Dietrich Wagner passes away

Music professor Dietrich Wagner, who passed away on Sunday 21 January, has left an enormous legacy with regard to the development of both the classical guitar and the lute in South Africa.

A teacher of international standing, he will be remembered for his detailed knowledge of classical guitar-playing, which was based on a thorough understanding of the teaching principles established by the great guitarists/composers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He combined this with a specialist's knowledge of lute music of the Renaissance and Baroque periods and a keen appreciation of contemporary music trends for the guitar.

"He will also be remembered for the gentle, but firm, guidance he gave to his pupils, imparting a strong and clear sense of purpose and commitment in his teaching. He was indeed a musician, teacher and man of very real stature. His loss to the music world, and the guitar fraternity in particular, is great," says Graham Pringle, colleague and part-time guitar lecturer at the Department of Music.

Dietrich Johann Wagner was born on 24 October 1937 in Stellenbosch, where he spent the first eleven years of his life. On his father's appointment as the Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand, the family moved to Johannesburg. It was at this same institution that Dietrich completed first a BA degree, majoring in Afrikaans and Geography, and then a BMus degree with guitar and voice as instruments.

After graduation he joined his erstwhile teacher, Fritz Buss, on the teaching panel of the Wits School of Music, as well as teaching at the Johannesburg College of Education and giving private lessons. In1964 he went to Germany, where he studied Singing under Elisabeth Grümmer at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. It was at this time that he met the person who was to play a major role in his life as a musician and teacher, his future wife, Nana.

From Berlin he went to London to study the lute and lute song with one of the pioneers of the lute revival, Robert Spencer. Returning to South Africa in 1966 to support his mother, who had been diagnosed with cancer, Dietrich resumed his teaching at the Wits School of Music, the College of Education and privately. In 1967 he married Nana, who at the time was living in Paris, where she worked as a translator for an American company. The job meant that Nana did a lot of travelling throughout Europe, but true to his character – one of strength of purpose and steely determination – Dietrich took this in his stride, as he did with many other subsequent endeavours.

During this time he also sang the role of the Evangelist in the *St Matthew Passion* on a number of occasions. The years 1971 to 1973 saw the Wagners back in Germany – in Cologne – where Dietrich furthered his studies on the lute under the renowned teacher and performer, Michael Schäffer. It was then that Nana began her lute studies, also under the tutelage of Schäffer.

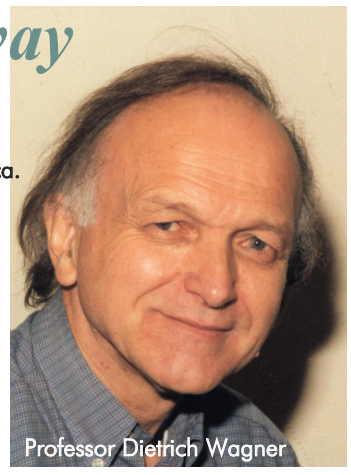
In April 1973, Dietrich joined the teaching staff of the Conservatoire in Windhoek, where he established a guitar and lute department, eventually being appointed to the position of senior lecturer.

> A memorial concert will be held at the Konservatorium on Saturday, 3 March, to pay tribute to a life well lived in the service of music

"This was a period of considerable musical activity, with the establishment of an early music ensemble, the Consortium Musicum. The group could boast up to three lutenists if needed, including Nana, who had once more taken up her studies of the instrument, now under Dietrich's supervision," says Pringle.

The Consortium frequently gave performances in Namibia, as well as regular recitals on the radio. At the same time, Dietrich managed to complete an MMus degree through the University of the Witwatersrand and continued to build on the career he had established in Johannesburg as a singer and lutenist in the manner of the great Elizabethan performers.

"His love of poetry, especially Afrikaans poetry, can be seen in the wonderfully sensitive songs that he composed throughout his creative life. He was also much in demand as a composer of incidental music for many Shakespearean plays that were performed in Johannesburg," says Pringle.


