



# BEL CANTO BOOT CAMP BEYOND NYC



## SOUTH AFRICA 2022

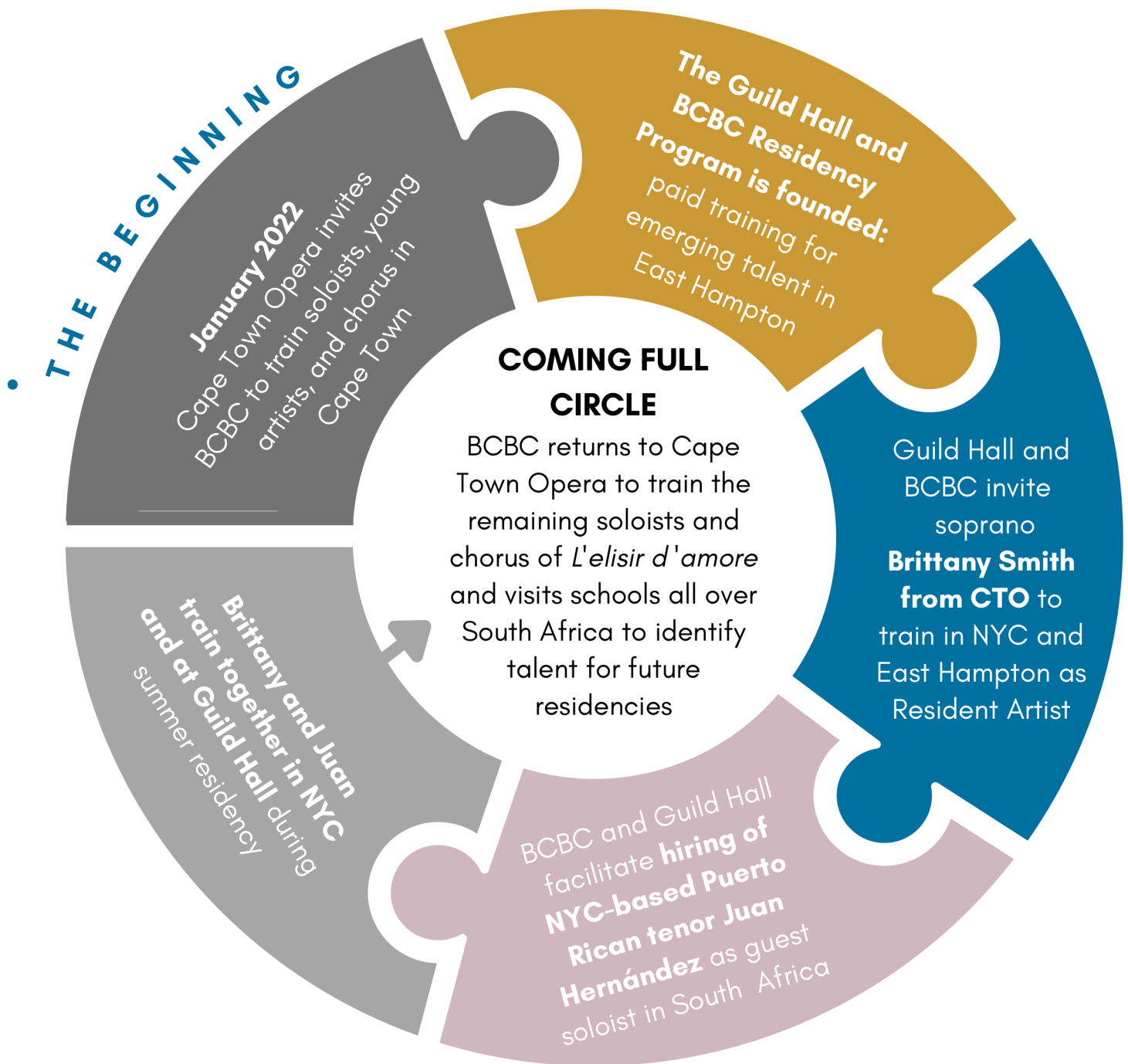
## REPORT AND FUTURE PLANS

Visit us at  
[belcantobootcamp.com](http://belcantobootcamp.com)

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# THE CAPE TOWN MODEL

ENRICHING SINGERS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES



Bel Canto Boot Camp stands committed to **decentralizing resources in the training of the unamplified voice**. This depends as much on our ability to build **ongoing relationships** with other communities as it does on our ability to train artists at home in New York.



