

## MEDIA RELEASE

### WINNERS ANNOUNCED 14<sup>th</sup> UNISA INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

#### Approved for public release

DATE: 06 February 2020

The 14<sup>th</sup> Unisa International Piano Competition which took place over the past two weeks was a resounding success with exceptional performances in both the jazz and classical categories. The prestigious jazz and classical piano competitions culminated in world-class performances during the final rounds on Friday 31 January and Saturday 1 February 2020.

After three gruelling and intense rounds, the finalists in both categories battled it out for the coveted top prize. The three jazz finalists performed on Friday, 31 January with two of South Africa's leading jazz musicians, Marc Duby on bass and Kevin Gibson on drum kit. The classical finalists performed with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra led by maestro Lawrence Golan from the United States of America (USA).



*Danilo Mascetti (Italy), Hao Wei Lin (Taiwan) and Evgeny Konnov (Russia) were the three finalists battling it out in the final round of the classical category of the 14th Unisa International Piano Competition*

After intense deliberations by the jury the first prize in the jazz competition was awarded to Lex Korten from the USA, while the jury awarded the first prize in the classical competition to the Russian pianist, Evgeny Konnov. This competition marks Konnov's fourteenth win in international piano competitions. The second prize in the jazz category was awarded to Dave



Meder (USA) while the classical second place winner was Danilo Mascetti from Italy. The third-place winners were Lorenzo Vitolo (Italy) and the 15-year-old prodigy Hao-Wei Lin from Taiwan.

Audiences were clearly mesmerised by the incredibly high levels of performance in both categories. According to Professor Karendra Devroop from Unisa's Music Department, the level of performance was exceptionally high, thereby making the job of jury that much more difficult. The total prize money awarded was approximately R920 000.

Bongani Thembe, CEO of the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra, awarded Evgeny Konnov a professional engagement with the orchestra, as did the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra. Lex Kortzen was awarded a professional engagement to perform at the 2021 Unisa Jazz Festival where he will be featured with the Unisa Big Band.

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