

15 December 2022

The Cape Town Philharmonic and the Mzansi Orchestra: A joint statement by the Chairman and CEO of the CPO.

After receiving several questions and indeed requests for tickets from our regular audience members about the up-coming Cape Town performance of the recently formed Mzansi National Philharmonic Orchestra, it is necessary to put into context this City Hall performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

The concert is part of a three-city tour, and the CPO is not involved – either in this tour or indeed in the national orchestra. Since it became known that the regional orchestras have lost all its funding from the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture to favour one national orchestra, the CPO has on numerous occasions requested a business and operational plan and a realistic long-term vision for the performance and training of young musicians. Travel and accommodation will constitute huge additional costs, while one orchestra for South Africa will create a constant tug-of-war between the major centres and eventually stifle orchestral development.

We are concerned that, without a transparent process, the future of established orchestras of which the CPO is the foremost will be in jeopardy. The new orchestra purports to train musicians for the future and creating opportunities for musicians who have been left out of the system, but this task is impossible from one location.

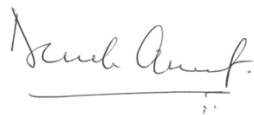
We fully support the development of young musicians and the CPO's youth education and development programmes are already setting standards for the transformation of the orchestral landscape.

The Mzansi National Philharmonic also wants to serve as a showcase of the best players South Africa has to offer, but up to now has not indicated how players will be selected and which criteria will determine selection. We are also concerned at the costs of inviting South African musicians who have left this country to make a career abroad, while some of those working in this country

have been excluded. The orchestra was formed without any meaningful consultation with musicians or music administrators in all parts of the country. If the orchestra is to make use of the musicians of all the regional orchestras, no plan has been formulated to ensure that current calendars can accommodate participation.

In our view, it would make more sense to spend the multimillions of rands earmarked for the MNPO over the next few years stabilizing and securing the current orchestral projects, devastated by the Covid pandemic.

Until there is total transparency, equity and accountability of how taxpayers' funds will be spent, the CPO cannot support this initiative.



Derek Auret
Chairman



Louis Heyneman
CEO and Artistic Director