



YOUTH FESTIVAL

9 AUGUST 2025

ODEION

FREE STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

the celebration continues



YOUTH FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING SOUTH AFRICA'S GREATEST TALENTS

CONDUCTOR: DANIEL BOICO

PROGRAMME:

WIENIAWSKI: SECOND & THIRD MOVEMENTS FROM VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 2
HELEN LIU, VIOLIN

HÄNDEL: "MA QUANDO TORNERAI" FROM ALCINA
KARABO RABALOI, SOPRANO

BINGE: SECOND & THIRD MOVEMENTS FROM CONCERTO FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE
COURTNEY ESAU, ALTO SAXOPHONE

BEETHOVEN: FIRST MOVEMENT FROM PIANO CONCERTO NO. 4
KARLIN OLIVIER, PIANO

- INTERVAL -

MOZART: "O ZITTE NICHT, MEIN LIEBER SOHN" FROM THE MAGIC FLUTE
XOLISWA MEMANE, SOPRANO

GREGSON: SECOND & THIRD MOVEMENTS FROM TUBA CONCERTO
KAMVELIHLE SANQELA, TUBA

GLAZUNOV: MÉDITATION FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA
KITSO MOREENG, VIOLIN

VIVALDI: FIRST MOVEMENT FROM CONCERTO IN C MAJOR (F. III, NO. 6)
SIAS SEVENSTER, CELLO

PROKOFIEV: PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1
DANÉ VAN GRAAN, PIANO

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PROGRAMME

HENRYK WIENIAWSKI

1835 - 1880

VIOLIN CONCERTO NO.2 IN D MINOR, OP. 22 (1862)

II. Romance: Andante non troppo

III. Allegro con fuoco – Allegro moderato (à la Zingara)

Henryk Wieniawski was a highly regarded virtuoso violinist, who wrote many works for his own performance. His style has the bravura stamp of Liszt and Paganini, although the brooding lyricism and formal discipline of Brahms also characterise the D minor violin concerto.

The beautiful Romance begins with a tranquil melody in the violin's middle register. Wieniawski initially accompanies this with pizzicato strings, as well as brief solos for the clarinet, oboe and cellos. After the orchestra becomes increasingly impassioned, the soloist soars to a higher register. This is a particularly beautiful section, the violin carried aloft by the surging texture beneath him. The orchestra eventually recedes, bringing the movement to a serene close.

The finale, 'in the gypsy style' begins with an exhilarating cadenza, the soloist unperturbed by a few string interjections. A brief restatement of the opening material ushers in the gypsy style proper. First-time listeners will delight in the unpredictable alternations between elements of the czardas and the lyrical second theme (actually the second theme of the opening movement). Wieniawski signals the penultimate section with a rapid flute solo – we may forgive Tchaikovsky for pinching this material for his own violin concerto some years later. Exuberant spiccato double stops and rapid scalar passages bring the concerto to an exciting conclusion.

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

1685 - 1759

ALCINA, HWV34 (1735)

Aria: Ma quando tornerai

Alcina was first performed in 1735 at London's Covent Garden. In common with many baroque opera seria, the plot is based upon a legend, with both 'magical' and 'rescue' elements. Handel squeezed no less than three operas out of Ludovico Ariosto's epic 1532 poem Orlando furioso: Alcina, Ariodante and Orlando.

Although the premiere was a great success, demanding a further seventeen performances, Handel was soon to fall victim to rival companies, and would turn increasingly to oratorio in the 1740s and 1750s. Nevertheless, the quality of Alcina was immediately recognised and admired. One of the composer's friends, observing him direct the first rehearsal, wrote 'While Mr Handel was playing his part, I could not help thinking him a necromancer in the midst of his own enchantments'.

This was a reference to the outlandish plot, in which two enchantresses, the sisters Alcina and Morgana, wreak havoc upon an island of villagers by seducing various hapless male victims, before turning them into animals when the sisters become bored of them. Things take a ridiculous turn when the fiancée of the knight Ruggiero shows up to rescue him, disguised as a man ('Ricciardo') with the aid of a magic ring. Naturally, the sisters each fall in love with the pair (Alcina with Ruggiero and Morgana with 'Ricciardo'), and chaos ensues. The amusingly convoluted plot may remind opera lovers of later works such as Mozart's Magic flute and Beethoven's Fidelio.

