

SAMRO gives R1 million plus to student musicians

SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts (SENA) has awarded 117 SAMRO Music Study Bursaries, worth R9000 each to deserving students. The bursaries are awarded every year on merit to students who wish to pursue full-time music study at a South African university.

"Since we started the bursary scheme 30 years ago, in 1981, SAMRO has awarded 1404 bursaries to help students with their tuition fees, said André le Roux, GM: SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts.

"We have also given out a further 60 overseas music scholarships since 1962. These bursaries, scholarships and other sponsorships collectively add up to more than R50 million that SAMRO has invested in music education since its inception. Supporting educated artists who understand their craft certainly makes the long-term value of these grants to the country and the industry tangible."

Study at postgraduate level

He said that many students who receive SAMRO bursaries go on to do well in SAMRO's annual Overseas Scholarships Competition, which enables the winners to study music at postgraduate level at an international tertiary institution of their choice.

Both the bursaries and the overseas scholarships have already yielded several music luminaries and Standard Bank Young Artist winners, and serve as an important stepping stone to a sustainable professional music career. SAMRO's support has not only been academic, but initiating the Moshito music conference and expo has benefited music education at an industry level as well.

Further support

SAMRO further supports these musicians throughout their career trajectory by commissioning original compositions - a total of 371 to date - which adds to the country's music canon while providing much-needed work and income for composers. "We have built valuable relationships with students, musicians and educational institutions over the decades, and now have a large family of SAMRO alumni," said Le Roux.

The majority of this year's bursaries (74) were awarded to undergraduate candidates in the general music study fields of Western art, jazz and indigenous African music. Twenty grants were awarded for music education study, 13 for music composition study, and 10 for postgraduate research into indigenous African music forms.

A heartening sign

Le Roux added that it was a heartening sign that more students were showing interest in researching and writing about indigenous music, and in studying music composition. The increase in applications for these fields that have traditionally battled to attract applicants can be partly attributed to more vigorous marketing from SAMRO's side to raise awareness and interest in these particular bursaries, as well as the increase in students studying composition and indigenous music research at universities.

For more information on the SAMRO Endowment for the National Arts, go to www.sena.org.za or email sena@samro.org.za