnicked on the grass, and sat under large shady umbrellas. This was a great social occasion in Soweto—probably the biggest gathering of people at a cultural event ever held in South Africa, which is the only country in Africa to promote jazz in this way.

Compared to last year's festival the standard was very much higher. Again Cape Town seems to produce the best musicians. It was an interesting point that all the prizes for individual musicians went to very young performers: teenage Mongezi Feza (trumpet), newcomer guitarist Thabana, pianist Pat Matshikiza (nephew of "King Kong" composer Todd Matshikiza), and tenor saxophonist Ronnie Beer.

First prize

The first and second prizes for the groups went to Chris McGregor's Blue Notes and Ronnie Beer's Swinging City Six from Cape Town.

Almost all the groups played jazz of two kinds — on the one hand their versions of advanced

and sophisticated American music, although they played this with a sound that was very much local. On the other hand they were forced to play at least one of their own compositions, and here one had a strong feeling that local jazz has managed to integrate a great deal of unique African sound, and develop this combination into a very powerful and expressive thing.

M. L.