Ma quando tornerai is one of Handel's best 'rage arias', sung by the title character. The opening section is a virtuoso showpiece, abounding with sparkling tunes and fiery coloratura passages. The second section begins in a remote key, and culminates in an unexpectedly passionate declamatory passage, before the da capo return affords the singer yet more opportunity for vocal fireworks.

RONALD BINGE

1910 - 1979

CONCERTO FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND ORCHESTRA (1956)

II. Romance: Andante espressivo

III. Rondo: Allegro giocoso

Ronald Binge was a British pianist, composer and arranger, famous for his collaboration with the Italian conductor Mantovani. Binge's saxophone concerto is a favourite with audiences, blending the lyrical qualities of the instrument with dance and jazz elements of the wartime era. It was commissioned by the BBC for the 1956 Festival of Light Music and dedicated to performance by Sigurd Raschèr. Raschèr was an American saxophonist, admired for his beautiful tone and fluent high register playing, both of which encouraged many composers to include the instrument as part of the orchestra in their symphonic music.

The Romance is particularly popular, requiring both elegance and passion from the soloist. The finale, a rondo, is lightly accompanied, allowing the saxophone to indulge in passages of considerable virtuosity, albeit in a cheerful and playful manner. Although Binge was self-taught as a composer, he continued to study counterpoint and instrumentation even after having achieved considerable fame in the wartime era. One of the most attractive qualities of his scoring is his trademark 'cascading' string sound, which is reminiscent of the Golden Era of Hollywood cinema of the 1940s and 1950s.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

1770 - 1827

PIANO CONCERTO NO.4 IN G MAJOR, OPUS 58 (1806)

I. Allegro moderato

Just before Christmas in 1808, Beethoven held a marathon fundraising concert in Vienna, the programme of which included an extended piano improvisation, two concert arias, excerpts from the Mass in C, and the premieres of the Fifth symphony, the Sixth symphony, the Fourth Piano concerto and the Choral fantasy(!) Unfortunately, the four-hour performance was plagued with all sorts of problems, such as the non-availability of the best players, the double-booking of the concert hall, and the failure of the heating system on a particularly cold night in December. The only full rehearsal had taken place that morning, and the performers were already exhausted by the evening. To make matters worse, Beethoven himself misread one of the repeat signs in the Choral fantasy, and the piece had to be stopped and restarted.

Two hundred years cover a multitude of sins; the problems of 1808 are long forgotten, and the composer's eccentricities part of the Beethoven legend. The Fourth Piano concerto is today recognised as one of the summits of the repertoire – it is a sublime and immortal work, and the most poetic of the master's concertos. The opening is unlike that of any previous classical concerto, as it is the piano alone that is first heard. This is no bravura, forte statement, either – instead, the soloist begins as if he is trying out the instrument, playing a few simple chords to test the sound. This is followed by a brief scalar run, and an invitation to the orchestra to respond. The answer is unprecedented, beginning in 'the wrong key', before modulating back to G major and presenting the exposition at last. Indeed, the harmonic novelties abound in the first movement, which juxtaposes lyrical and dramatic passages, all the while demonstrating Beethoven's command of form and instrumentation.

PROGRAMME

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART 1756 - 1791

THE MAGIC FLUTE, K.620 (1791)

Aria: O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn

Mozart composed several operas in his short life, which contain some of the finest music ever written. Many of them (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* & *Così fan tutte*) are written in Italian, and thus could 'travel' Europe, Italian being the international language of opera in that era. However, Mozart also composed a number of theatre works that are similar to opera, but with spoken dialogue instead of recitative – German works of this type are termed 'Singspiel'. For context, Beethoven's *Fidelio* is another Singspiel, and Bizet's *Carmen* is an example of the French equivalent, *opéra comique*. This genre was often shorter in length than conventional opera, usually family-friendly, and sometimes written in a dialect rather than formal language.

Mozart's *Magic Flute* is his final stage work, and premiered only months before his death. Despite the ridiculous and surreal plot, its music is of exceptionally high quality, and many of its arias and duets are sung in concert. These include Sarastro's basso profundo arias, and the silly but touching duet between Papageno and Papagena. The energetic overture, too, has long been a staple of symphonic programmes. Emanuel Schikaneder's libretto contains marvellous portrayals of many wonderful and endearing characters, and Mozart's music brings them alive with a level of skill that no other composer can match.

