

7th Unisa International

VOICE COMPETITION

COMPETITION RULES AND REGULATIONS

21 January to 1 February 2026

ZK Matthews Great Hall, Unisa

Pretoria, South Africa

Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha
Winner of the 6th Unisa
International Voice
Competition, Classical

Define tomorrow.

UNISA



UNISA INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITIONS

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The Unisa International Music Competition was established in 1982 and is now widely recognised as among the most prestigious competitions in the world. It is the only competition on the African continent that is a member of the World Federation of International Music Competitions. A piano competition is hosted every four years interspersed with voice, strings, and wind competitions in the intervening years. Past laureates include leading international personalities and rising stars.

In 2026, Unisa will host the 7th International Voice Competition from 21 January to 1 February in Pretoria, South Africa.

The Unisa International Music Competition is unique in that it offers two categories: classical and jazz.

COMPETITION FORMAT

ONLINE	QUALIFYING ROUND	Recital of 20 minutes
COMPETITION	ROUNDS 1 – 3	Recitals with piano
	FINAL ROUND	With orchestra (classical category) or with jazz ensemble (jazz category)

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- All information contained in this booklet was correct at the time of going to press. The Organising Committee of the 7th Unisa International Voice Competition reserves the right to make changes if circumstances warrant it.
- The official language of the competition is English. All correspondence must be conducted in English.
- By signing the entry form, each competitor accepts all the rules and regulations of the competition and the decisions of the Jury and agrees to fulfil all obligations associated with the prizes.
- A maximum of thirty competitors inclusive of both categories (jazz and classical) will be selected for the live rounds of the competition in Pretoria.
- The organisers reserve the right to record all the performances during the competition, which can be used at their discretion for radio and television broadcasts, or otherwise. Each competitor, by signing the entry form, will renounce all rights, fees and claims regarding such recordings and broadcasts.

Eligibility

- Classical and jazz vocalists of all nationalities may enter.
- The competition is open to applicants born on or after 1 February 1993.
- Prize winners and finalists of previous Unisa International Voice Competitions are not eligible to enter.

Qualifying round

- All applicants must submit an online video recording as set out in the repertoire requirements.

- Candidates will be required to provide links to their online recordings (YouTube or other file hosting sites) for the qualifying round to the competition organisers.
- All files must be viewable online. The competition organisers will not download video recordings. DVD recordings will not be accepted. Each piece must appear as a separate video track on the online submission.
- Each recording must be certified as original by either the recording engineer or the applicant's teacher. Edited recordings are prohibited.

Entry

- The closing date for entries is 21 July 2025. Video links, electronic application forms and proof of entry fee payment must be submitted to the competition secretariat by this date.
- The following documents must be submitted with the completed entry form:
 - a. A recent colour digital photo (head and shoulders), for use in the official competition programme should you be selected to participate. Digital photos must be 300 dpi.
 - b. A short, typewritten, concise biography (no more than 100 words) in English for inclusion in the programme should you be selected to participate.
 - c. A copy of your CV.
 - d. A minimum of two recommendations by teachers and/or professional musicians.

- e. Proof of payment of the non-refundable entry fee of US\$ 100 (R500 for South African citizens). Payment by electronic funds transfer only into the University of South Africa bank account.
- f. A certified/notarized copy of your birth certificate or identity document showing your date of birth and nationality.
- g. Links to your online videos (See Qualifying Round on pages 6 and 8).

The entry fee can be paid into the following bank account:

Account holder: UNISA Income Account Bank: First National Bank
 Branch code: 250645 Branch name: Sunny Park
 Account number: 62799625200
 Account Type: Cheque
 Reference: 1 12200 and your surname
 SWIFT code: FIRNZAJJJ

- Email proof of payment to Kgomotso Boshielo at boshimk@unisa.ac.za and copy musiccomp@unisa.ac.za.
- Applicants will be informed of the decision of the selection panel by no later than 30 September 2025.

Only emailed applications will be accepted

Contact details

E-mail: boshimk@unisa.ac.za and musiccomp@unisa.ac.za

Web site: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/musicfoundation>

- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Any candidate who provides false or misleading information will be disqualified.

