

RICHARD COCK - Conductor

Richard was born in Port Elizabeth and educated at Woodridge Preparatory School and the Diocesan College, Cape Town. He pursued his musical studies at the Cape Town College of Music, where he graduated in 1971. In 1972, he won a scholarship to the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), where he was awarded several prizes and diplomas. In 1978 he became Director of Music at the Cathedral Choir School and assistant organist at Chichester Cathedral. During his years in England he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

After his return to South Africa in 1980, Richard breathed new life into the National Symphony Orchestra as Music Director from 1991. However, it is as a choral trainer and conductor that he is best known. He was organist and director of music at St Mary's Cathedral for 12 years and was elected a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music for his services to church music in South Africa. He founded the Symphony Choir of Johannesburg and the internationally recognized Chanticleer Singers in 1980.

In 1999, Richard left the orchestra to pursue a freelance career and to stimulate music activities throughout South Africa. As a conductor, he is in much demand countrywide. In May 2000, he received an Honorary Doctorate in music from Rhodes University. In 2012 he received a Parnassus Award from Stellenbosch University and in 2013 a special award from the ATKV for his 30 years' dedication to spreading the love of music in South Africa. In November 2014 he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Arts & Culture Trust, and in March 2020 he was awarded the Robert Grey Medal from Bishops College for distinguished achievements by an Old Diocesan, as well as a Luminary award from Michaelhouse in recognition of his contributions to the development and promotion of South African music and artists.

He is chairman of the Apollo Music Trust, and, together with Florian Uhlig, he directs the Johannesburg International Mozart Festival which is held every January.