

Bill Sharpe, Shakatak's keyboard player



By [Martin Myers](#)

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Shakatak, the legendary English jazz-funk band, is returning to Cape Town for just one show on Saturday, 30 September, as part of their 40th anniversary world tour.



Shakatak band members. Image supplied

The band, comprising Jill Saward (lead vocals), Bill Sharpe (keys), Keith Winter (guitar), George Anderson (bass) and Roger Odell (drums), will be heading to the Mother City for a night fans will foster, forever. Today Shakatak amplify their live shows with Jacqui Hicks (backing vocals, saxophone and flute) or Debby Bracknell (backing vocals and flute) and Alan Wormald (guitar and backing vocals).

Shakatak have enjoyed a level of success, and career longevity rarely paralleled in contemporary music – but then Shakatak is a particularly unusual group.

Due to the nature of their music, their fanbase is far-reaching while always retaining an 'underground element'. This paradox sees the band, known primarily as serious jazz/funk musicians, enjoying high 'cult' status and instant recognition as a much-loved household favourite.

Thanks to their successful recording career, Shakatak has firmly established itself as a vibrant live act, combining astute musicianship with a sense of fun that translates perfectly with audiences worldwide to this day.

Shakatak scored several major hits, *Night Birds* (1982) and *Down on the Street* (1984), plus a further 12 entries in the Guinness Book of British Hit Singles.

I recently chatted with Bill Sharpe, the keyboard player.

■ ***What is your purpose?***

To create music to make myself happy and hopefully other people too.

■ ***What does music mean to you?***

It's been my life for over 40 years, so very important! As well as good food.

■ ***Our music is about...***

Feeling, love, fun and connection.



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■ ***What is your motto?***

In life, have something to do, someone to love and something to look forward to.

■ ***Fame is about...***

15 mins...

■ ***Retirement will happen when...***

I'm in the ground.

■ ***I don't do...***

Interviews.

■ ***I would love to co-write with...***

Stevie Wonder.

■ ***Where do you go for inspiration to create?***

At my piano or in the studio.

■ ***What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?***

Writing and creating new music.

■ ***The song you must do during every show?***

Night Birds

■ ***Any funny moments on stage?***

Too many to mention!

■ ***My heroes are...***

Keith Emerson, Herbie Hancock, Lyle Mays, Pat Metheny to name a few in music.

■ ***My style icon is...***

Issey Miyake.

▣ ***Which living person do you admire most and why?***

Barack Obama. Because he's Barack Obama.

▣ ***What is your most treasured possession?***

My 1923 Bosendorfer piano.

▣ ***It's your round, what are you drinking?***

A nice white Burgundy.

▣ ***Dream gig to do?***

Anywhere close to home.

▣ ***What makes you stand out?***

Not showering for three days.

▣ ***Any nicknames?***

None I can say.

▣ ***If you were not a musician, what would you do?***

Gardener.

▣ ***Pick five words to describe yourself?***

Just need one perfect smile.

▣ ***Greatest movie ever made?***

Dr Zhivago

■ ***What book are you reading?***

The Glucose Goddess.

■ ***What song changed your life?***

Can't Buy Me Love

■ ***Who do you love?***

Everyone.

■ ***What is your favorite word?***

Discombobulated.

■ ***Top of your bucket list?***

A hole in one.

■ ***Your greatest achievement?***

The *Night Birds* album.

■ ***What do you complain about most often?***

Brexit

■ ***What is your biggest fear?***

Not being able to write new songs.

■ ***Happiness is...***

A big bed with fresh cotton sheets.

■ ***On stage, I tend to...***

Play the piano.

▣ ***The best life lesson you have learned?***

Always expect the unexpected.

▣ ***What has been your favorite journey so far?***

To travel the world with Shakatak.

▣ ***Do you do charity work, and if you do – what do you do?***

Anything to do with cancer research and hospices.

▣ ***Wishes and dreams?***

Good health and happiness for everyone including me.

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