

A flute of many voices

Flautist creates distinctly diverse sounds

ANDREA NAGEL

FLUTE wizard Wouter Kellerman has been touring the world with his instrument, delighting music lovers from Australia to Texas, at the world's largest music industry trade fair, Midem, in Cannes, France.

"What people experience during my performances is not what they are expecting from a flautist. I create music that consists of all the colours you can make with this very versatile instrument," says Kellerman, who has been playing the flute since he was 10.

"My parents took me to the symphony and asked me what I wanted to play. I chose the flute because I was intrigued by the idea that the breath produces all those beautiful sounds.

"It is easy to instinctively relate to the instrument; it's been around for thousands of years," he says.

The style of his flute music is undefinable however. Kellerman calls it "roots" or "world music".

"Roots because it dates back to our collective roots, with a focus on the essence of music. It is music that talks to many different cultures. It has African, Irish, tango and even flamenco references," the artist says.

Kellerman played classical flute for years before he started experimenting with the many sounds a flute can make.

He was the principle flautist of the National Youth Orchestra many years ago, and took master classes in Europe and the US during their summers, studying under the best teachers in the world.

"I studied classical music, but I can play jazz. I play with the instrument — I sing and play the flute at the same time. I use

the pads to make a percussive sound and I even beat-box the flute."

He calls this technique flute-boxing.

"You get three different sounds: the sound of the instrument, the sound of the voice and the sound the lips make.

"I want to take this music with a strong African influence into the world. People feel the music in their bodies and recognise that this is the music they're coming home to."

One of Kellerman's career highlights was playing to a global audience of 700-million people during the closing ceremony of last year's Fifa World Cup.

"It was amazing to be part of that."

His debut album, *Colour*, enjoyed rave reviews, topped the charts and was nominated for a 2008 South African Music Award for best instrumental album.

His show, *Kellerman Colour Live*, won the 2010 Sama for best jazz/instrumental/popular classical DVD.

Kellerman and his world-class ensemble will perform at the Victory Theatre in Houghton Estate, Johannesburg, tonight and on Saturday night.

"It has been a dream to put this show together. I'm working with my favourite musicians: bass player, water percussionist and vocalist Phresh Makhene, Senegalese percussionist and vocalist Lamine Sonko, guitarist Luke van der Merwe, vocalist Eunice Harris, who brought tears to my eyes the first time I rehearsed with her, and Jaconell Mouton on keyboards and backing vocals and dancers," he says.

The Victory Theatre concerts, and the resulting DVD, will feature tracks from *Colour* and his latest release, *Two Voices*.

Tickets available at Computicket.

'I want to take this music into the world'



ORIGINAL SOUND: Wouter Kellerman not only plays his instrument, but also plays with it

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