



Final results: Hubert van der Spuy National Music Competition 2024

Eight finalists:

Sinran Emilie Yang, 8 years, Piano: Johannesburg, Gauteng
Henning Boucher, 11 years, Flute: Johannesburg, Gauteng
Dylan Price, 13 years, Piano: Johannesburg, Gauteng
Victor Le Du, 12 years, Piano: Makhanda, Eastern Cape
Juliette Nel, 11 years, Cello: Walvis Bay, Namibia
Samuel Nel, 14 years, Piano: Walvis Bay, Namibia
Haotian Mike Yang, 12 years, Piano: Rondebosch, Western Cape
Agnes Huang, 11 years, Piano: Johannesburg, Gauteng

Top 3 results:

3rd prize winner: Agnes Huang
2nd prize winner: Haotian Mike Yang
Winner: Samuel Nel

Photos attached to the email:



Eight finalists with panel of adjudicators

From Left to right:

Back: Dylan Price, Prof Hubert van der Spuy, Lizet Smith, Hendrik Hofmeyr, Dane Coetzee
Front: Sinran Emilie Yang, Juliette Nel, Haotian Mike Yang, Samuel Nel, Agnes Huang, Victor Le Du, Henning Boucher



Top three with panel of adjudicators (from left to right):

Back: Hilda Boonzaaier (chairperson), Prof Hubert van der Spuy, Lizet Smith, Hendrik Hofmeyr, Dane Coetzee

Front: Haotian Mike Yang (2nd place), Samuel Nel (winner), Agnes Huang (3rd place)



Our winner, Samuel Nel, with Prof Hubert van der Spuy

PRESS RELEASE

23 September 2024

14-year-old Namibian takes home just short of R30 000 in 35th Hubert van der Spuy National Music Competition

Professor Hubert van der Spuy is as passionate and enthusiastic as ever about the instrumental competition for young musicians launched in 1989. At the time Van der Spuy was the head of the Music Department at the University of the Western Cape, where he inspired young people to become their very best. The optimal development of young musicians has always been a priority for Van der Spuy, and he is the generous donor of the competition's first prize bearing the name of his late mother, Johanna van der Spuy. The Competition has grown into the most prestigious of its kind in South Africa and Namibia.

Prof Van der Spuy is legendary for his remarkable work ethic, his integrity and his charisma. His enormous contribution in so many areas was recognised in 2011 and 2012 when he was awarded the Huberte Rupert Prize (SA Academy for Arts and Science) and an Honorary Licentiate in Music (Unisa). In March 2023 he was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 13th kykNET Fiëstas. In October 2023 the North-West University bestowed an Honorary Doctorate on him. He is still active as an adjudicator and acts as external examiner for prominent universities.

This year's competition – the 35th since its inception – took place in the world-class Endler Hall in Stellenbosch and marked the beginning of a new collaboration with the Stellenbosch University. According to Professor Mario Nell, the Chair of the University's Department of Music, the Department strives to stimulate and develop the performing arts on a continuous basis. They therefore feel privileged and proud to become part of this wonderful and unique event on South Africa's musical calendar.

The event kicked off on Monday evening with a gala concert where the winner of the 2023 competition, Xizhi Aiden Luo, appeared as guest soloist with the University of Stellenbosch Symphony Orchestra and Reghardt Kühn as conductor. The programme included Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture* as well as the third movement (*Allegro assai*) from Mozart's *Piano Concerto No 19 in F*, K 450.

Over the next three days a total of 46 young musicians between the ages of 7 and 14 were judged in three rounds, with eight finalists going through to the final round on Friday night.

The **overall winner for 2024** is the 14-year-old pianist **Samuel Nel** from Walvis Bay in Namibia. This was the fourth year Samuel participated in the competition and he went home with a whopping **R29 200**. When he is not practicing piano, you will find him on the golf course, and he represented Namibia this year at the All-

Africa golf championships. Samuel loves performing in front of an audience and dreams of playing Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No 1* in the future. As part of his prizes Samuel won the Johanna van der Spuy Memorial Prize of R15 000, a gold medal plus an invitation to perform as soloist with the University of Stellenbosch Symphony Orchestra at the opening ceremony in 2025. He may also be invited to the Hugo Lambrechts Concerto Festival in 2025. He also won the prize for the best performance of a Baroque work in the first round (*Allemande* and *Courante* from the *French Suite No 2* by JS Bach), the best performance of a Romantic work in the third round (*Liebesträume No 3 in A-flat* by Liszt), the Piano category prize, as well as the best performance of a South African composition. Samuel's younger sister, Juliette, was also one of the eight finalists. They come from a musical family and have two younger brothers who also play the piano! At 14 Samuel still has enough time to decide about a future career, but what he does know is that there will always be a place for music AND golf in his life!

The **2024 runner-up** and winner of R10 000 and a silver medal is pianist **Haotian Mike Yang** from Rondebosch in Cape Town. He won a total of **R14 200**, including the prize for the best performance of a Classical work in the second round (the first movement (*Allegro*) from Haydn's Sonata in D, Hob XVI 33). Mike is 12, and apart from the piano also plays the guitar. He has a dog named Coffee, likes doing maths, and says he is also good at badminton (and has a delightful smile!).

In third place and the bronze medal winner this year is the 11-year-old pianist **Agnes Huang** from Johannesburg, with a total of **R9 700** in prize money. Agnes loves playing the piano but can also play the violin. She enjoys playing pieces from the Romantic period the most.

