

ZOË MODIGA

A ZULU FAIRYTALE

A pertinent exploration of identity, Zoë Modiga's latest album is proof that the South African artist is on the up. She chews the cud with **Jane Cornwell** about topics ranging from the Black Lives Matter movement to the importance of cattle in African society

Zoë Modiga is a fast rising star in South Africa, and no wonder. Hers is a talent brimming with blessings: a virtuosic voice; a charismatic stage presence; instrumental skills (she plays piano, clarinet and guitar); a knack for composing songs with hooks and texture, and for penning lyrics that embrace, in her mother tongue of isiZulu, ideas around identity, spirituality and self-discovery.

Her current sophomore album *Inganekwane* (isiZulu for 'Fairytale') takes the themes explored in her 2017 debut, *Yellow*:

The Novel, and delves even deeper into what it means to be a young black woman in Africa today. More unusually, as featured across the album's artwork – Modiga draped in white fake fur, or with curving silver horns, standing amid a herd of cattle – the work also examines the cultural significance of the cow in everyday African life. "Identity is something that's happened to you, so this is me looking back and being appreciative of where I come from," says the Durban-born 27-year-old, Zooming with me from her home in Johannesburg. ▶

Photos by Taverda Chidzira

