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Havana heat in the Hat

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Local jazz fans flocked to the Medalta Potteries site on Thursday evening to listen and dance to the lively music of Maraca.

Before the 10-piece Latin band took to the stage, Montreal circus performer Aytahn Ross warmed up the crowd with balancing and juggling feats.

While sitting in the open-air venue, Hatters got a chance to listen to Afro-Cuban, Latin and Brazilian inspired tunes with the sounds of congo drums, trumpets, saxophones, maracas, flutes and piccolos filling the summer air.

The gem of the Maraca show was the international award winning flutist, composer and director Orlando "Maraca" Valle — his enthusiasm was contagious, while his musicianship was brilliant.

The audience even got out of their lawn chairs and took to the dance floor, thanks to several spicy salsa numbers the Cuban band performed.

"It's great," said long time JazzFest attendee Susan Schank.

"I love supporting the jazz festival because every year they bring in such great talent. It's really evolved over the years," Schank said while

swaying to the music. "We're right up there with all of the jazz festivals in the bigger city. Hatters will have another chance to enjoy international entertainment in a warm breeze at the Transit Terminal Parkade show, which will feature free live entertainment starting

For more information on upcoming Medicine Hat JazzFest performances visit www.medicinehatnews.com

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