

2024

SEASON REPORT

Welcome

2024 saw Opera UCT grow as a production company in national relevance and international stature, while continuing to produce young singing-actors sought after by the most prestigious studios and theatres around the world. As the oldest performing and training institution for opera in South Africa, and as the harbour and source for some of the most respected and successful operatic performers in the world today, our training programme has grown each year in both breadth and focus to respond to ever evolving trends in the international operatic world. As an integral part of the young singers' experience, our performance activities allow them to confidently stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their international counterparts when they finally venture forth after their years with us. Our activities also provide Cape Town's arts scene with world-class operatic performances of which we can all be proud.

As always, this report on our 2024 activities contains everything which we do over-and-above our core training programme. It makes no mention of lessons, coachings, classes and lectures – all of which are vital, representing the engine room of our activities - and which are well supported by UCT. Instead, this report celebrates the performances, productions, masterclasses, competitions and international residencies on which our international success depends. For these activities, we must constantly be raising funds, and our 2024 successes have brought the prospect of committed and dedicated support far closer into view.

I am confident that you will be proud of our young South African talent as you read.

Jeremy Silver
Director of Opera UCT, University of Cape Town





Our story

UCT began staging operas in 1929, presenting a diverse range of works from early Italian repertoire through to new commissions by South African composers. As the only company in the Cape for many decades, the UCT Opera Company not only programmed regular seasons in Cape Town, but also undertook several tours across the country, as well as to Zimbabwe and Namibia. The company also became the premiere opera training academy on the African continent and, with the change of government in 1994, could boast the discovery and training of such current opera stars as Pretty Yende, Levy Sekgapane, Golda Schultz, Musa Ngqungwana and Pumeza Matshikiza.

Today, we have prize winners every year at high-profile international competitions, such as Operalia, Neue Stimmen and Belvedere.

In addition, our alumni proceed to some of the best young artist placements and opera houses around the world, with recent successes including Siphe Kwani going directly to the Royal Opera House in London, Siphokazi Molteno going directly to the Metropolitan Opera, New York and Luvo Maranti joining the Young Artists of the National Opera Studio, also in London.

This means that our staged productions, concerts and public masterclasses offer the public a unique opportunity to catch these singers on home ground before they spread their wings.

Since the beginning of this century, the opera at UCT has produced many operas in collaboration with Cape Town Opera, while preserving a separate and unique identity as the wellspring of the very best talent across South Africa.

Our relaunch as **Opera UCT** at the beginning of 2023 was a reflection of the increase in the number of our own independent stagings, from the magnificent new work by South African composer Hendrik Hofmeyr, *Sara Baartman in 2022*, to Offenbach's well-loved opera, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Sondheim's witty revue *Marry me a little* as well as Rossini's *L'inganno felice* in a new collaboration with AGL and Suidoosterfees in 2023. 2024 saw the addition of two major new productions: the world premiere of Donizetti's *Dalinda* and Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, in addition to our concert presentation of *The Sound of Freedom*, and the numerous other concerts, competitions, book launches and masterclasses which have become a well-loved staple of our seasons.



The Sound of Freedom, Opera UCT, April 2024

Mission Statement

The purpose of Opera UCT is

- 1) to produce accomplished and passionate singing-actors, ready to pursue their ambitions for an international performing career, through high-quality teaching, coaching, preparation and performance opportunities.
- 2) to prepare young artists who wish to pursue different goals, for example teaching, directing, arts management or music therapy to be ready for the next step on their journey.
- 3) to lead the conversation for the provision of world-class opera in South Africa via the breadth and quality of our performances and other events.

Our core values include:

- Dedication to daily achievement
- Emphasis on the humanity inherent in creative activity
- To guide and support all our young artists to find their own success
- To contribute to the cultural enrichment of the wider community



Preparing for The Sound of Freedom, Opera UCT, April 2024



2024 Season Launch

To celebrate the anniversary of our relaunch as Opera UCT, and to share some details of the forthcoming year's activities, we presented a concert and cocktail reception at the Baxter Theatre Centre on 27th February 2024.

23 soloists and an additional chorus of 16 performed music from across the operatic genres, including Italian grand opera, French and German opera and Spanish Zarzuela. The evening concluded with a call for friendship, brotherhood and community from Strauss's brilliant operetta, *Die Fledermaus*, followed by a spirited drinking song and an invitation to join us in the foyer where artists and audience mingled to chat about the plans that had been unveiled for the year ahead.



Distinguished Alumni Recital Series
Makudupanyane Senaoana



After his success singing the title role in Opera UCT's 2023 production of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Makudu Senaoana returned to give a recital with UCT pianist and coach, Lisa Engelbrecht. On the programme were two song cycles: *An die ferne Geliebte* by Beethoven, and *Dichterliebe* by Schumann.

7th March 2024
Chisholm Recital Room, SACM



The 4th annual collaboration between Opera UCT and the Vocal Division at Stellenbosch University

11th March 2024, Endler Hall, Stellenbosch
12th March 2024, Baxter Concert Hall, Cape Town

Now in its fourth year, our collaboration with the vocal division at Stellenbosch University always brings an interesting new angle to the repertoire in the spirit of education and discovery.

This year 12 singers from each institution came together in an exploration of Spanish art song from the 16th century to the present day.