The aria *O zittre nicht, mein Lieber Sohn* is an audacious creation, especially for the 18th century. The character of the Queen of the Night is a villain, manipulative and destructive. She makes her grand entrance in this aria, terrifying the hero, Tamino. Mozart's syncopated string figures portray her scheming mind and pounding heartbeat as she convinces Tamino to rescue her abducted daughter Pamina. Although the opening is not a recitative (by definition), it approaches a type of baroque arioso, the low register of the voice barely suppressing a tension that culminates in showstopping coloratura in the final section. Mozart's thrilling music has ensured the immortality of the Queen of the Night, who remains one of the most outlandish and lovable villains in all fiction. In his youth, Mozart famously wrote to his father Leopold saying he was 'no lover of difficulties'. This wonderful aria proves that he changed his mind later in life.

EDWARD GREGSON

b.1945

TUBA CONCERTO (1976, ORCHESTRAL VERSION 1978)

II. Lento e mesto

III. Allegro giocoso

Edward Gregson has enjoyed a long and successful career as one of Britain's leading composers. The recipient of many honours and awards, Gregson is regularly commissioned by leading orchestras, among them the London Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Royal Scottish National Orchestras. Gregson is also renowned as a teacher and academic, serving as the of Principal of the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester for 12 years until his retirement in 2008.

Gregson's Tuba concerto is frequently performed, and regarded as one of the finest of its genre. The popularity of the work may be inferred by its numerous versions – originally for tuba and brass band, the composer scored it for symphony orchestra two years later, and a wind band arrangement followed in 1984. The concerto is dedicated to John Henderson.

The beautiful, songlike second movement is pensive and lyrical, its opening chords reminiscent of Vaughan Williams; the tuba's melancholy and searching soliloquy eventually giving over to an impassioned outburst from the orchestra. The reflective mood returns at the end, string chords now ebbing away and leaving the soloist to play his coda in the very lowest register of the instrument. In the finale, by turns heroic and merry, Gregson delights his audience with frequent changes of mood, making use of syncopation and cross rhythms to keep them guessing. A brief cadenza exploring the extremes of the instrument's register ushers in the march-like coda, which ends the concerto in exuberant fashion, the composer giving a little nod to film music in the closing bars.

ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV

1865 - 1936

MÉDITATION FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA, OPUS 32 (1891)

Glazunov was a renowned Russian composer and conductor of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His music is steeped in the 'classical' style of Tchaikovsky, even though he studied with Rimsky-Korsakov and considered Balakirev, Borodin and Mussorgsky his models. Although Glazunov's music was considered somewhat old-fashioned after Stravinsky's early ballets had widened the scope of musical expression, his craftsmanship and mastery of form was impeccable, and his fluency enabled him to compose music of great refinement relatively quickly. Glazunov was prolific, and his works include eight symphonies, five concertos, ballet scores and chamber music.

Glazunov's Méditation was composed in 1891, and was particularly popular during the composer's lifetime. A lyrical work of great delicacy, it is notable for its exquisite refinement, melodiousness, and subtle orchestration. Written in D major, it is largely diatonic, and the brief excursion to B-flat in the middle section is accomplished in a most natural manner. Nevertheless, the violin's rhythmic syncopations give the phrases considerable momentum, as do the several instances of orchestral counterpoint – these build some musical tension, and cause the dynamic level to rise on more than one occasion. A notable feature of the Méditation is that there are only three beats of rest for the violin soloist after its entry in the third bar.

PROGRAMME

ANTONIO VIVALDI

1678 - 1741

CELLO CONCERTO IN C, RV399 (F. III, NO. 6) (C.1730)

Vivaldi's reputation rests principally on his hundreds of instrumental concertos, although he composed more than 40 operas as well a considerable amount of sacred music. Incredibly, music was not his actual profession – he was in fact a Roman Catholic priest, and for many years worked at the chapel of a religious orphanage in Venice. Nevertheless, the institution did appoint him as the girls' music teacher, and some of his pupils became virtuoso players even as nuns in the convent orchestra. Vivaldi himself was a violinist, and many of his concertos were composed for his own performance, or for his leading students.

