

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 staples 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.

Soprano:

Brittany Smith, born in Cape Town, is a BMus graduate in Opera at the South African College of Music at UCT under the tutelage of Professor Virginia Davids. She was first introduced to opera in her tenth year of schooling at Rhenish Girls' High School through her teacher and opera singer Sonja van Amstel.

While studying at UCT SACM, Brittany was cast in various roles: Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Serpina in *La Serva Padrona*. Brittany was asked to join the Cape Town Opera Young Artist Studio in 2017. Here she has performed in concerts abroad and locally, as well as being cast as understudy and lead in CTO's various productions. Brittany has sung the roles of Gretel in Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel*, Priestess Leila in *The Pearl Fishers* and Magda in CTO's in house production of Puccini's *La Rondine*. She sang for the Artscape/Cape Philharmonic Orchestra's Youth Music Festival as a soloist performer at the age of just 21 and was selected as one of 9 for the Les Azuriales Opera Festival where she competed and took part in their *Falstaff* Reduced opera where she sang as Nannetta.

Brittany was the Overall Winner for the Shock Foundation Opera Competition in the Female Classical Section in 2016. She was nominated for the 53rd Fleur du Cap Awards for Best Female Opera Singer in 2017 for her role as Pamina in Cape Town Opera's *The Magic Flute*, and nominated for Adele in AGL Opera's rendition of *Die Fledermaus* and as Giulietta of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in 2018. She was recently nominated for the 54th Fleur du Cap Awards (2022) for her role as Gretel. Cape Town Opera has appointed her as house soloist for 2022.

Alto:

Monica Mhangwana is a singer, vocal coach, and entrepreneur, born and raised in Pretoria South Africa. She started singing in choir when she was 8 years old, and has sung in various vocal ensembles including The University of Pretoria Youth Choir. She studied music at the University of Pretoria under the tutelage of Dr Hanli Stapela. Monica has participated in masterclasses with Kobie van Rensburg and Professor Albie van Schalkwyk.

Monica has sung at the Wakkerstroom music festival and the University of Pretoria Music festival. She has been selected to perform as the soloist for the prestigious University of Pretoria's annual Principa'ls concert four years in a row (2015-2018), singing in many genres ranging from Jazz, African styles, Contemporary, and Western Classical styles. Monica has toured nationally and internationally as part of various music ensembles. She was the alto soloist in Umculo's *St John's Passion* by JS Bach in 2018 in Soweto, this project won the German based Classical:NEXT innovation award. She was the lead vocalist in Dr Phuti Sepuru's Quintet which represented South Africa in the Seychelles in November 2018. Monica was a soloist for the Roche Bobois French Opera event in Sandton, hosted by Dr Harald Sitta.

Monica is a co-founder and Managing Director of Glacier Stone, a creative music, arts, and media company. In 2020, she won The Smith Award Prize for Mezzo-sopranos in the Voices of South Africa International Opera Singing Competition and was a semi-finalist in the Grand Finale and she performs at Sittopera events held at The Rand Club. In 2021 she joined Johannesburg Opera. In 2021 Monica also performed in concerts organised by the renowned Richard Cock for various

audiences including blue chip corporate clients. This year she was selected to be a Young Artist at Cape Town Opera. Monica also works as a vocal coach.

Tenor:

Martin Hundelt was born in Osnabrück (Germany) and was introduced to music through playing the violin. He studied singing with Ute Niss at the *Musikhochschule Lübeck*, where he gained his performance degree in 1993. He has also studied with the renowned tenors Aldo Baldin and James Wagner.

Martin's repertoire as an opera singer encompasses lyric tenor roles such as Belmonte (*Entführung*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) and Ferrando (*Così*) as well as Male Chorus (*Rape of Lucretia*) and Hans (*Bartered Bride*). His main field of performance for over thirty years now though is with a widespread oratorio and concert repertoire, much in demand in particular as a Bach Evangelist.

He now also looks back on thirty years of teaching, starting as a lecturer at the *Universität der Künste Berlin* in 1993. Since 2002, he teaches at the *Musikhochschule Lübeck* where he is devoted to work with young singers in all courses of study, Bachelor students as well as members of the opera studio. In 2012, he was elected Vice President of the *Musikhochschule*, a position he has held ever since.

Bass:

Aubrey Lodewyk, hails from Rustenburg where his musical journey began in church at a young age. His talent has been crafted and groomed at some of South Africa's most prestigious institutions. After completing his post-graduate studies in 2007 and a two-year young artist program at Cape Town Opera, he started his professional career by touring extensively with the company, performing several operatic roles.

He made his debut at the Israeli Opera in 2011 in the role of Silvio in *I Pagliacci*. 2011 also saw him creating and bringing to life the role of Mandela in *Mandela Trilogy*, which was performed around South Africa, UK and made its European debut. His performance in this role was nominated for best performance in a musical at the Naledi Awards in 2011 and another nomination at the prestigious Fleur du Cap Awards for best performance in an Opera in 2019.

His vocal abilities allow him to perform a wide range of classical music ranging from Lieder, Opera, and Oratorio. Operatic roles he has performed so far are, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Germano in *La scala di seta*, Germon in *La Traviata* and Valentine in *Faust*, Marcello in *La Bohème* and Gasparo in *Rita*. He has performed with the Symphony choir of Johannesburg in a number of oratorios such as Handel's *Messiah*, *St. John Passion*, *St. Matthew Passion*, Brahms *Requiem*, and Rossini *Stabat Mater*.

Aubrey is currently studying towards a master's degree in music performance and is also a part time voice lecturer at the University of Pretoria School of the Arts.