History, language and new styles were explored and presented to enthusiastic audiences in both Stellenbosch and Cape Town.



The Sound of Freedom

2024 was the year that more voters than ever in history headed to the polls for national elections in at least 64 countries, representing a total of about 49% of the global population. To commemorate and celebrate this global expression of democracy, Opera UCT presented a musical tour through opera composers' responses to the subjects of freedom and democracy in an entertaining and thought-provoking concert.

Creatively directed by Christine Crouse, the brilliant young vocal talent of Opera UCT joined forces with the UCT Symphony Orchestra.



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
ITUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Opera UCT

THE SOUND OF FREEDOM

Tuesday
23 April 2024
7PM BAXTER CONCERT HALL

**OPERA UCT
SOLOISTS & CHORUS**
WITH **UCT SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**
CONDUCTED & DIRECTED BY
JEREMY SILVER

THE BAXTER

web tickets
powered by clicknplay

SACM
SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



The Sound of Freedom Programme

Beethoven

EGMONT OVERTURE

UCT Symphony Orchestra

Handel

JUDAS MACCABEUS

Oh liberty, thou choicest treasure....

Zizopho Funzo, soprano

'Tis liberty, dear liberty alone

Nica Reinke, mezzo soprano

Come, ever-smiling liberty

Zizopho Funzo & Nica Reinke

Mozart

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

Se vuol ballare

Jaco Koegelenberg, baritone

Mozart

DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL

Frisch zum Kampfe

Dumisa Masoka, tenor

Beethoven

FIDELIO

Mir ist so wunderbar

Leonore - Nontobeko Bhengu, soprano

Marzelline - Frances van Vuuren, soprano

Rocco - Themba Mdlalose, baritone

Jacquino - Iviwe Boms, tenor

Oh welche Lust

Opera UCT Chorus

Euch werde Lohn

Leonore - Karabo Rabaloi, soprano

Florestan - Luvo Maranti, tenor

Rocco - Sandile Zitha, baritone

Bizet

CARMEN

Habanera

Violina Anguelov-Hobbs, mezzo soprano

Juan Burgers

UBUNTU - THE OPERA

Inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first democratically elected president of South Africa

Ubuntu - Mkhanyiseli Dyantyi, tenor

Mandela - Mthunzi Nokubeka, baritone

Winnie Mandela - Nontobeko Bhengu, soprano

soprano

Verdi

AIDA

Fu la sorte dell'armi a tuoi funesta

Aida - Paulina Malefane, soprano

Amneris - Violina Anguelov-Hobbs, mezzo soprano

mezzo soprano

O patria mia

Aida - Molly Dzangare, soprano

Verdi

NABUCCO

Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate

Opera UCT Chorus

Rossini

GUGLIELMO TELL

Finale

Opera UCT Chorus

Beethoven

FIDELIO

Finale

Leonore - Setsoane Ntseki, soprano

Florestan - Vuyisa Xipu, tenor

Fernando - Liam Jaftha, baritone

Rocco - Sisa Mjekula, baritone

Marzelline - Jodi Carr, soprano

Jacquino - Dumisa Masoka, tenor

Opera UCT Chorus

A total WOW! Thank you

@uctopera for the spectacular

Sound of Freedom! @baxtertheatre



The Sound of Freedom – photos from the stage and the foyer

OPERA UCT formed part of the inaugural

HEAT

WINTER ARTS FESTIVAL



Opera UCT was delighted to be invited to participate in Cape Town's very first **HEAT** Winter Arts Festival.

The festival was created to boost visitors to galleries and live events in the city centre in the quieter winter months.

Through their themed programme and map, **HEAT** provided the context to unite art galleries that are walking distance from each other and bring together art forms which only occasionally interact.

Our three programmes were meticulously curated by Christine Crouse and Jeremy Silver to give musical and textual expression to the overarching theme of the 2024 Festival: Common Ground.

11th to 21st July, 2024,
Multiple venues



#inspiredbynature

Association For Visual Arts (AVA) Gallery

“Music is the shorthand of emotion” –
Leo Tolstoy.

The relationship between music and the natural world is innate to our experience.

#inspiredbynature drew inspiration from Nina Kruger's *Infinite Threads*, an exhibition in which Kruger created sculptural objects out of found natural materials. Opera UCT presented an electric mix of classic and contemporary opera and song, all inspired by our relationship to nature, past and present.



#connectedvoices

Central Methodist Church, Greenpoint Square

This programme responded to HEAT's overarching theme of 'Common Ground'.



Opera was made to bring people together. It is a powerful asset and a vital force in elevating human connection and mutual understanding. Our carefully crafted programme centred on themes of oppression, freedom, liberty, peace and human friendships.



#onlytenors

Spin Street Gallery

To celebrate the close of the festival, we showcased four of our talented tenors in a spirited celebration of music as pure entertainment.