Vivaldi's music is notable for its effortless melody, as well as the subtle variety he was able to impart to these tunes at every repetition. However, he is also considered the greatest exponent of ritornello form as practised in the late baroque era. The term refers to a sophisticated type of rondo form, in which the main ritornello ('returning') theme undergoes considerable variation at each appearance.

The RV399 concerto for violoncello and orchestra is typical of the composer – sparkling ritornello melodies played by the full orchestra, with brief contrasting sections for the soloists and a small ensemble. Father Antonio, above all, delighted in effervescent virtuosity and exuberance, together with a mastery of formal proportion – virtues that JS Bach greatly admired in the Italian's music.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

1891 - 1953

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 IN D-FLAT MAJOR, OPUS 10 (1912)

Allegro brioso - Poco più mosso - Tempo I - Meno mosso - Più mosso (Tempo I) - Animato - Andante assai - Allegro scherzando - Poco più sostenuto - Più mosso - Animato

By the time Prokofiev composed his First Piano concerto in 1912, large scale single-movement form had already developed something of a tradition, although it was generally reserved for tone poems – on the other hand, a virtuoso concerto was still expected to behave itself formally. The composer was something of an enfant terrible, and one imagines him taking some delight in upending certain conventions of the time. The D-flat concerto is not only unusual in form, but its emphasis on percussive rhythm and pungent harmony was certainly a far cry from the imperial decorum demanded by Russian audiences of the time.

In 1914, Prokofiev played the work in a piano competition of the St Petersburg Conservatory. The Principal, Alexander Glazunov, did not take kindly to this music, considering its disregard of time-honoured aesthetic norms an act of youthful arrogance. Nevertheless, Prokofiev's pianistic gifts were astonishing, and the young lion was awarded the first prize, which included a grand piano.

Even if we dismiss Glazunov's reservations as reactionary, there is an air of insouciant irreverence about the work. The opening gesture wears the guise of an arching theme in the Tchaikovskian mould, but after a few feigned attempts at development, the composer discards it for the true main theme of the concerto. This is characterised by a spiky, athletic octaves and rapid scales, all underpinned by chords of higher level of dissonance than Glazunov considered acceptable. However, the acerbic bitonality that characterise Prokofiev's middle and later styles is generally absent – most of the chords remain conventional, even when the rapid modulations occur in the middle of a phrase.

But for all its novel effects of phrase structure, the several motives are carefully worked out and logically presented. And underneath its rhapsodic façade, even the form turns out to be three short movements played without interruption. The 'slow movement' explores dreamlike, even impressionistic harmonies, then rises to an impassioned climax before subsiding again. The ominous start of the 'finale' leads to a cadenza both playful and impetuous. The orchestra joins the piano for a thrilling virtuoso episode, before that Tchaikovskian theme brings the concerto to a close.

Notes by Lance J. Phillip 2025

A portrait of conductor Daniel Boico. He is a middle-aged man with short, dark hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt. His hands are visible at the bottom of the frame, holding a white baton. The background is dark and out of focus.

CONDUCTOR

DANIEL BOICO

Described by critics as "Dynamic, vigorous, exciting and imaginative - an undisputed star who combines magnetic charisma with a skilled technique" Israeli-American conductor Daniel Boico is the Artistic Director and CEO of the Free State Symphony Orchestra, as well as Associate Guest Conductor of the KZN and Mzansi Philharmonics, and the former Music Director and Chief Conductor of the MÁV Symphony Orchestra, Budapest, and Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic.

Born in Israel to musician parents and raised in both Paris and the United States, Daniel initially received his training as a singer, and later was a student of legendary Russian professor of conducting, Ilya Musin, at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. A finalist and prize-winner at the Prokofiev, Pedrotti, and Cadaques International Conducting Competitions, Daniel was also Music Director of the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra, Chicago, and visiting professor and director of orchestras at the Grand Valley State University in Michigan. Earlier in his career, Daniel was assistant to Daniel Barenboim at the Chicago Symphony, where he worked closely with such distinguished conductors as Pierre Boulez, Claudio Abbado and Zubin Mehta.

