

## **Programme Message – 13<sup>th</sup> Unisa International Piano Competition**

**Prof Mandla S Makhanya**

It is with tremendous enthusiasm that I welcome all competitors, jurors, invited guests, industry partners, members of the public and members of the Unisa community to the 13<sup>th</sup> Unisa International Piano Competition. It is my distinct pleasure and honour to extend a very warm welcome to our international visitors, including competitors, jury members and the orchestra conductor who have travelled from over 20 countries to join us for the 13<sup>th</sup> Unisa International Piano Competition.

Piano competitions are held in very high esteem at Unisa, each building on an illustrious 34-year history of such competitions. Our piano competition is undoubtedly the most popular of the various types of music competitions offered by the University of South Africa, bringing with it prestige and recognition that extends well beyond our borders. Our international piano competition, which happens to be the only international competition on the African Continent ranks amongst the very best piano competitions in the world as evidenced by the large number of our laureates that have established themselves amongst the leading concert pianists in the world.

The current competition will be breaking new ground and establishing itself as a pioneer in the world of international piano competitions. It is the very first competition in the prestigious World Federation of International Piano Competitions (based in Geneva) to include a jazz piano category parallel the classical piano category. This remarkable achievement is expected to set the standard for all future piano competitions that aim to include both jazz and classical piano categories in the World Federation of International Music Competitions. The Artistic Director, Prof Karendera Devroop has informed me that several international piano competitions have already expressed an interest in expanding their formats to include jazz. Unisa is extremely proud to be taking the lead in this initiative, while adhering to the highest possible international standards.

This competition will also bring together several of our industry partners, including but not limited to professional orchestra and jazz musicians who will accompany our finalists, South Africa's music copyright society SAMRO, media broadcasters including MNET (television), various print and online media, and Unisa's very own production teams at Facilities, Sound and Video. We pride ourselves on collaborating with our industry partners to ensure the best possible production for this prestigious event.

This competition will once again feature a shadow jury comprised of students from various universities, development and community engagement music programmes and entrants from our national piano competition. The goal of the shadow jury is to give young students from across the country the opportunity to develop their skills as potential jurors and examiners while also making a positive contribution to the competition and education across the country. We are very fortunate to have students from most universities that offer music from across the country.

To all participants, jurors, attendees and professionals involved in this competition, I wish you the very best for a joyous and momentous competition. I encourage you to take some time out to

explore our beautiful country and enjoy the tourist attractions in the Tshwane region. My sincerest thanks go out to everyone involved in making this competition a success.