DONIZETTI

Dalinda

4th – 8th September, 2024, Baxter Theatre

“The best show I’ve ever seen”

Gayton McKenzie, National Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture

WeekendSpecial, 6th September 2024
Soprano Dzangare gleams with authority and passion....
baritone Zwane dominates the stage with every entrance,
his unforced delivery resonating powerfully through the
auditorium.... the presentation of this opera can hold its
own comfortably on the world stage.
BEVERLEY BROMMERT

Opera with Opera News, November 2024
Musically, the performance was a stirring demonstration of
Opera UCT's place in the operatic world, and from the sombre
opening of the Prelude onwards (the Cape Town Philharmonic
was in the pit) Silver's taut conducting ensured that Donizetti was
well served. In the title role, the Zimbabwean soprano Molly
Dzangare gave an exciting performance mixing purity and
temperament, and as Ildemaro, Luvo Maranti traced long lines
with his plangent tenor.... Perhaps most excitingly of all, the
Liswati bass-baritone Thando Zwane was an imposing Acmet,
with big stage presence to match his voice and a way of projecting
musical tension across a phrase.
JOHN ALLISON



CONDUCTOR Jeremy Silver
STAGE DIRECTOR William Costabile Cisco
SET DESIGNER Michael Mitchell
LIGHTING DESIGNER Kobus Rossouw
MOVEMENT DIRECTOR Ananda Fuchs
COSTUME DESIGNER Leticia Parvoleta Ivanova
COSTUME STYLIST Widaad Albertus
PROJECTION DESIGNER Kirsti Cumming

CAST

DALINDA	Molly Dzangare, Nontobeko Bhengu
ILDEMARO	Luvo Maranti, Mkhanyiseli Dyantyi
ACMET	Thando Zwane, Aubrey Lodewyk
UGO D'ASTI	Bongiwe Nakani-Mcetywa, Violina Anguelov-Hobbs
CORBOGA	Sisa Mjekula, Jaco Koegelenberg
ELMELIK	Vuyisa Xipu, Dumisa Masoka
GARNIERO	Thandolwethu Longo, Caspar Dieler
GUGLIELMO	Iviwe Boms, Simbongile Ntlahta
RIDOLFO	Themba Mdlalose, Theunis Jacobs
UBALDO	Sandile Zitha, Liam Jaftha

Opera UCT acknowledges the generosity of the Millennium Trust for its support of Opera UCT, and Bill van Rensburg for his support of *Dalinda*.



CHORUS

SOPRANOS

Buhle Swelindawo, Carmen Traut, Jessica Smith,
Kirsten Clarke, Linda Mbozi, Marvellous Mahlangu

MEZZO-SOPRANOS

Amahle Zondi, Mckel-Leigh Galant, Ntombi Nkosi,
Owethu Mxutu, Phoebe Andrews, Shannon Johnson

TENORS

Anele Mfulatelwa*, Khayaalethu Silevu*, Lereko Motele,
Loyiso Dlova*, Sonwabo Ntshata*

BARITONES

Bulelani Madondile*, Khaya Ntshuntshe*, Oyama
Manqoba*, Zukisa Nyandana*, Zukisa Sotayisi*

* member of Afri Arts Chorus

DANCERS

Tazley Jooste, Chantal De Haan

SUPERS

Ismaeel Williams, Caleb Dorman

DALINDA WORLD PREMIÈRE

Opera UCT was honoured and thrilled to make history with the first fully staged performances of *Dalinda* by celebrated nineteenth-century Italian composer, Gaetano Donizetti.

The history of the opera was like a detective story! Following the successful première of his opera, *Lucrezia Borgia*, in Milan in 1833, Gaetano Donizetti sought to have the opera staged in Naples. There, all stage works had to be approved by the censors, who repeatedly refused *Lucrezia* for its murderous plot and immoral characters. Over the next few years, Donizetti and his librettist, Felice Romani, presented various alterations for approval, but constant refusals of this and other operas exasperated Donizetti so much that he began to turn his sights towards Paris, where commissions were plentiful. But before leaving, despite four frustrating years, Donizetti decided to give *Lucrezia Borgia* one last shot. This time, instead of only making modifications, he totally reworked his original score. With a completely new libretto and much original music to combine with some of the original *Lucrezia* music, the plot now took place in the Middle East at the time of the Third Crusade.

The New York Times

A (Very) Belated Donizetti Premiere in South Africa

The 1838 score for “*Dalinda*,” which uses chunks of “*Lucrezia Borgia*,” was found in Naples in 2019. A student company in Cape Town just gave the first staged performance.

By Roslyn Sulcas
Reporting from Cape Town
Sept. 17, 2024, 5:02 a.m. ET


However, like all his previous submissions, this new undertaking was also rejected by the censors. *Dalinda* was never performed, and Donizetti left for Paris. Meanwhile, the manuscript score ended up being divided up and lost.

Just a few years ago, the missing parts of the *Dalinda* manuscript were rediscovered, recombined and worked into a new critical edition. At long last, almost two centuries after its creation, *Dalinda* was ready to be performed. Opera Co-Pro, an organisation which facilitates collaborations between opera companies, received exclusive rights to the score for a limited time, and initially arranged for a concert presentation of the opera in Berlin in 2023.

Our involvement came into being in discussion with Ambra Sorrentino, CEO of Opera Co-Pro, who had been part of the process that made the opera performance-ready. When she suggested that we perform the work in Cape Town as one of several companies around the world keen to add the work to their schedules, little did we imagine that Opera UCT would end up giving the very first stagings of the work, and that Cape Town performers and audiences would be forever recorded in operatic history!