Daniel has recorded a premiere recording of Nino Rota's two cello concerti with cellist Dimitry Yablonsky and I Virtuosi Italiani for the Chandos label, Der Mondbach II by Andres Alcalde for cello and double string quartet with cellist Pablo Mahave-Veglia for the Eroica Classical Recordings label, as well as Statue Dance from Pavlovsk, a ballet in 3 tableaux by

Karen LeFrak, for the American Ballet Theatre's ABT II Company. Daniel has also recorded Kalinnikov's Symphony No. 1 for Bayerische Rundfunk, as well as Steven Gerber's Music in Dark Times with the Nürnberger Symphoniker for the Naxos Group, due for release in 2025.

Daniel has performed with such orchestras as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of London, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Nürnberger Symphoniker, State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia, Moscow Philharmonic, National Orchestras of Taiwan, Mexico and Costa Rica, Taiwan Philharmonic, Columbus Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and the KZN, Johannesburg and Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestras. He has collaborated with such fine soloists as Itzhak Perlman, Gil Shaham, Daniel Barenboim, Shlomo Mintz, James Ehnes, Gary Hoffman, Andreas Ottensamer, Nikolay Lugansky, Pablo Sainz-Villegas, Aviram Reichert, Daniel Ciobanu, Nikita Mndoyants, Alexander Buzlov, Olga Kern, and Ilya Friedberg.

SOLOISTS

HELEN LIU



Helen Liu is currently a second-year BMus student under the guidance of Professor Farida Bacharova. She was a finalist and strings prizewinner at the SAMRO Hubert van der Spuy National Music Competition in 2019, and a finalist and runner-up at the Victoria K Bennet Music Competition in 2019, as well as a finalist and category winner in 2022 and 2023. She has participated in the Gauteng Chamber Music Festival (2017-2019) and the Stellenbosch Chamber Music Festival (2023, 2024, 2025). Helen was also a finalist and category winner in the National SASMT Pretoria Ensemble Competition for violin and piano duo in 2019 and 2021. In 2019, Helen had the honour of performing a solo violin concerto with the Rand Symphony Orchestra in 2019, as well as the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra in 2023. Additionally, she was recognized as a semi-finalist and prizewinner in the National Youth Music Competition, earning the Polina Burdukova Prize as the strings runner-up in 2022.

KARABO RABALOI



Soprano from Kroonstad, Free State. Credits include: Recipient of the Erik Chisholm Memorial Prize for meritorious work in Opera 2024, PgDip in Music Performance Graduate with Distinction, UCT Dean's Merit list 2024, Runner up, David Aldred Competition (2024); Duet prize, 3rd Aviva Pelham Operetta Competition (2024); finalist FoCTO Bursary Competition (2024); soloist in the Young Artist concert of The Songmakers Guild; soloist in the SACM Concerto festival.

Roles include: Miss Jessel - Turn of the Screw (Opera UCT); Giulietta (understudy) Les contes d'Hoffmann (Opera UCT); chorus I Capuleti e i Montecchi (Opera UCT/CTO); chorus Sara Baartman (Opera UCT); soloist in Sondheim's Marry me a little (Opera UCT); chorus Nkoli: The Vogue Opera (independent).

COURTNEY ESAU



Courtney Esau is a classically trained saxophonist and music educator based in Gqeberha, South Africa. She began playing the saxophone at the young age of ten and remains active in studies and performances.

After matriculating from Collegiate Girls' High School, she went on to complete her BMus degree from the University of Cape Town under Cara Pearce. After returning to Gqeberha, she completed her PGCE with cum laude and restarted music lessons under Dr Grant Snyman, through Nelson Mandela University, where she is currently pursuing her Master's degree.

She has spent a year volunteering in Germany and gained experience as a vocalist. Over the years, she has performed with various wind ensembles, including the UCT Symphonic Wind Ensemble and most recently, the Nelson Mandela University Wind Orchestra. A career highlight is her recent Binge Concerto performance with the Eastern Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, as part of their 2025 Youth Concerto Festival.