Competition rounds

- The competition will be held in the ZK Matthews Hall, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Building, Unisa Muckleneuk Campus, Pretoria, South Africa.
- All live rounds are open to the public.
- The competition consists of five rounds:
 1. A Qualifying Round per online video submission.
 2. A 1st and 2nd Round (with piano accompaniment), after which the first elimination of candidates will take place.
 3. A Semi-Final Round consisting of a recital with piano.
 4. A Final Round consisting of a recital with an orchestra (classical vocalists) or a performance with a rhythm section (jazz vocalists).
- Order of appearances in Round 1 will be determined by drawing lots.
- This order of appearance will be adhered to in subsequent rounds, except at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Jury for specific reasons.
- A maximum of 12 competitors (6 classical and 6 jazz pianists) for the Semi-Final Round and a maximum of 6 competitors for the Final Round (3 classical and 3 jazz vocalists) will be chosen, pending the decision of the Jury.
- All the rounds are accumulative: performances in previous rounds will count towards the end result.

Travel and accommodation arrangements

- The organisers will provide all successful applicants with one return air ticket (economy class) from and to their closest major international airport.
- Free accommodation with host families will be provided for all competitors for the duration of the competition. This will include meals and transport. If competitors prefer other accommodation arrangements, this will be for their own account.

PRIZES

Rehearsal times

- All candidates will receive the same amount of rehearsal time in the ZK Matthews Great Hall and will be informed of the exact date and time beforehand.
- Competitors must be in Pretoria at least 2 full days prior to the competition so that sufficient rehearsal time can be allocated.

Accompanists

- The organisers will provide piano accompanists free of charge for the First, Second, Third and Fourth Rounds of the Competition, as well as for a fixed number of rehearsals. Additional rehearsals will be at the competitors' own expense.
- Should competitors wish to make use of their own accompanist, the organisers will not be responsible for any expenses incurred (including travelling and accommodation costs for such accompanists).

Voting procedure

- Jury members vote by secret ballot.
- Members of the Jury will abstain from voting for competitors who are their present students who have been their students in the past five years, or who are related to them.
- Competitors who are still participating in the competition may not establish contact with the Jury members. Competitors who do so will be disqualified.
- All the rounds are accumulative: performances in previous rounds will count towards the end result.

Classical and Jazz Vocalists

First Prizes	USD15,000
Second Prizes	USD 8,000
Third Prizes	USD 5,000

- Special prizes will also be awarded.
- The adjudicators are not obliged to award all the prizes should the standard of the competitors not warrant it.

REPERTOIRE REQUIREMENTS

Classical vocalists

- Singing from memory is compulsory except for the South African work, which may be performed with the score.
- Repeats are not required, but da capos must be performed.
- No work may be performed in more than one live round. (Works recorded for the Qualifying Round may be repeated in the live rounds.)
- The organisers reserve the right to request prospective competitors to change their chosen repertoire should the chosen works not comply with the required standard.
- Competitors must submit copies of scores in advance of the competition.
- Competitors will not be permitted to make repertoire changes after 15 October 2025.
- The order of pieces performed in each round is left to the competitor's discretion.
- Competitors who do not adhere to the minimum/maximum time allocation may be disqualified.

- Competitors may not perform their own compositions.
- Scores of the prescribed South African work will be sent to the successful candidates by 31 October 2025.
- When selecting repertoire lists for solo rounds, applicants are requested to bear the following criteria in mind:
 - Good taste, musicianship and vocal virtuosity;
 - Musical expressivity and interpretative ability;
 - An understanding of different vocal genres and musical styles.
 - All repertoire choices are subject to approval.

Jazz vocalists

- Singing from memory is compulsory except for the South African work which may be performed with the score.
- All pieces in all rounds must feature an improvised section of at least two choruses except ballads where one chorus of improvisation is accepted. Improvisation is defined as the use of 'scat' syllables for the creation of original melodic and rhythmic content.
- Candidates that intend performing an original composition(s) must include 3 copies of the composition(s) with their application form.
- No work from the repertoire or chosen by the competitor may be performed in more than one live round. (Works recorded for the Qualifying Round may be repeated in the live rounds.)
- The organisers reserve the right to request prospective competitors to change their chosen repertoire should the chosen works not comply with the required standard.
- Copies of certain scores/lead sheets may be requested from competitors.
- Competitors will not be permitted to make any repertoire changes after 15 October 2025.