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

This production was made possible through the generous support of Sir Mick and Lady Barbara Davis and the Humanities Faculty of the University of Cape Town.



THE TURN OF THE SCREW

There was huge excitement and anticipation for our new production of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* - a work last seen in Cape Town in the early 1980s. Based on a short ghost story by Henry James, this psychological thriller had audiences on the edge of their seats!

The point of departure for this production was the generosity of Elaine Kidd from the Jette Parker Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in recommending and sponsoring American stage director, Harriet Taylor, to come and work with us. We were doubly fortunate that Harriet suggested adding Movement Director, Scott Howland, to the team. They are wonderful and talented collaborators both individually and as a duo, and the process of creating this production was a joy and an inspiration from start to finish.

20th to 23rd November, Baxter Theatre,





CONDUCTOR
STAGE DIRECTOR
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Jeremy Silver
 Harriet Taylor
 Marcel Mayer

LIGHTING DESIGNER
MOVEMENT DIRECTOR
COSTUMIER

Luke Ellenbogen
 Scott Howland
 Nasrow Creations

CAST

PRINCIPALS

(in order of
 vocal appearance)

FLORA, SOPRANO

Siphosihle Letsoso (Wed, Fri),
 Jodi Carr (Thurs, Sat)

PETER QUINT, TENOR

Vuyisa Xipu (Wed, Fri),
 Dumisa Masoka (Thurs, Sat)

THE PROLOGUE, TENOR

Dumisa Masoka (Wed, Fri),
 Vuyisa Xipu (Thurs, Sat)

MILES, SOPRANO

Onalenna Maelane (Wed, Fri),
 Alex Breslin (Thurs, Sat)

MISS JESSEL, SOPRANO

Karabo Rabaloi (Wed, Fri),
 Setsoane Ntseki (Thurs, Sat)

GOVERNESS, SOPRANO

Molly Dzangare (Wed, Fri),
 Zizipho Funzo (Thurs, Sat)

MRS GROSE, MEZZO SOPRANO

Nica Reinke (Wed, Fri),
 Ntombi Nkosi (Thurs, Sat)

OPERA UCT CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN 1

Farida Bacharova

VIOLIN 2

Eriel Huang

VIOLA

Maja van Dyk

CELLO

Graham du Plessis

DOUBLE BASS

Conroy Scott

FLUTE / PICCOLO /

ALTO FLUTE

Lisa Thom

OBOE / COR ANGLAIS

John Rojas

CLARINET / BASS CLARINET

Féroll-Jon Davids

BASSOON

Brandon Phillips

HORN

Shannon Thebus

PIANO / CELESTE

Lisa Engelbrecht

HARP

Jana van der Walt

TIMPANI / PERCUSSION

Frank Mallows



Opera UCT Masterclass Series
Sarah-Jane Davies

The art of auditioning

Two days after our FoCTO Bursary Competition finals, we were delighted to host British singer and casting director, Sarah-Jane Davies, in our studio. As Head of Casting at Scottish Opera and Artistic Consultant to Les Azuriales Opera in France, she generously shared her expertise and experience with a room full of our young singers and supporters.



21st March,
2024

Fiasconaro
Room

South
African
College
of Music



*Mkhanyiseli
Dyantyi and
Molly
Dzangare
working with
Sarah-Jane
Davies,
with Lisa
Engelbrecht
at the piano*

Opera UCT Masterclass Series

Janet Haney Residency

“A coach with a useful and easy approach for today’s modern opera needs”

**Adriana Gonzalez, Operalia
1st prize winner 2019**



Janet Haney made her eagerly awaited return-visit as **Principal Guest Coach** to work in close detail with several of our young singers on repertoire and vocal development. Following ten days of intensive coaching, she gave a final masterclass in order to share the immense growth our singers had displayed.

Janet has been a busy vocal coach and repetiteur for many of the leading opera companies in the UK. Overseas work has included Wexford Festival Opera, Islenska Opera (Iceland), Opera Africa and Gärtnerplatz Munich.

She prepares many professional artists to sing operatic roles for major Opera Houses throughout Europe, including La Scala, Frankfurt Opera, English National Opera and Munich Gärtnerplatz.

2nd April – 12th April, 2024

Fiasconaro Room, South African College of Music

Opera UCT Masterclass Series

Musa Ngqungwana

Bass-baritone alumnus, Musa Ngqungwana, visited to coach and to share his expertise in a public masterclass. Born in Gqeberha, Musa has been lauded by *The New York Times* for his “rich, glowing voice and elegant legato,” while the *The Arts Desk* describes him as having “striking stage presence and a dignity that never falters”.

After completing his studies at UCT, he joined the prestigious Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. He was the Grand Finals Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2013, and has gone on to perform all around the USA as well as in London, Edinburgh, Salzburg and Copenhagen amongst other prestigious venues.



Participating in the masterclass were celebrated Opera UCT young singers: Luvo Maranti, Dumisa Masoka, Karabo Rabaloi, Vuyisa Xipu and Nontobeko Bhengu.

Opera UCT coach, Dr. Lisa Engelbrecht, accompanied the session at the piano.