KARLIN OLIVIER



Karlin Olivier (born 2002) started piano lessons at the age of 5 and cello lessons at the age of 8 under the tutelage of Karin Scholtz. Over the past 14 years she has received numerous awards at eisteddfods such as RACA (Randfontein High) and NEA. She has taken part in numerous competitions, including the PH Moore music competition (2013-2019), South African Music Scholarship Competition (2019), SASMT Pretoria Ensemble Competition (2017-2023), Atterbury National Piano Competition (2021) and the National Youth Music Competition (2021).

Karlin has been on the UNISA Honorary Roll for piano, cello, and theory exams and has passed her UNISA grade 7 piano duo exam, UNISA grade 8 piano exam and UNISA grade 8 cello exam, all with distinctions. She attended various symposiums such as the Stellenbosch International Piano Symposium & the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival. She has previously performed concertos with the Randburg Symphony Orchestra in 2017 and 2019, as well as the Free State Symphony Orchestra during the Youth Concerto Festival in August 2023.

Karlin finished her degree in Bachelor of Music in 2024 and is currently residing in Bloemfontein. As of 2025, she was appointed as junior lecturer at the Odeion School of Music, University of the Free State, and is currently teaching first- and second-year students in keyboard skills and accompanying students for their practical exams, whilst completing her Master's Degree in Piano Performance.

XOLISWA MEMANE



Xoliswa Memane is a young opera singer studying Vocal Performance at Odeion School of Music in the University of Free State, she is doing her final year diploma under the guidance of Dr Albertus Engelbrecht. She is originally from a small town in the Free State called Reddersburg. With her ongoing classical voice training, she has performed leading roles in university productions, such as depicting the role Belinda from Dido and Aeneas from Henry Purcell. She has also competed in Musicon solo singing competitions and won first position 3 consecutive times.

Xoliswa Memane aims to develop her artistry and pursue a professional opera career, performing on international stages.

SOLOISTS

KAMVELIHLE SANQELA



Kamvelihle started his musical journey at the age of eight years old. He learnt and played tuba under the teachings of Kyle du Preez, while attending Greenwood Primary School. His progress on tuba continued for another four years at Greenwood until he finished and moved on to his next challenge which was a five year high school journey at Grey High school.

Kamve continued to play tuba at Grey under the teachings of Shawn Lyon. His experience and skill on the instrument improved greatly as he got to play in different musical groups like the Grey Symphonic Wind Band and the Eastern Cape Wind Orchestra. During this period Kamve discovered his love and passion in music and was inspired by his teachers to pursue a music career.

Currently, he is studying at Nelson Mandela University under the Bachelor of Music degree program and is in his third year. He is continuing to improve his tuba playing under the guidance of Dr. George Foster, well continuing to play in the NMU Brass ensemble and orchestra. He is working on his dream of playing professionally and also becoming a composer.

KITSO MOREENG



Kitso Moreeng began playing the violin at the age of eight and currently studies under Mr. Francois Henkins. He has held several principal positions, including concertmaster of the FSYO, Concertmaster(Captain) of the Grey College String Ensemble and Principal Second violinist of the MSP Senior Orchestra. In 2024, He won first prize in the Strings division of the Free State Music Competition.

Kitso has participated in esteemed music courses such as the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival and the South African Strings Foundation Convention. Kitso also plays the oboe and serves as principal oboist for both the FSYO and FSYWE.

He is a founding member of Zwei Saiten, a violin duo formed with the current FSYO concertmaster. Outside of music, Kitso enjoys debating, singing, and conducting.

SIAS SEVENSTER



Sias Sevenster (10 years old) began playing the cello in 2021 under the guidance of Mrs Tilla Henkins. In both 2023 and 2024, he was awarded first prize in the Junior Strings Category of the Musicon Soloist Competition. In 2024, he also received the trophies for Best Male Singer and Best Junior Strings performer at the Free State Eisteddfod.

In addition to cello, Sias studies piano and previously took recorder. He is furthermore a member of his school choir and has performed as a vocal soloist with the choir, but also together with other musicians at several events in Bloemfontein. Sias is a member of the Free State Youth Orchestra Sinfonietta.

Outside of music, Sias enjoys cross country running, reading, and building with Lego. This year marks his debut as a soloist with the Free State Symphony Orchestra.

