

FACT SHEET



THE BLACK TIE ENSEMBLE

An investment for the future

For the many talented and qualified young singers with a passion to sing opera, as well as seeking a platform to perform, South Africa's diva **Mimi Coertse** and celebrated opera director and costume designer **Neels Hansen** established **The Black Tie Ensemble (BTE)** in 1999.

Apart from ensuring continued live performances of opera and serious music, one of the aims of **BTE** was, and still is, to create a conduit for gifted singers to attain their goals and to nurture and develop their talents, as well as to offer talented artists with no formal training the opportunity to further their studies and to gain experience through the **Incubator Scheme**. **BTE** has been lauded for its developmental work and has also received awards in this regard.

The BTE project was established mainly to create work in order to generate income for the singers on a continuous basis throughout the year and is largely dependant on corporate support for its continued growth.

Now that more opportunities are available to young singers, especially through the past eight years' activities of **BTE**, more facets of the **Ensemble's** activities are being established and must be developed. **The Black Tie Ensemble**, which includes singers from **diverse cultural backgrounds**, has during the last eight years developed into one of the most exciting classical music and singing projects in Gauteng. **BTE** has established its new home at the **State Theatre, Pretoria** and has its offices and rehearsal venues in the same location. **BTE** has performed at concerts, arts festivals and corporate functions throughout South Africa; **has successfully staged seven opera seasons**; and has also performed abroad to great acclaim. **BTE** is a serious developmental project and truly an investment in the future.

Development programmes:

Incubator Scheme

The **Incubator Scheme**, initiated in 2002, assists young talented artists with no formal singing training or means to acquire such training, to gain experience and possibly become part of **The Black Tie Ensemble** in the future. During their three-year apprenticeship these young artists receive vocal coaching, music theory as well as skills classes on a daily basis and have the opportunity to perform and gain stage experience as well. The popular **Black Tie Ensemble Male Double Quartet** consists of members of the **Incubator Scheme** and underscores the standard these young singers have already achieved. A kind and farsighted sponsorship from the **Department of Arts and Culture** has enabled **BTE** to extend the number of “Incubators” in its **Incubator Scheme** as well as the curriculum to include technical students. Additional support is received from **Rand Merchant Bank**.

Black Tie Ensemble Chorus

In 2005, **BTE's** seventh year of existence, a **permanent opera chorus** was established as the next step in the **Ensemble's** development. This allows access to a semi-professional opera chorus which, with training, meets the unique demands of an opera chorus. The chorus master is the well-known Chorus Master, **Mathilda Hornsveld**. Whilst earning income through their chorus activities, the choristers receive ongoing training as well.

Adopt an Artist

The **Ristorante Ritrovo** initiated an innovative sponsoring scheme whereby individuals or companies can adopt an artist. In terms of this, the adopted artists receive a monthly allowance which allows them to pay for necessities such as housing in close proximity to The State Theatre, as transport demands from outlying areas and townships create logistical problems.

Edutainment

In order to bring opera and quality music to a wider audience, **BTE** performs at functions, festivals and concerts, as well as at schools and factories with its edutainment programmes.

Corporate performances

BTE performs regularly at corporate events, ensuring a monthly income for the singers. **The Ensemble** can be booked for corporate events as a small or large ensemble as required, and have been used during corporate product launches, soirees, movie premieres, international conferences, among others.

Support of The Black Tie Ensemble

None of the successes would have been possible without the proud support of our sponsors, current and past.

Our new, principal sponsor for 2007, 2008 and 2009 is **Royal Bafokeng Holdings**.

Additional financial and other sponsorship is currently drawn from Sappi, the Department of Arts and Culture, The National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, Sasol, the Mazzonne family of Ristorante Ritrovo, The State Theatre, The National Arts Council, Rand Merchant Bank, McCarthy, The Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, Rapport, Classic FM, Classic Feel Magazine, City Press and BASA.

The ongoing support of our audiences as well as assistance from numerous other sources enables **BTE** to share the magic of opera with an ever-increasing audience.

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