2nd May 2024
Fiasconaro Room, SACM

Opera UCT Masterclass Series

Michelle Breedt

Internationally renowned mezzo soprano, Michelle Breedt, worked with four Opera UCT singers at the Baxter Concert Hall. Drawing on her immense talent and experience, Michelle delved straight into the inner workings of a singer's craft, and the work that goes on behind the scenes to hone a singer's technique and artistry.

Her focused approach reaped huge rewards for the young artists, while offering the audience a special insight into the mindset required to produce great performances.



18th September, 2024
Baxter Concert Hall

Jonathon Cole-Swinard

RESIDENCY



Jonathon Cole-Swinard is Head of Music and Chorus Director at Garsington Opera. He studied at Oxford University and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and began his career as Emerging Artist Repetiteur at Scottish Opera. He then joined the music staff at the Staatstheater Nürnberg where he made his conducting debut aged 25.

He has since worked on over 80 stage productions and works regularly as a conductor, chorus director, and vocal coach.

We were delighted to welcome Jonathon in his capacity as Head of Music at Garsington Opera in the UK. He filled his days with high-quality coaching, followed by auditions for places on the Garsington Opera Alvarez Young Artists scheme.

Alumnus Siphe Kwani had already joined them in 2024. Keep in touch to catch our announcement of another successful candidate for their 2025 season!

12th – 16th October, 2024

COMPETITIONS

We hold a variety of competitions every year, each one with a distinct repertoire emphasis.

Our competition finals are always exciting public events and are very well attended.



FoCTO Bursary Competition

19th March, 2024
Baxter Concert Hall

Audiences savoured the very best of our young talent early in the year with the annual FoCTO Bursary Competition. This year's competition hosted the new Music of Note Prize for a particularly talented upcoming singer, donated privately. We are grateful to the Friends of Opera in Cape Town for their generous support of our singers as they venture forth into the professional world.



The finalists on stage awaiting the adjudication, with FoCTO's chairperson, Gloria Kaminski, and Jeremy Silver

2024 Winners:

1st prize - Vuyisa Xipu

2nd prize - Molly Dzungare

Joint 3rd prize - Zizopho Funzo & Mkhanyiseli Dyantyi

Music of Note prize - Sisa Mjekula

David Aldred Memorial Prize for Sopranos

9th April, 2024

Baxter Concert Hall



David Aldred was particularly interested in the soprano voice, and Strauss's Four Last Songs was one of his favourite works for this voice type. After his death in 2021, his friends decided to honour his memory by establishing a prize for sopranos studying at the SACM, with each participant being required to include one of the Strauss set in their programme.

2024 Finalists:

1st prize: Frances van Vuuren

Runners-up: Zizipho Funzo, Karabo Rabaloi

The Aviva Pelham Operetta Competition

14th May, 2024

Baxter Concert Hall



Operetta is a staple of the repertoire in German opera houses, and has a long tradition in South Africa too.

This competition, inaugurated and sustained by Cape Town diva, Aviva Pelham, in 2022 is now a firm favourite in the Opera UCT calendar.

2024 prizewinners:

1st aria prize – Carmen Traut

Duet prize – Karabo Rabaloi & Luvo Maranti

2nd aria prize – Sisa Mjekula

Joint 3rd aria prize – Nica Reinke & Setsoane Ntseki

Audience prize: Ntombi Nkosi



Schock Foundation Singing Competition

*Under the aegis of the
Vocal Division of SACM*

Now in its 23rd year, this competition has introduced the public to some major talent throughout its history, with many of its prize winners now pursuing impressive international careers.

This year's prize winners were:

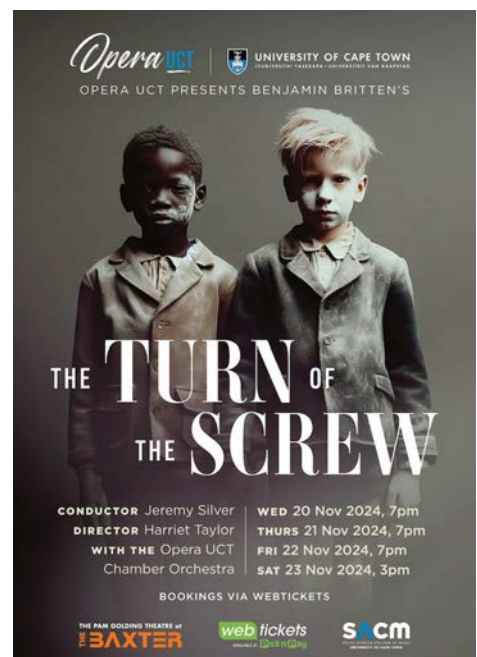
Thandolwethu Longo
Nontobeko Bhengu
Sandile Zitha
Frances van Vuuren
Sisa Mjekula

1st prize and Best Opera Aria
2nd prize and Best Oratorio Aria
3rd prize and Audience Prize
4th prize and Best Art Song
Best South African Song