- The order of pieces performed in each round is left to the discretion of the competitor.
- Competitors who do not adhere to the minimum/maximum time allocation may be disqualified.
- Scores of the prescribed South African work will be sent to the successful candidates by 31 October 2025.
- When selecting repertoire lists for solo rounds, applicants are requested to bear the following criteria in mind which will form part of the adjudication process:
 - a. Vocal quality and ability to swing;
 - b. Choice of repertoire and use of jazz language;
 - c. Improvisation, originality and interpretation;
 - d. Ability to sing different styles (such as Bebop, Latin, swing)
- All repertoire choices are subject to approval.



Cynthia Abraham
Winner of the 6th
Unisa International
Voice Competition,
Jazz

CLASSICAL VOCALISTS

1. Qualifying Round

Each candidate must submit, together with his or her entry, an online recording with a time limit of 20 minutes. Please ensure that the link(s) to the online video recording(s) are active and can be viewed by the screening panel. The recording must be of his or her performance of four (4) works, as follows:

- 1.1 An aria from the 17th or 18th centuries;
- 1.2 Two art songs of which one must be in German;
- 1.3 An opera or concert aria.

2. First Round

The minimum performance time is 20 minutes and the maximum 25 minutes.

- 2.1 One aria antica from the 17th or 18th century sung in the original language;
- 2.2 One art song from the German, French, Italian, Spanish, Scandinavian, Slavic, Russian, English, American or South African repertoire sung in the original language;
- 2.3 Any accompanied or unaccompanied song (composed after 1900) sung in the original language;
- 2.4 One opera aria of own choice from any period.
- 2.5 A prescribed South African work for voice (approximately 3 minutes in duration).

3. Second Round

A minimum performance time of 25 minutes and a maximum of 35 minutes.

It should be a diverse programme that must include the following:

- 3.1 Two opera arias from different periods and languages.
- 3.2 Two art songs in different languages;
- 3.3 One operetta aria.
- 3.4 Works of own choice may be added to make up the required minimum performance time.

4. Third Round

A recital comprising works of your own choice. A minimum of 25 and a maximum performance time of 35 minutes. A five-minute interval will be permitted. This interval does not form part of the performance time. Candidates are required to adhere to the following:

- 4.1 At least half of the programme should include arias or art songs of the bel canto and Romantic periods;
- 4.2 At least one work must be presented from the following list of composers: Bellini, Boito, Donizetti, Leoncavallo, Mascagni, Mozart, Puccini, Rossini, Tchaikovsky or Verdi;
- 4.3 One of the arias presented must have been composed after 1900.
- 4.4 Works of own choice may be added to make up the required minimum performance time.

5. Fourth Round

A performance with orchestra of a minimum of 25 minutes and a maximum of 35 minutes comprised of works from the list of operas and Lieder below.

- 5.1 At least one aria from the following operas must be included in the final round repertoire

Beethoven	Fidelio
Bellini	I Capuleti e I Montecchi I Puritani La sonnambula
Bizet	Carmen Les pêcheurs de perles
Catalani	La Wally
Charpentier	Louise
Cilea	Adriana Lecouvreur L'Arlesiana
Delibes	Lakmé
Donizetti	Don Pasquale L'Elisir d'amore La Favorita Lucia di Lammermoor Lucrezia Borgia Linda di Chamounix
Dvořák	Rusalka
Gershwin	Porgy and Bess
Giordano	Andrea Chenier
Gluck	Orfeo ed Euridice
Gounod	Faust Roméo et Juliette