Professor Dietrich Wagner

In 1979, Dietrich completed the circle by returning to teach in Stellenbosch. He again established a small, but vibrant, post at the Konservatorium, where he produced a number of guitarists and lute players of considerable talent and ability. "He also established a guitar studio at home which has greatly enriched both the Stellenbosch and wider community. Apart from creating the guitar syllabi for various Eisteddfods and the University of South Africa (UNISA), he has adjudicated the guitar section at Eisteddfods, as well as officiating as an examiner at the practical music examinations of UNISA."

In 1995 he was invited to join the panel of adjudicators for the *Concours Panafricain de Musique et des Arts* (International Guitar Competition) that was presented in Pretoria in February of that year. Perhaps his greatest achievement during this time was his role in nurturing the talent of the well-known South African guitarist, James Grace, who became the first guitarist to be awarded the highly valued Tagore Medal at the Royal College of Music in London, thus confirming Dietrich Wagner's position as possibly the pre-eminent teacher of classical guitar in South Africa.

"He will be sorely missed as a musician, composer, teacher, friend and guide to many, many pupils. He will also be missed for his wry sense of humour!" says Pringle.

A memorial concert of lute, singing and guitar music will be held at the Endler Hall, US Konservatorium on Saturday 3 March at 20:00. James Grace (guitar), André Howard (singing) and Elna van der Merwe (piano) will be among the performing artists. Entrance is free; reserve a seat at (021) 808 2345.

Pryswenners by die Departement Drama

DIE US se Departement Drama het soos gebruiklik aan die einde van verlede jaar sy presteerders beloon. Onder die wenners was Wolf Britz as beste studenteregisseur, wie ook vir 'n gesogte Fleur du Cap-Teaterprys benoem is as mees belowende student.

Op die foto is die Dramadepartement se trotse prys-wenners

Woordfees fokus op *Landskappe van die Liefde*

Die Woordfees, wat van 5 tot 11 Maart gehore sal 0 met net die beste Afrikaanse vermaak, bied 'n verskeidenheid vertonings wat die *Landskappe van die Liefde* – soos die tema vir 2007 lui – gaan uitbeeld. Radio Sonder Grense se Iris Bester sal ook hier tent kom opslaan om interessante onderhoude met mense binne die US, sowel as gewilde kunstenaars soos Mathys Roets en Valiant Swart, onder andere, te voer.

RSG se Spektrum en Monitor sal dus elke middag in die feesweek vanaf die Sasol Kunsmuseum se binnehof uitgesaai word. Die RSG se tuinkafee – gedoop Plataan Kafee – sal oop wees vir luisteraars wat graag wil kom saamkuier. Ligte middagetes en wyn sal bedien word vir slegs R25.

So maak seker dat jy die Plataan Kafee in die feesweek vanaf 13:00 tot 14:00 en Saterdag van 12:00 tot 13:00 besoek. Besprekings kan gedoen word by (021) 808 3691.

Die Soweto String Quartet sorg vir vars klanke

Sedert die drie Khamese-broers – Sandile, Thami (violiste) en Reuben (tjellis) – in 1989 die Soweto String Quartet saam met Makhosini Mnguni (violis) by hulle oom se Madimba-musiekskool gestig het, het hulle musiek een van Suid-Afrika se grootste uitvoerprodukte geword. Met hulle vars dansritmes – wat wissel van Kwela tot African Jazz – sorg die Soweto String Quartet dat almal ekstaties op hulle voete bly. Moet dus nie dié legendariese groep se optrede misloop op Sondag 11 Maart (Jan Marais Natuurreservaat) in *Sunday Blues en Al daai Jazz* nie. Ander groepe wat hier te sien sal wees, is Tucan Tucan, Delta Blue, Bonekey en ESP. Kaartjies kos R80.