15th October, 2024
Baxter Concert Hall



*Opera UCT tenor, Luvo Maranti and director Jeremy Silver
in a coaching session*



BOOK LAUNCHES

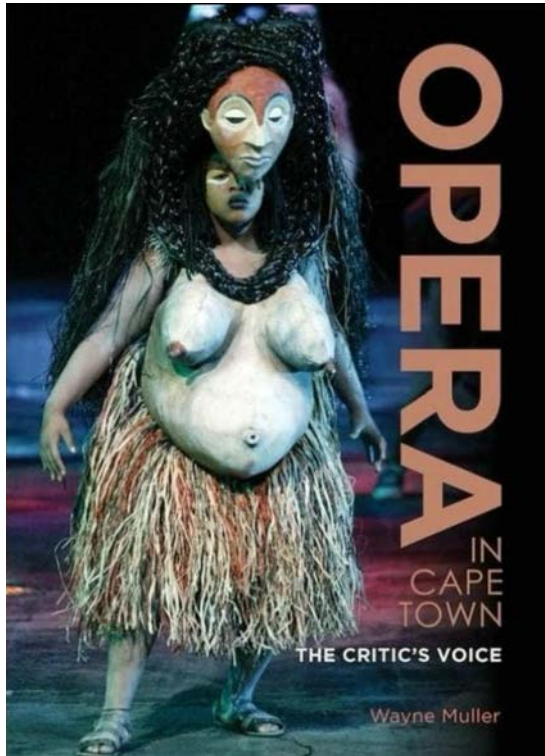
SOUTH AFRICAN ENVOYS OF OPERA

by Margaretha Deysel Stemmet

In a new initiative for 2024, Opera UCT hosted the launch of three books on the subject of opera. The first, South African Envoys of Opera, charts the lives and careers of 111 gifted South African singers who sang internationally. We learn of their training, their early careers and the direction their particular singing lives took them. Yet this is not just a catalogue of roles, operas and opera houses. The author has taken immense care to bring these singers fully to life off-stage, sharing their interests and even their favourite recipes. Some of these were offered as snacks in a reception which followed an on-stage interview of the author and small concert.



OPERA for the BOOKS



Two weeks after the first book launch, Opera UCT hosted a joint event for two new book publications.

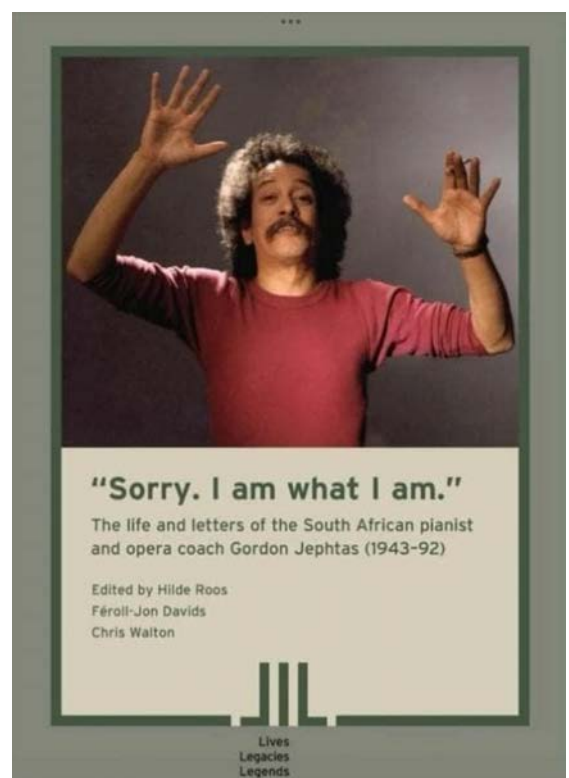
Wayne Muller's "Opera in Cape Town: The Critics Voice" traces the reception history of opera from the 1980s to the present, and charts the development of a distinctly South African operatic aesthetic.

"Sorry, I am what I am" by Hilde Roos, Féroll-Jon Davids and Chris

Walton explores the life and letters of the South African pianist and opera coach Gordon Jephtas, a SACM alumnus who worked as an accompanist with the Eoan Group before moving to Europe and establishing an international reputation.

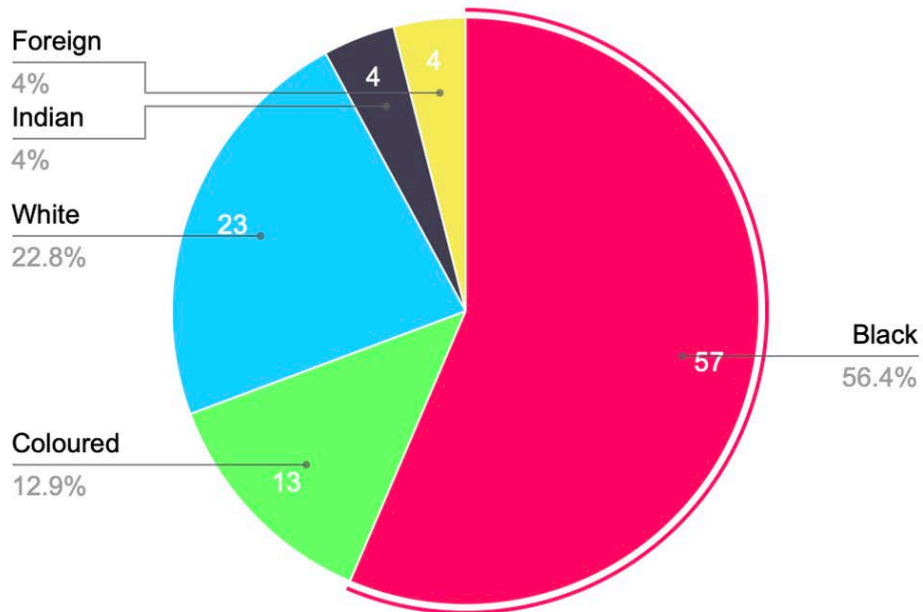
Africa Melane led a round-table discussion with the three authors, with musical items provided by the vocal talent of Opera UCT.