Handel	Alcina Giulio Cesare
Leoncavallo	I Pagliacci
Mascagni	Cavalleria Rusticana
Massenet	Werther Manon
Meyerbeer	La prophète
Millocker	Die Dubarry Gasparone
Mozart	Così fan tutte Don Giovanni Die Entführung aus dem Serail Idomeneo Le Nozze di Figaro Die Zauberflöte
Offenbach	Les Contes d'Hoffmann
Ponchielli	La Gioconda
Puccini	Gianni Schicchi La Bohème Madama Butterfly Manon Lescaut Turandot Tosca
Purcell	Dido and Aeneas
Rossini	Il Barbiere di Siviglia La Cenerentola Semiramide
Saint-Saëns	Samson et Dalila
Strauss J.	Die Fledermaus

Strauss R.	Der Rosenkavalier
Tchaikovsky	Eugene Onegin
Verdi	Aïda
	Un Ballo in maschera
	Don Carlo
	La Forza del Destino
	Macbeth
	Nabucco
	Rigoletto
	Simon Boccanegra
	La Traviata
	Il Trovatore
	Ernani
Wagner	Der Fliegende Holländer
	Lohengrin
	Die Meistersinger
	Tannhäuser
Weber	Der Freischütz

5.2 At least one aria from the following non-operatic works must be included in the final round repertoire:

Bach	Hohe Messe
	Johannes Passion
	Matthaus Passion
	Missa in A
Brahms	Ein Deutsches Requiem
Dvorak	Stabat Mater
Elgar	Dream of Gerontius
Faure	Requiem

Handel	Alexander's Feast
	Jephta
	Joshua
	Messiah
Haydn	Die Jahreszeiten
	Die Schöpfung
Khumalo	UShaka KaSenzangakhona
Lehar	Giuditta
	Das Land des Lächelns
	Paganini
Mahler	Kindertotenlieder
Mendelssohn	Elijah
Mozart	Exsultate Jubilate (KV165)
	Grosse Messe in c
Rossini	Stabat Mater
	Tancredi
Strauss J	Die Zigeunerbaron
	Eine Nacht in Venedig
Strauss R	Amor
	Cäcilie
	Ständchen
	Vier Letzte Lieder
	Zueignung
Verdi	Requiem
Wagner	Wesendonck Lieder

JAZZ VOCALISTS

1. Qualifying Round

Each candidate must submit, together with his or her entry, an online recording with a time limit of ± 20 minutes. Please ensure that the link(s) to the online video recording(s) are active and can be viewed by the screening panel.

Accompaniment (rhythm section, piano, guitar or jazz play-a-long) is permitted. The recording must be of his or her performance of three (3) works chosen from the prescribed repertoire list as follows:

- 1.1 A jazz standard (medium or up-tempo swing) that includes a minimum of 2 choruses of improvisation;
- 1.2 A Latin American standard that includes a minimum of 2 choruses of improvisation;
- 1.3 A jazz ballad that includes one chorus of improvisation.

2. First Round

A minimum performance time of 20 minutes and a maximum of 25 minutes. The choice of repertoire is left to the discretion of the vocalist but must include the following:

- 2.1 A medium tempo Blues;
- 2.2 An up-tempo jazz standard;
- 2.3 A Latin American jazz standard.
- 2.4 A prescribed South African work for voice (approximately 3 minutes in duration).
- 2.5 Works of own choice may be added to make up the required minimum performance time.

3. Second Round

A minimum performance time of 20 minutes and a maximum of 25 minutes. The choice of repertoire is left to the discretion of the vocalist but must include:

- 3.1 A jazz ballad;
- 3.2 A 'rhythm changes' based composition;
- 3.3 A 'contemporary' jazz composition (any piece written after 1975 – including original compositions).
- 3.4 Works of own choice may be added to make up the required minimum performance time.

4. Third Round

A recital comprising work(s) of your own choice. A minimum of 25 and a maximum performance time of 35 minutes. A five-minute interval will be permitted. This interval does not form part of the performance time. Original compositions are permitted.

5. Fourth Round

Finalists will be required to perform a programme of a minimum of 25 minutes and a maximum of 35 minutes with a rhythm section supplied by the competition organisers. Candidates may choose their own repertoire but will be required to perform one compulsory work.

This work will be given to the candidates at the end of the third round when the finalists have been selected. Original compositions are permitted. Choice of repertoire, programming of selections, originality and improvisation will form part of the adjudication process.