



**Music Director/Conductor:**

**Richard Cock**, born in Port Elizabeth in 1949 was educated at Woodridge College in the Eastern Cape, and Diocesan College and the South African College of Music in Cape Town. He was awarded a scholarship to the Royal School of Church Music in 1972.

Richard was an alto lay vicar at Chichester Cathedral before becoming Assistant Organist in 1978. As the cathedral's assistant organist, he was also Director of Music at Prebendal School, the cathedral choir school. He established the Chichester Cathedral Choristers' Association (CCCA). Richard was elected a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music for his services to church music in South Africa.

When Richard returned to South Africa in 1980 the SABC asked him to revive the then dormant SABC Choir. As the Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra of South Africa (run by the SABC) from 1991 Richard introduced an exciting new vibe to the orchestra. He has been organist and Director of Music of St Mary's Cathedral, Johannesburg and is also acclaimed as South Africa's 'first professional countertenor'.

The SABC disbanded the NSO and the SABC Choir in 1999 and Richard, backed by the members of the choir, founded the Symphony Choir of Johannesburg, carrying on the choir's high standards. Richard is also the founder of the acclaimed Chanticleer Singers.

Since Richard left the SABC to pursue a freelance career he has conducted concerts all over the country and abroad with great success. His innovative approach and ideas mean that great music performances are now no longer for the elite, but for everyone. Concerts have been produced in venues ranging, among many others, from the Kruger Park, Cape wine estates and the Jo'burg Zoo to the Pretoria State Theatre, Cape Town, Durban and Pietermaritzburg City Halls and other formal venues. The music presented is equally varied – from Queen numbers and other contemporary popular music, traditional and modern South African compositions, church music through tunes from musicals to the grand stables of classical music like Bach, Mozart, Faure, and also more modern classical composers like Britten and Fanshawe. This eclectic mixture of venues and music paired with the consistently high standard of performance and Richard's inimitable rapport with the audiences has made Richard the most respected and best loved conductor for South African music lovers.

Richard has worked extensively with visiting international stars, the Three Tenors, Andrea Bocelli, Julian Lloyd-Webber, Katherine Jenkins, Joshua Bell to mention but a few, and has produced concerts sponsored by local corporate companies like Rand Merchant Bank and individuals like N. Oppenheimer and has conducted choirs and orchestras for important state functions like the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President.

Through the Apollo Music Trust (of which Richard is currently the Chairman) founded in 1981 by Richard and Nick Lewis as a platform for South African Musicians and a vehicle for financial support for students pursuing tertiary level music studies, numerous South African musicians have benefited and are now enjoying successful performing or teaching careers here and abroad.

For twenty years Richard was on the Board of Trustees of Business and Arts South Africa, as well as the Artistic Committee of the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra. With Florian Uhlig, he directs the Johannesburg International Mozart Festival, and he is also involved in successful outreach projects in Soweto and Eldorado Park, and further afield in the Western Cape and Limpopo.

Richard has received numerous awards and honorary degrees: Honorary Doctorate in music from Rhodes University, Parnassus Award from Stellenbosch University, a special Award from the ATKV for his 30 years dedication to spreading the love of music in South Africa. A Lifetime Achievement Award from the Arts & Culture Trust, the Robert Grey Medal from Bishops College for distinguished achievements by an Old Diocesan, plus a Luminary award from Michaelhouse in recognition of his contributions to the development and promotion of South African music and artists.