



*The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor*

**PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR WELCOME**

**ADDRESS: 11<sup>TH</sup> UNISA INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION**

**19 January – 4 February 2012**

**ZK Mathews Hall, Muckleneuk Campus**

**University of South Africa**

- Programme Director : Mr John Roos
- Mrs Makhanya (accompanying me)
- Members of the Unisa Council
  - Dr S Mokone-Matabane; Deputy Chairperson
  - Ms JA Glennie
  - Dr C von Eck
  - Prof M J Linington
- Prof Narend Baijnath, Pro Vice Chancellor of Unisa and Mrs Baijnath
- Colleagues of Unisa's Executive Management
- Previous Chancellors of Unisa
- Honourable Jurors:
  - Ms SM Voges, Director: Directorate Music (Chairperson)
  - Mr A Delle Vigne
  - Prof A Pisarev and Mrs
  - Mr A Pratt
  - Mr J Roos
  - Ms N Schumann
  - Mr T Vasary

- Ms E Wong
- Prof R Yassa
- Board of Control of the Unisa Foundation
  - Ms J de Villiers
  - Mr L Mngoma
- Members of the Board of Trustees
  - Ms M Letlape
- Honourable members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Mr Mthobi Tyamzashe, Chairperson of the Vodacom Foundation and other members from our main sponsor, Vodacom
- Dr Johnny Meko: Musical Director - Music Academy of the Gauteng Youth Jazz Band
- Members of the Organising Committee of the Unisa Music Competition
- Sponsors of Special prizes
  - Mr T Zsandinyi, COO: Travel with Flair
  - Mr T Potgieter, Commercial GM: SAA
  - Mr B Dekker
  - Mr G Muller, Avis
- Participants
- Host parents
- Members of the media, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen

It is a real pleasure - and an honour - to welcome you to South Africa and to the University of South Africa, on the occasion of this, our 12<sup>th</sup> Unisa International Piano Competition.

This competition continues a tradition that was begun at Unisa thirty years ago, of holding music competitions that would bring together both budding and accomplished musicians, to test and hone their abilities and skills against their peers, locally and internationally. I am very happy and proud to say that it never disappoints in the quality and calibre of the contestants, the competition and the organisation, and so we can all look forward with anticipation and excitement, to a few days of unadulterated edification.

Often when people speak of a department or foundation of an institution of which they are very proud, or which brings them great honour, they refer to it as the "*jewel in the crown*". Rather old-fashioned terminology, but quite evocative, nonetheless. Unisa's Music Foundation can justifiably be dubbed the jewel in our crown in that it has consistently performed in a manner that has not only brought honour to our university and our country, but with that honour, a reputation as a music centre of international standing and excellence. It has, over a period of 12 years, consistently shown its mettle and its ability to maintain the highest international standards - even while our institution was navigating profound and fundamental change in line with the transformation of our country and our education system. That, I assure you, is no mean feat. What it speaks of is an unwavering commitment to excellence and professionalism and a deep love and dedication to music. And this illustrious competition ladies and gentlemen, encapsulates all of those qualities.

Another characteristic of a department or foundation of excellence is that it never rests on its laurels, but continuously seeks to stretch, develop and extend its practice and influence beyond narrow or rigidly defined parameters. That too has been a hallmark of the Unisa Music Foundation and we have shared some wonderful and inspiring performances by the young and the not so young, as they cut their teeth as budding musicians, on programmes and initiatives developed, led and supported by the Foundation. We believe that this approach contributes to and results in initiatives such as the Music Academy of Gauteng Youth Jazz Band, who will be performing for us this evening under the direction of Dr Johnny Meko, member of Unisa's music examinations committee and also - coincidentally - recipient of an honorary doctorate from Unisa.

But when it comes to music, ladies and gentlemen, that passion, love and dedication reaches far beyond the confines of our institution to draw other equally committed people into the fold; people who love the arts - and music in particular - and who are prepared to give of their money, time and

expertise, to ensure that music flourishes at a time when we see so much neglect of the arts.

We are extremely grateful therefore, to our competition's main sponsors Vodacom for their loyal and unstinting support, and to the sponsors of the special prizes for their generosity. A special word of thanks must also go to our illustrious panel of jurors for sharing their expertise and for giving so freely of their time. You are most welcome. We trust that you will find this competition as rewarding and exciting as those who have been jurors on previous occasions.

Ladies and gentlemen, it would be remiss of me I think, if I were not to acknowledge in my welcome the host parents with whom our competitors will be staying for the duration of the competition. I have no doubt that you are continuing the tradition of hospitality and friendliness for which our country is renowned. In a sense you are also ambassadors, and I feel confident that our competitors will take back to their respective countries happy experiences and memories that in turn will make them ambassadors for South Africa. That is what music does. It crosses the boundaries of language, culture and politics; it draws people in and unites them in shared joy and appreciation.

As the President of the Unisa International Music Competition and the Chancellor of our University, Judge President Bernard Ngoepe so eloquently said in his message at a previous competition: "Music can penetrate the innermost depths of our souls. May our visitors return home invigorated and inspired by the spirit of Africa!"

Ladies and gentlemen Judge President Ngoepe has unfortunately been called away on matters of the State and so it is my very great honour, on his behalf, to welcome you once again, and to declare this 12<sup>th</sup> Unisa International Music competition open.

Thank you.