21st May, 2024
Baxter Concert Hall

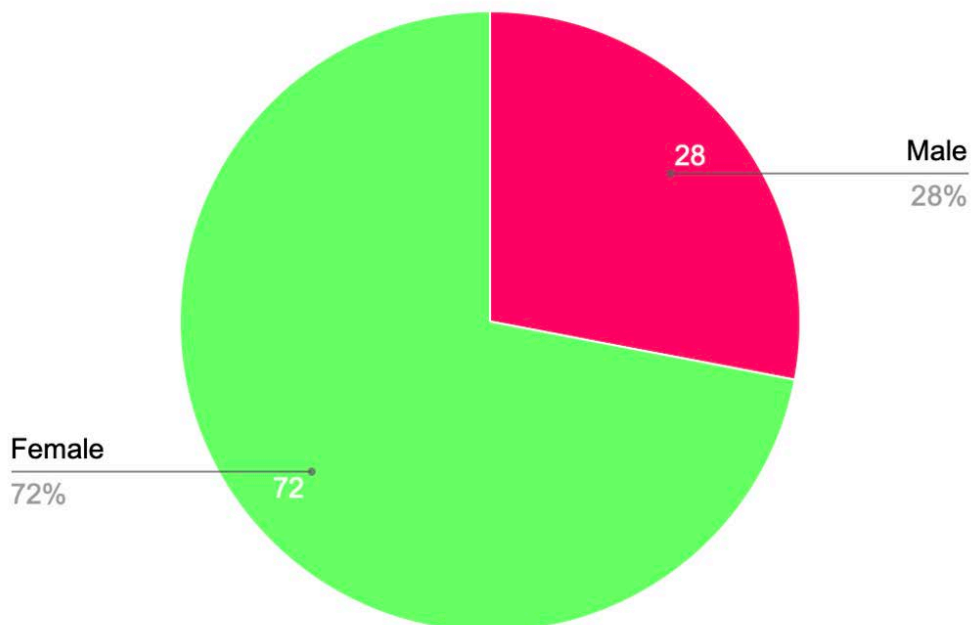


Student Singer Statistics

Demographic



Gender Division



The wider ecosystem:

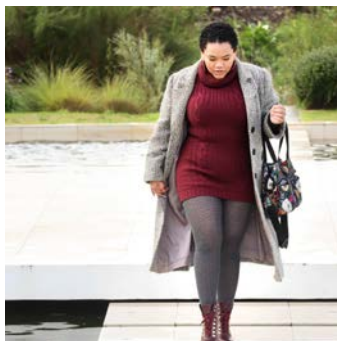
1) TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

Singers are at the heart of the operatic experience for audiences, and Opera UCT continues to lead the sourcing and training of young South African talent, as it has for many decades.

However, singers don't work in isolation, and without orchestral instrumentalists, conductors, directors, designers, répétiteurs, stage managers and craftsmen, no opera can fully come to life.

Opera UCT is the only institution in the country that is addressing this need head-on, giving personal training and performance experience to young practitioners in the wider operatic ecology. All our young artists receive training and feedback from our own specialised staff as well as from the national and international guest artists who visit throughout the year.

Our 2024 cohort of Opera practitioners included:



Whiren van Niekerk, stage director



Marvin Kernelle, conductor



Ian Bothma, répétiteur

It is with great pride and a little sadness that we see Marvin Kernelle and Ian Bothma leave us to embark on the next stage of their respective careers in Germany. We wish them every success!

In addition:

3 of our singing students worked as **Assistant Stage Managers**,

1 worked as a **Make-Up Artist** and

1 as a **Surtitle Operator**

– all alongside professional practitioners in their field.

We performed our *Sound of Freedom* concert alongside the **orchestra** at the South African College of Music, giving them valuable operatic experience in addition to the symphonic training which is already at the heart of their training



2) EMPLOYMENT

Keeping the arts alive!

Opera is the most collaborative of the art forms, requiring a wealth of talents and expertise. In addition to Opera UCT staff, the administrative and technical staff of the South African College of Music and the staff of the Baxter Theatre, we have been able in 2024 to provide freelance employment across the arts sector to 55 individuals and 3 companies:

- 2 Stage directors
- 2 Set designers
- 2 Lighting designers
- 2 Movement directors
- 1 Costume designer
- 2 Costume & Wardrobe Managers
- 1 Milliner
- 1 Répétiteur
- 1 Scenic artist
- 1 Projection designer
- 2 Production Managers
- 2 Stage managers
- 5 Costume Assistants
- 1 Make-up Artist
- 1 Assistant Stage Manager
- 1 Surtitled translator into isiXhosa
- 1 Surtitled operator
- 1 Wigmaster
- 1 Graphic Designer
- 4 Opera Singers
- 21 Freelance Orchestral Players
Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra
- Costumier
- Set building company

Reaching out: MAKING CONNECTIONS



AFRI-ARTS CHOIR

For our September production of *Dalinda*, we were joined by the male singers of the Afri-Arts Choir, a recent addition to the BongiLizwi Music Education Organisation founded by Bongiwe Nakani-Mcetywa and Nolizwi Monica Dadase in 2013.

