

Berklee College of Music auditions prospective SA students

Four well-accomplished musicians-teachers-arts administrators from Berklee College of Music will visit South Africa for the third year running in April, taking part in the CTIJF's sustainable training and development programmes while conducting auditions and interviews with prospective Berklee students from across Africa.



Last year over 70 youngsters took part in the auditions which had to be extended by a day because of the large number of applicants.

Speaking from Boston, Samuel Skau, assistant director of International Programs at Berklee says: "We are extremely grateful for the support that our partner espAfrika provides to make Berklee's African programme possible. Its outreach to educators, local music initiatives, young students and local and regional communities is extremely powerful.

"Both the Cape Town International Jazz Festival and espAfrika are recognised as world-class organisations and therefore complement Berklee's own global standing. The CTIJF training and development programme's integration into the festival itself makes it a natural point of connection for us."

Skau added that over the past two years the Berklee team had met some exceptional teachers in Cape Town. He said these teachers are deeply committed to their students and connect them with incredible opportunities that they might not have otherwise.

World renowned teachers

The recruitment of African students remains a key focus of Berklee's annual trip to Cape Town. But Skau says their involvement in classes and training sessions is just as important. "The festival's development projects give us the opportunity to meet and interact with talented and innovative young South Africans. Conversely, they have the opportunity to meet with our world renowned teachers and to experience a little bit of Berklee in their own country."

As an alumnus of Berklee, Skau says there is no place on Earth where music students will experience such depth and diversity of music training. "Berklee has a unique inter-departmental curricular structure with a massive choice of courses and over 500 music teachers. Also, the chemistry from the blend of 4,300 music students from over 90 countries as they

interact with each other in classes, ensembles, and interdepartmental projects creates an environment like none other, anywhere."

Programmes offered at Berklee cover a wide spectrum of careers in music including Music Business and Management, Music Production and Engineering, Performance, Music Therapy, Electronic Production and Design, Jazz Composition, Contemporary Writing and Production, and many others.

Skau says this kind of depth and diversity forms a microcosm of the music industry right on the Berklee campus. He says he sees this mirrored by the CTIJF itself and its training and development initiatives that form a huge part of it.

Berklee conducts programs, and several thousands of auditions and interviews on six continents, and awards nearly US\$30 million in scholarships, each year, to deserving young music students.

Two full-tuition scholarships

In addition to the standard undergraduate scholarship awards, Berklee will award two full-tuition scholarships for young musicians from Africa to attend its famous and immensely successful five-week Summer Performance Programme in Boston, USA, and two Berklee Online awards to its award-winning online school.

"The four awards will be made during the festival period while the undergraduate scholarships will be announced at a later stage."

Last year, Megan Saayman from Cedar High and Gavin Kemp from Mitchells Plain were awarded scholarships to the Summer Performance Programme.

"Through our auditions and interviews in Cape Town, we expect to see and hear fantastic young musicians well deserving of the Berklee scholarships," says Skau.

"From our experience over the past two years, we have been humbled at the privilege of experiencing some very deep, innate talent of young African musicians, many of whom are self-taught musicians who have developed their skills on instinct. We are eagerly looking forward to the program in 2013.

CTIJF's Sustainable Training and Development (T&D) programme

The Berklee College initiative forms part of the festival's Sustainable Training and Development (T&D) programme, sponsored by the City of Cape Town, the Department of Arts and Culture, the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) through the South Atlantic Arts and Culture Trust, the SABC and South African Tourism.

Paul Mashatile, Minister of Arts and Culture says the festival's ten different empowerment and skills development initiatives represent a powerful set of interventions that provide experiences and opportunities to individuals who would never otherwise have them.

"The Department of Arts and Culture is proud to be associated with this vital component of the annual jazz event as it opens up new opportunities and expands awareness of the power of arts and culture in our society," the minister said.

SABC spokesman Kaizer Kganyago said: "The SABC is proud to be the co-sponsor of the festival's T&D programme, aimed at a new generation of musicians, arts journalists and photographers. In order for measureable progress to take place from the T&D initiative, the focus should not be based upon short term results only - developmental work requires longer time frames to deliver meaningful and lasting impact."

Patricia De Lille, executive mayor of Cape Town: "It is heart-warming to know that many people and children from in and around Cape Town are exposed to music, musical instruments and rhythms in an entirely new way. The city and this

festival have a long track record together: the event attracts visitors to our city while its communities actively participate in the festival."

NLDTF CEO Charlotte Mampane said: "The National Lotteries Board is happy to be part of the training and development initiative of the South Atlantic Arts and Culture Trust that will see youth empowered through various programmes and thereby becoming more marketable. Under the leadership of our Chairperson, Professor Nevhutanda, we are all very passionate about the job creation in the thousands of organisations we fund each year. We are confident that the training skills will help the youth access job opportunities."

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>