The youngest finalist this year was the 8-year-old pianist **Sinran Emilie Yang** from Johannesburg. She loves playing with her friends and apart from the piano, she also likes to play other musical instruments. She took home an amount of **R10 200** in prize money, including the best performance of a Baroque work in the first round for contestants 10 years and younger, and the best performance of a Classical work in the second round for participants 10 years and younger. She was also the overall best candidate of 10 years and younger.

Also from Johannesburg is the 11-year-old flautist **Henning Bouwer**. His total prize money amounted to **R5 200** and included the category prize as best woodwinds player. Henning lives for music, academics, sport and culture, with music his favourite. He says if he is not making music, he is listening to it. Henning says to be on stage making music is exactly where he wants to be, which became abundantly clear from the passion he displayed while playing the flute. Henning's sister Lili also qualified for the competition. She plays the recorder and won the category prize of **R3 000** for other instruments.

Juliette Nel from Walvis Bay in Namibia plays the cello and is overall winner Samuel Nel's younger sister. This 11-year-old won a total of **R5 200**, including the category prize as best strings player. Juliette loves to be outside, especially on her paddle board on the lagoon in Walvis Bay, where her dog, Tiger, often joins her on the board. She also enjoys playing the piano and her favourite sport is rhythmic gymnastics. Her dream is to become a concert cellist.

Dylan Price is 13 and also from Johannesburg, and one of the six finalists playing the piano. He says it doesn't matter what he does in life, he will always do his 200% best! Like the other finalists Dylan received prize money of **R2 200** for being a participant in the third as well as the final round.

Victor Le Du is 11 and hails from Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown) in the Eastern Cape. He attends Kingswood College and started with piano lessons in 2019. He plays the clarinet as a second instrument and when not practicing, he relaxes playing chess. Victor received prize money of **R2 200** for being a participant in the third as well as the final round.

The experienced panel of three adjudicators consisted of Dane Coetzee, Hendrik Hofmeyr and Lizet Smith.

Dane Coetzee graduated in cello performance at UCT and Stellenbosch University, respectively. He has appeared as soloist and chamber musician at several well-known South African festivals and performed as a soloist with The Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, The Cape Town Philharmonic Youth Orchestra and the Musicanti Chamber Orchestra. Dane occupied a permanent Tutti cello position in the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra until October 2021 and left to occupy his current position at the Beau Soleil Music Centre in Cape Town as cello teacher and cellist of the Beau Soleil Piano Quartet. His current performance portfolio includes activities as a soloist, chamber musician, ad hoc orchestral musician and studio session cellist across South Africa and the Southern African region.

Hendrik Hofmeyr's first major success as a composer came in 1988 with the performance at the State Theatre of *The Fall of the House of Usher*, which won the South African Opera Competition and was also awarded the Nederburg Opera Prize. In 1992 he accepted a post as lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch, and in 1997 he was appointed at the University of Cape Town, where obtained his Doctorate in 1999, and retired as professor and Head of Composition in 2022. Hofmeyr's *Incantesimo* for flute was chosen to represent South Africa at the Congress of the International Society of Contemporary Music in Croatia in 2005. Many of his works have been issued on CD and published abroad. Hofmeyr's oeuvre comprises operas, ballets, symphonies, concertos and numerous choral, solo vocal and instrumental works, and includes some 150 commissions.

Lizet Smith is a highly accomplished clarinet teacher and performer. She has taught at several schools and universities in South Africa, with her students achieving numerous accolades in various competitions. She currently teaches at Pretoria Boys High School, Afrikaans Hoër Seunskool and the University of Pretoria. Lizet is also an active performer, regularly participating in chamber ensembles and orchestras. She has been the principal clarinet for the Gauteng Philharmonic Orchestra since 2014 and has performed in numerous productions and concerts. Lizet holds a BMus degree from the University of South Africa, a Clarinet Performers Licentiate, and a Piano Teachers Licentiate. She has also received a Clarinet Performers Certificate from Trinity.

The annual competition is organised by the Tygerberg branch of the South African Society of Music Teachers, with Hilda Boonzaaier as chairperson. During the award ceremony on Friday night Boonzaaier was presented with honorary membership of the South African Society of Music Teachers for her contribution to music education in South Africa.

As part of her remarks Boonzaaier referred to the number of entries received, and the diversity of instruments entered for the competition from across South Africa and Namibia. Among the 46 participants selected there were 6 playing the cello, 4 flautists, 3 playing the recorder, 20 pianists, 6 violinists, with 5 playing the clarinet and 2 trumpet players. Boonzaaier said the competition serves as an invaluable platform to cultivate the musical talent of the country's young musicians.

She further said: "We are also very thankful for our new collaboration with the Stellenbosch University Music Department – the place where musicians and teachers of the future are being educated. The role of teachers can never be underestimated because they nurture these talented budding young musicians. Teachers make little ones count. They inspire and work tirelessly to teach our young competitors. We salute you all."

Boonzaaier concluded with a quote by Vaughan Fleischfresser: "In a world where everything is online, music is in-person. In a world where everything is instant, music takes time. In a world where everything is increasingly superficial, music is always meaningful. In a world where everything is increasingly confronting, music is calming."

The comprehensive prize list is attached. Please confirm additional photo requests or enquiries.

Kind Regards
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