The choir is predominantly made up of singers from the community choirs of the townships, together with a few recent Opera UCT graduates.



BISHOPS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* includes a role for boy soprano. We were delighted to have the support and interest of the music department at Bishops Preparatory School, from where we were able to double-cast two 12-year-old boys for the production. Both of them acquitted themselves brilliantly in what will surely turn out to be a formative experience of their youth.

Achievements in 2024:

Opera UCT singers past & present

Some highlights

Current soprano, **Molly Dzangare**, was one of three international singers to receive a prestigious Opera Europa Eva Kleinitz Scholarship. Applications were received from over 160 young singers from 44 different countries – all of whom are still in full-time education.

Recent alumnus, **Smelo Mahlangu** (bass-baritone), has been appointed a Young Artist at Volksoper Wien between 2024 and 2026. He joins singers from Germany, Russia, Chile, USA and Austria.

Alumna, **Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha** (soprano) was one of the 2024 recipients of the prestigious Herbert von Karajan Prize at the Salzburg Easter Festival.

2024 graduate, **Siphe Kwani** (baritone), has joined the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as a Jette Parker Artist, and already sung a principal role on their stage.

2023 graduate, **Sanele Mwelase** (countertenor), sang the title role in a new work, Ali, written by Grey Filastine's for the Theatre Royal de la Monnaie in Belgium.

Alumnus, **Theo Magongoma** (baritone), has won the 4th Stignani Competition in Imola, Italy. He was also awarded the audience prize.

Thando Zwane (principal baritone role in Dalinda, and postgraduate from 2025) won the Audience Choice award in the finals of the 42nd International Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition in Latvia.

Vuyisa Xipu (tenor) reached the final rounds of the 2024 Neue Stimmen Singing Competition in Germany.

Recent alumna, **Moloko Letsoalo** (soprano), and 2024 graduate, **Luvo Maranti** (tenor), joined the Young Artists at the National Opera Studio in London in September.



A selection of alumni performances in 2024:

Pretty Yende

Cleopatra	<i>Giulio Cesare</i>	Frankfurt Opera
Micaëla	<i>Carmen</i>	Arena di Verona
Antonia	<i>Les contes d'Hoffmann</i>	Metropolitan Opera, NY
Norina	<i>Don Pasquale</i>	Vienna State Opera

Golda Schultz

Fiordiligi	<i>Così fan tutte</i>	Royal Opera, London
Anne Truelove	<i>The Rake's Progress</i>	Paris National Opera

Cecilia Masabane Rangwanasha

Liù	<i>Turandot</i>	Washington Opera
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Pumeza Matshikiza

Aida	<i>Aida</i>	Hannover State Opera
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Nombulelo Yende

Micaëla	<i>Carmen</i>	Frankfurt Opera
Contessa	<i>Le nozze di Figaro</i>	Frankfurt Opera

Siphokazi Molteno

Flora	<i>La Traviata</i>	Dallas Opera
Cherubino	<i>Le nozze di Figaro</i>	Teatro Comunale Belluno

Levy Sekgapane

Rodrigo	<i>Otello</i>	Frankfurt Opera
Ernesto	<i>Don Pasquale</i>	Vienna State Opera

FACULTY & STAFF 2024

OPERA UCT

Director
Projects Manager
Coaches

Drama lecturer
Strategy and Operations
Student Admin Assistants

Prof Jeremy Silver
Christine Crouse
Dr Lisa Engelbrecht
Ean Smit
Ian Bothma
Paul Griffiths
Eriel Huang
Nica Reinke
Siphosihle Letsoso

UCT STAFF

Dean, Faculty of Humanities
Development & Alumni

Prof Shose Kessi
Sarah Archer (Executive Director)
Sidney Van Heerden
Cindy de Oliveira

SACM STAFF

Director
Deputy Director
Departmental Manager
Concert Co-ordinator
Administrative Officer

Senior Secretary
Building Supervisor
Principal Technical Officer

Prof Andrew Lilley
A/Prof François du Toit
Angelisa Scheepers
Fiona Grayer
Noluthi Kula
Sheila Taylor
Lisa-Marie Diamond
Samuel Kruger
Izan Greyling

VOCAL STUDIES, SACM

Head of Vocal Studies
Vocal Lecturers

A/Prof Patrick Tikolo
Paulina Malefane
Violina Anguelov
Sipho Fubesi



Top: The Turn of the Screw, curtain call - November 2024

Bottom: At the first night of Dalinda, left to right: Prof Mosa Moshabela (VC, UCT), Ambra Sorrentino (CEO, Opera Co-Pro), Eriel Huang (Strategy & Operations, Opera UCT), Gayton McKenzie (National Minister of Sports, Arts & Culture), Jeremy Silver (Director, Opera UCT), Ricardo Mackenzie (Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Western Cape) – September 2024