

The South African Jazz Songbook

Music at Unisa 145 Year Celebrations:

Prof QM Temane

Ladies and gentlemen, Unisa is a unique institution in many ways. From our educational delivery method to our examinations process we are indeed an institution that prides itself on being radically different from other educational institutions while striving towards the same goals of educating the citizens of our country. One of the truly unique departments at Unisa is our Music Directorate that is viewed as the leader in the field of music within our country and abroad.

Our directorate music is comprised of two divisions most notably our music examinations division and the Unisa Music Foundation. Our examinations division is the only South African Music examining body in the country having been in existence for 125 years. Over the past 125 years the music examinations division has become the standard bearer for music in South Africa with

most if not all universities accepting our examination levels as the acceptable standard within the country. This year we conducted our very first music examinations in India and plans are underway to expand to African countries on the continent. The examinations division also hosts the Unisa Music Scholarship competition which has provided the platform for many of South Africa's young musicians to launch their careers. Unisa music examinations include exams in both jazz and classical music and the division publishes a wealth of educational materials.

The Unisa Music Foundation provides three core functions: national and international music competitions; music concerts and special projects; and community music engagement. As we celebrate 145 years at Unisa, we also celebrate 36 years of music competitions and almost 20 years of concerts and community music engagement at Unisa. Currently our competitions are ranked amongst the best in the world and include both

jazz and classical categories. Many of our winners have gone on to prolific international careers and the competitions have provided much needed access for black South African artists who are increasingly entering and winning competitions in South Africa and abroad. In February of this year Cecilia Rangwanasha became the first black South African female ever to win one of Unisa's prestigious international competitions. She was joined by Cynthia Abrahms another black female from France who won the jazz category of the voice competition.

Our concert series have welcomed the best performers in the world to Unisa's concert halls including many South African artists in the fields of jazz, African music, classical music, Gospel music, Indian music and more contemporary music styles. A flagship of the Unisa Music Foundation is their community music engagement programme which provide access to music tuition to over 1000 disadvantaged South African youth

from Soshanguve, Mamelodi, Hammanskraal and many other historically disadvantaged communities. Many of our students have gone on to obtain their highest music qualifications including bachelors and master's degrees in music and other fields such as engineering. Some of these students and teachers will be performing tonight with the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra. Tonight we will also get to see and hear Prof Bobby Ferrazza on stage. The reason for me singling out Prof Ferrazza who is the head of jazz studies at Oberlin Conservatory is because he was instrumental in helping get Mr Tshepiso Ledwaba, one of our community engagement tutors to study and train at Oberlin Conservatory on a full scholarship. Upon his return Mr Ledwaba will become the very first Steinway trained and certified piano technician in South Africa. Such is the nature of the wonderful relationships that exist between the Unisa Music Foundation and many organisations abroad.

This evening's concert is part of a much broader project that the Music Foundation has conducted with the US Embassy in Pretoria. The entire project as described by Professor Makhanya involves a large scale collaboration between artists from the USA and South Africa. The Unisa Music Foundation has collaborated on several special projects such as this one with collaborative concerts, artists and cultural exchange between several embassies. Most recently we collaborated with the Embassy of the Netherlands, the Embassy of Venezuela, the Embassy of Mexico and the Embassy of Uruguay on similar projects. This year we also initiated a partnership with the Embassy of Seychelles and in April we had one of the premier jazz ensembles from the Seychelles perform on our recently launched Unisa Jazz Festival.

As the Unisa Music Foundation continues to push the boundaries in education, performance and cultural exchange we take pride in building

relationships with institutions within South Africa and abroad. The Directorate Music is fully aware of the important role it plays within Unisa and our country in supporting the arts through education and performance. I am proud to include the Directorate Music within my portfolio and as Unisa celebrates 145 years I anxiously await the new developments that will unfold within the Directorate Music in the future.

Introduce artists.....

Ladies and gentlemen, this brings to a close a short yet important reflection on the role played by the Directorate Music with Unisa. At this point I would like to introduce the artists as they make their way to the stage, starting with the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra conducted by maestro Gerben Grooten and followed by Kevin Gibson on drums, Emma Adomeit on bass, Bob Ferrazza on guitar, Michael Orenstein on piano, James Ford on trumpet, Chris Anderson on

trombone and Karendra Devroop on saxophone.
Please join me on welcoming the artists to the
stage. Enjoy the concert.