

## John Ntsepe

Critics have labeled John Ntsepe as one of South Africa's most outstanding young pianists and without a doubt the leading Black classical pianist in South Africa and Europe. He made history by being the first Black pianist to receive a B. Mus Degree (*Performing Arts*) from the *University of Pretoria* and also a Performers Licentiate from *UNISA* (both *with distinction*). In 2006, he became the first Black soloist (instrumentalist) to perform with the *Cape Philharmonic Orchestra*. Ntsepe is known as the last protégé of the late South African pianist, Lionel Bowman. In 2014, Ntsepe was visited as one of the international artists at the Chamber Music Festival of Castro-Chiloe (Chile) for chamber music and giving masterclasses. This year, Ntsepe will give the world premiere of the Piano Concerto by the celebrated Viennese composer, Gabriele Proy which she is composing especially for him. Apart from solo his many performances, he has many years of extensive teaching experience in piano, music theory and aural training. He has taught beginner students through to advanced students. He was on the faculty of the *Hout Bay Music Project* and often does did music appreciation workshops in South Africa. Ntsepe has also coached and accompanied many singers and instrumentalists. Ntsepe's artistry is consolidated by his natural sense of style, individuality, sensitivity, energy, drama, technical command of the keyboard, high quality of musicality and emotional maturity which are admired by all who listen to his performances. In 2011, Dame Trudi Koeleman from the Netherlands labeled him "...a born interpreter". He enjoys a multifaceted career that has led him to perform throughout South Africa, Europe and South America. He has received master-classes from international pianists such as Laura Mikkola, Adam Wodnizcki, Carlo Guaitoli, Marek Drewnowski, Konstantin Scherbakov, Homero Francesch, Angela Hewitt, Vadim Monastyrski, Lori Sims, Alejandro Geberovich and Markus Schirmer. After completing his studies with his mentor, Francois du Toit at the *South African College of Music (University of Cape Town)*, Ntsepe moved to Austria (Vienna) to further his piano studies with Ralph Heiber. He is currently doing his Doctoral studies at the *Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz (Austria)*, specialising in the music of the Russian composer Nikolai Medtner. His dissertation theme is "Investigating Nikolai Karlovich Medtner's Piano Concertos", supervised by Christoph Flamm, Christian Utz and Peter Revers.

Mr. Ntsepe was born in Sebokeng, a small Township in the Gauteng Province. He started playing piano at the age of 14 under Vanessa Burger's tutelage. His talent in music became apparent immediately after starting piano lessons. Six months later, he gave his first public concert and later he took part in the Vereeniging Eisteddfod and was the top participant for two consecutive years. Shortly after that, Ntsepe was accepted into *The National School of the Arts* in Johannesburg. While still in Johannesburg, he gave performances at the *Sandton Art Gallery* and numerous soiree clubs. His exposure led him to be a regular guest on many television and radio shows. Ntsepe regularly gets invitations to perform at prestigious events, festivals, music soiree clubs and societies in South Africa, Europe and South America. He has shared the stage with renowned musicians such as; Olga Kern, Pinchas Zukerman and Amanda Forsyth. He has performed for several heads of States including former South African President FW De Klerk, President Jacob Zuma and President Xi Jinping of the Republic of China. Over the years, Mr. Ntsepe has been awarded numerous awards and prizes including being a prize winner in *the 20<sup>th</sup> Internationalen Johannes Brahms Wettbewerbes* in Pörschach/Wörthersee (2013). He was invited to give a performance at the closing ceremony of the historic 2015 FOCAC (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation), which was held at the Sandton Convention Center in Johannesburg. Mr. Ntsepe has recently (2017) done television interviews for *ORF: 3Sat, Kulturzeit* which will be aired in Austria and *Kulturmontag* which will be aired in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.