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Entertainment

South African music group teams with Princeton host for on-demand concert series

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The Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble will present a five-concert series of online performances on the Princeton Symphony Orchestra's website starting on Friday, Jan. 29. Graham De Lacy

The [Princeton Symphony Orchestra](#) will present South Africa's [Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble](#) in "[Buskaid – A Musical Miracle](#)," a five-concert on-demand series curated from the group's performances over the last five years.

The series opener, "[Brilliant Baroque to Cool Kwela](#)," will be available online from Friday, Jan. 29, to Sunday, Jan. 31 on PSO's website princetonsymphony.org.

Buskaid is an organization that offers music instruction to less privileged children and young people in the township of Soweto. Directed by founder Rosemary Nalden, the student ensemble is noted for its animated performances of classical, pop and South African music.

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"I'm thrilled that the PSO is presenting the amazing musicians of the Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble," said PSO executive director Marc Uys, who is from South Africa. "Their musicianship and enthusiasm for their art is inspirational. Considering the conditions under which they have consistently excelled, it is nothing short of a miracle. Their story is one filled with hope and beauty and should be shared with the whole world."

Buskaid founder and music director Rosemary Nalden came up with the idea for creating virtual concerts out of archival footage of past concerts during the initial lockdown period of the pandemic.

"Suddenly I had the time to devote to the painstaking task of sound and video editing – something I've wanted to do for years," said Nalden. "As a result, we've been able to take some outstanding highlights from these concerts and turn them into five very special streamed events, showcasing the versatile and prodigious musical talent which can be found in the dusty township of Soweto."

“One unique aspect of all these concerts is the extraordinary ability of these young musicians to capture the precise style of the music, whether it’s European baroque or township Afro-pop,” Nalden added.

The Jan. 29-31 concert will include the third movement of Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 13 in C Major performed with guest pianist Melvyn Tan, Max Bruch’s Romanze for Solo Viola and Orchestra featuring Buskaid-trained violist Tiisetso Mashishi and Princeton-based composer Julian Grant’s “Sancho’s Dance-Mix,” a suite after dances by Ignatius Sancho. The program will be enhanced by popular vocal selections and Kwela — a South African style of music derived from the marabi sound.

A new Buskaid on-demand program will be posted each month. Access to each concert in the series is \$5 per unique device. To purchase, call 609-497-0020 or visit princetonsymphony.org.

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