Die Soweto String Quartet

Internasionaal-gerekende fotograwe neem ook deel

Drie fotograwe wat reeds internasionaal erkenning ontvang het, is van die genooide kunstenaars wie se werk by vanjaar se spesiale Woordfees-kunsuitstalling vertoon sal word. Dit is ook die eerste keer dat 'n buitelandse kunstenaar, die Kameroen-gebore Nederlandse fotograaf Angèle Etoundi Essamba, aan 'n Woordfees-uitstalling deelneem. Essamba, wat in die afgelope dekade wêreldbekendheid as fotograaf verwerf het, kom spesiaal na Suid-Afrika vir die Woordfees. Die twee Suid-Afrikaanse fotograwe, Jac de Villiers en Lien Botha, het internasionale aansien met suksesvolle uitstallings in die buiteland verwerf.

Dit is ook die eerste keer dat fotografie die medium is waarin die jaarlikse Woordfees-kunsuitstalling aangebied word. Die uitstalling sluit aan by die Woordfeestema, *Landskappe van die liefde*. Amanda Botha is die kurator. Dit word in die US Sasol Kunsmuseum op Stellenbosch gehou en het al op Woensdag 21 Februarie geopen. Die uitstalling duur tot Donderdag, 5 April. Rondleidings van die uitgestalde werk sal deur die drie fotograwe en die kurator, Amanda Botha, onderneem word.

'n Tuiste in eie taal

"'n Tuiste in eie taal" is die uitgangspunt van 'n simposium wat op 8 Maart tussen 14h00 en 17h00, deur die Meertaligheids-Aksiegroep (i-MAG) en die Taakgroep vir die Bemagtiging van Afrikaansgebruikers op TV (Tabema) aangebied word.

Met die eerste sessie plaas die genooide hoofspreker, prof Nicholas Ostler van Bath in Engeland, en skrywer van *Empires of the Word – A Language History of the World*, die taalkwessie in 'n globale konteks. As voorsitter van die "Foundation for Endangered Languages" en met sy vooruitskouing op die toekoms, sal hy beslis sy toehoorders laat regop sit. Ostler haal beslis nie om dowe neute die volgende Arabiese spreekwoord in sy voorwoord aan nie: "The strength of a person is in his intelligence and in his tongue". Hy sê ook dat nie prinse, state of ekonomieë die werklike rolspelers in die wêreldgeskiedenis is nie, maar taalgemeenskappe.

Die hoofspreker in die tweede sessie is prof Francois Grin, ekonoom en hoof van die Instituut vir Vertaling en Tolking aan die Universiteit van Genève, Switserland. Hy is 'n kenner op die gebied van taal- en kulturele diversiteit. Die derde sessie word ingelei deur prof Christo Viljoen (elektroniese ingenieur, voormalige vise-rektor van die US en voorsitter van die SAUK Beheerraad). Hy bespreek die praktiese haalbaarheid van moderne tegnologiese hulpmiddels om veeltaligheid te fasiliteer.

Samevattend sal 'n paneel van taal- en kulturele kundiges, onder leiding van Alet van Huyssteen (voorsitter van i-MAG, oudvoorsitter van die Wes-Kaapse Taalkomitee en dosent in Xhosa, UWK) die simposium afsluit.

BESPREKINGS

Besprekings word vanjaar deur Computicket behartig: 083 915 8000 of aanlyn by www.computicket.co.za

Kaartjies kan ook bespreek en afgehaal word by die Woordfees se Computicket-terminaal by die Oude Libertas Amfiteater: (021) 809 7473, 809 7380, 809 7569.

Kaartjies kan Maandag 5 tot Saterdag 10 Maart van 8:00 tot 17:00 gekoop en afgehaal word by die Lettere-gebou, kamer 200A (tweede vloer, ingang: Van Ryneveldstraat) Skakel: (021) 808 3138.

NAVRAE:

Vir algemene feesnavrae: (021) 808 2901, 808 3513 of stuur 'n e-pos na fees@sun.ac.za of besoek www.woordfees.co.za