# TESTIMONIALS

## CAPE TOWN OPERA

I had the most beautiful and exhilarating experience with BCBC, too many light bulb moments to mention here. **Your teachings, patience and expertise are exactly what is needed to ensure we all reach and realize our untapped potential.** Thank you so much, I wish we had 6 months with you, but I guess that too would've been too short! I hope we'll work together again.

**Tylor Lamani**

**BCBC has completely changed my view on how to approach singing and learning music, especially in Italian.** Rachelle and Derrick have a contagious passion for the art of Bel Canto and in the week we spent together I gained a deep appreciation for the art of singing in Italian. **I will be debuting my first major role with Cape Town opera (Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*), and after working with them I feel confident in my preparation.** I cannot wait to work with them again and am so grateful for what they are doing for opera singers.

**Van Wyk Venter**

I gained so much knowledge in the coaching and master classes presented by Bel Canto Boot Camp in Cape Town. I believe that this training is crucial for all singers and musicians. **I believe that classical musicians in South Africa and all around the world should experience these classes, as it will broaden their knowledge and their technique.** Thank you so much to Rachelle and Derrick for enriching our musical journey.

**Danielle Speckman**

No amount of words can express how thankful I am to you for investing in me. **Thank you for showing me how resilient I am as a singer - even when I doubt my own abilities.** Thank you for teaching me my worth as a singer and for pushing me to fall in love with how different and amazing my instrument is. Thank for making me fall in love with getting "Back to Basics." **The world needs more teaching like yours!**

**Brittany Smith**

Thank you so much for the opportunity to work with you again! **Your work helps me to grow and understand both my voice and the material I sing.**

**Rueben Mbonambi**

# WHERE WE HAVE BEEN WHERE WE ARE GOING

The first Bel Canto Boot Camp beyond NYC collaboration was with **Cape Town Opera** in January 2022. It prompted a return to South Africa in August 2022 during which BCBC visited schools around the country.

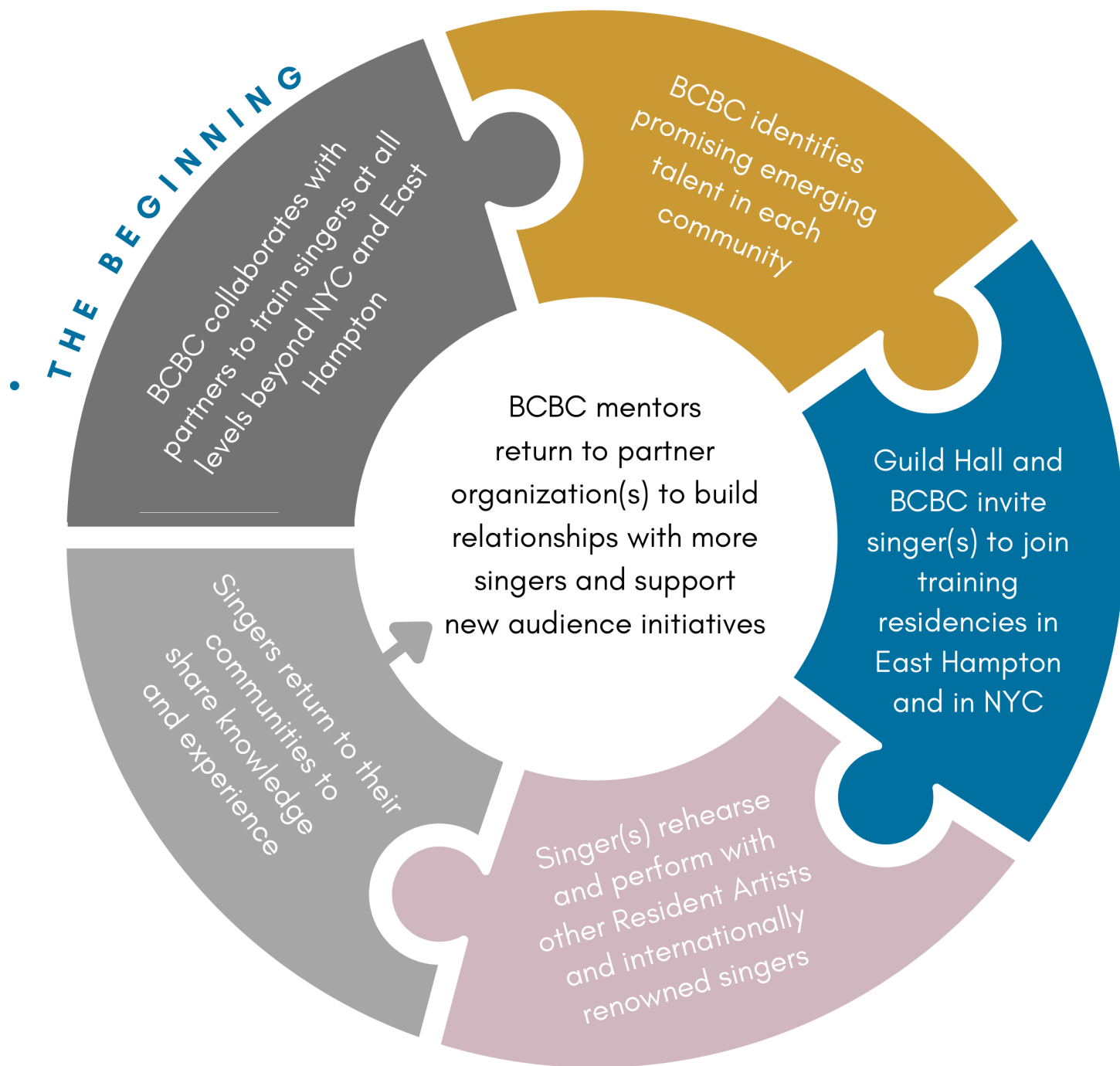
This launch project inspires **BCBC Beyond NYC in 2023 - work and audition trips to Mexico and Puerto Rico.**