DANÉ VAN GRAAN



Dané van Graan is a third-year student at the University of Cape Town's South African College of Music, pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Classical Piano Performance. She began playing the piano at age seven, receiving lessons from Jenny Reed throughout her school years. She later received training from Associate Professor François du Toit during her initial years at the college and is now furthering her studies under the guidance of Dr Esthea Kruger. Over the years Dané has participated in numerous national music competitions, earning a wide range of prizes. Most recently, she was awarded first prize at the Johan Vos Music Competition where she also received several special awards and she won the Laura Searle Competition for Concerto Playing.

She won her category at the Grahamstown National Music Competition in 2015, 2017 and 2019. She also reached the finals of the Atterbury National Piano Competition several times, winning her category in 2016. In 2017, she was a finalist at the SAMRO Hubert van der Spuy National Music Competition, where she received several special prizes. On an international level she was ranked among the top 50 in the Avila International Music Festival (online). In 2021, Dané won first place at the Phillip H. Moore Competition and in 2022, she reached the finals of the National Eisteddfod's Young Performer Awards.

That same year, she performed with the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra as a finalist in the Hennie Joubert National Piano Competition, where she placed third overall. After completing her UNISA Grade 8 piano exam in 2022, she was awarded the Du Toit van Tonder Music Scholarship Prize during the UNISA Scholarship Competition. Dané is also passionate about chamber music and art song performance and has taken part in both the Songmaker's Guild and the Neues Lied Festival for art song duos.

Since performing in her first competition in 2015, Dané has developed a deep passion for the stage and for sharing music with others. For her, music is more than just performance-it is a personal journey of expression, faith, and connection. She strives to communicate something meaningful, using her talent to honour God and touch the hearts of others.

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

Samantha Durrant
(Concertmaster)
Sharon de Kock
(Co-Concertmaster)
Richard Reid
(Assistant Concertmaster)
Francois Henkins
(Assistant Concertmaster)
Ralica Macheva
Lizette Gous-Holloway
Jason Oppelt
Jani Liebenberg

VIOLIN II

Regomoditswe Molosioa
(Principal)
Elspeth Neary
Michele Williams
Stefné Raubenheimer
Tsholofelo Tshikare
Sue-Phill Petersen
Lofentse Lekalake
Isaac Molelekoa
Gerhard du Preez

VIOLA

Elsabé Raath-De Jager
(Guest Principal)
Jana Smit
John Warner
Japie Ngqondi
Doraliza Ackerman

CELLO

Anmari van der Westhuizen
(Principal)
Chair sponsor: Frederick Fourie
Arend Brink
Tilla Henkins
Piet van Rooyen

BASS

Ruan Baartman
(Principal)
Asta Budack
Christi-Louise Swanepoel

FLUTE

Renée Neuhoff
(Guest Principal)
Miranda Britz

OBOE

Carin Bam
(Guest Principal)
Elize Loeb van Zuilenburg

CLARINET

Danré Strydom
(Principal)
Chair sponsor: Katinka Botha
Louwrika van Niekerk

BASSOON

Simon Ball
(Guest Principal)
Jan-Willem Hoorweg

FRENCH HORN

Dylan Barker
(Guest Principal)
Erik Albertyn
Adriaan Erwee
Caryn Pretorius

TRUMPET

Paul Loeb van Zuilenburg
(Principal)
Chad Groepies

TROMBONE

Nick Green
(Guest Principal)
James George
Vuyani Gxavu

TUBA

Kamvelihle Sanqela

TIMPANI

Maritsa Barlow
(Principal)

PERCUSSION

Marie-Elize Venter
(Guest Principal)
Margie Anderson

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2025 SEASON

13 & 14
SEPTEMBER

CONDUCTOR:
GÉRARD KORSTEN
PIANO:
BEN SCHOEMAN

Haydn: L'Isola disabitata
Ravel: Piano Concerto in G major
Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 3

18 OCTOBER

CONDUCTOR:
HO CHUNG YEH
SOLOISTS:
HUI CHIU, CHINESE BAMBOO FLUTES
HANDRI LOOTS, FLUTE

Mozart: Overture to The Marriage of Figaro
Wang Chenwei: Thaipusam (African Premiere)
Tang Jianping: Flying Song (African Premiere)
Wang Chenwei: Winds of Affinity (African Premiere)
Schumann: Symphony No. 2

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Bochabela
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| *Symphony for life* |
| *Simfonie gee lewe* |