

SOL ZIM

Cape Times

live entertainment

All that glitters is Brother Zim

IF SOL ZIM'S stage personality is as impressive as his diamonds, then folks are in for a sparkling evening on Sunday at the Nico.

Zim's gems are breathtaking. There is a huge gold and glittery knuckleduster on one hand and on the other a ring in the shape of a treble clef with diamonds all the way up. And down. And around.

Canadian-born Zim promises that his only appearance in Cape Town on Sunday night is more likely to be a "happening" than a concert.

"It's because I involve the audience," he said on arrival from Johannesburg this week with his wife June. "My concerts become like a Jewish revival, creating a Jewish emotional feeling that can be felt from the six-year-olds to the 60-year-olds."

Zim, founder and half of the Brothers Zim, a Jewish singing duo which travels extensively, will be appearing without his soul brother Paul on his South African tour, but will be backed by a 12-piece orchestra.

"My material is mainly Jewish but I present it in a very modern, Las Vegas style.

"Usually my concerts end with the audience hand-clapping, feet-stomping and everyone singing along in Hebrew and Yiddish."

Sol comes from five generations of cantors and blessed like his antecedents with a light tenor voice he considered becoming an opera singer. He learnt 23 of the most famous lyric operatic roles, but then his background, blood and early training in Yeshiva colleges, made him switch his energies to Jewish music.

"I am a renegade. Yes, a renegade. I like to innovate and have been innovating in terms of Jewish music for years.

"I have literally changed the Friday night service for the more progressive Jewish people. I have made it so that people must be involved in the service rather than be spectators.

"I don't permit people just to sit there and I think this is necessary if the service is to survive.

"I have tried to create a musical emotional balance which will tug at the heart of the people and give them the sense of what we call 'Yiddishkeit'.

The Brothers Zim have performed in clubs and halls throughout the USA, Israel, Canada, Europe and Australia, and have recorded 15 albums.

Their packed engagement diary for concerts in and around Florida (USA) between mid-December to mid-January would give even a newspaper social editor good reason to think of changing her career to something less exhausting.

Life for Sol may be full of glitter, but it is also very hard work.

Fiona Chisholm

CAPE TOWN

South Africa