# DRAWING THE CIRCLE WIDER STILL

## BUILDING ON THE CAPE TOWN MODEL



Future plans to build upon the great success of our continued relationships in South Africa include:

**Latin America in 2023**

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities in 2024**

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# SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES VISITED IN 2022

## University of Pretoria

Lecture: Legato and Language  
Master Class  
Auditions for Guild Hall & BCBC  
Resident Artist Series  
BCBC Boot Camp Live:  
Ornamentation



## North-West University

### Potchefstroom

Auditions for Guild Hall & BCBC  
Resident Artist Series  
Two Master Classes  
Lecture/Demonstration:  
Ornamentation

## Tshwane University of Technology

Master Class  
Auditions for Guild Hall & BCBC  
Resident Artist Series



## Stellenbosch University

Master Class  
Lecture/Demonstration: Legato and  
Laryngeal Registration  
Auditions for Guild Hall & BCBC  
Resident Artist Series  
BCBC Boot Camp Live:  
Recitative - The Italian Libretto



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*BCBC's work in South Africa in 2022 was generously sponsored by Mrs. Katharine Rayner, Mr. Nicholas Taylor and Mr. Dan Langley, and Google*

# SOUTH AFRICAN PRESENTERS VISITED IN 2022

## Cape Town Opera

- Preparation of cast and covers for *L'elisir d'amore*, the Judith Neilson Touring Production of Cape Town Opera, appearing in three South African cities
- Delivery of complimentary copies of our book, **The Vaccai Project**



- BCBC Boot Camps Live: Coloratura, Recitative: From Libretto to Score

**Bel Canto Boot Camp met with several other local and national presenters during the August 2022 trip.** The goals were to gain insight in ways BCBC can serve the South African singing community going forward and to explore collaboration on two specific proposed BCBC led projects:

- A residency program in South Africa modeled on the successful Guild Hall & BCBC Resident Artist Program
- A long term project to deliver musical literacy courses for adults free of charge online using the unamplified human voice as instrument of instruction.



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# EXPANDING OUR WORK SOUTH AFRICA 2023

BCBC seeks to partner with organizations and schools to present a residency program in South Africa modeled on the Guild Hall & BCBC Resident Artist program.

## The Guild Hall & BCBC Resident Artist Series East Hampton, NY

The Guild Hall & BCBC Resident Artist Program offers singers individualized training with BCBC coaches, providing time and space for role/audition preparation and scene/recital study.

Guest artists at the height of international singing careers are invited to join resident artists as both mentors in masterclasses and colleagues in concerts – a unique training and performance collaboration between operatic superstars, established professional singers, and promising singers still on the verge of an international career. Internationally renowned sopranos Lisette Oropesa and Latonia Moore join the program in upcoming seasons.

*The Guild Hall & BCBC Resident Artist program is generously funded by the V. Atkins Foundation.*



Guild Hall & Bel Canto Boot Camp Resident Artist Series, The Potions of Love: Bel Canto Arias and Ensembles, at St. Lukes Episcopal Church in East Hampton, NY, July 20, 2022. Photo: Jessica Dalene Photography

## The **SEEKING SPONSORSHIP** & BCBC Resident Artist Series South Africa

BCBC sponsors a week of instruction in Cape Town between 16 and 21 January resulting in a fund raising even for a residency in August

### **The South African Residency**

BCBC seeks to identify sponsors to provide

- housing for 7 - 10 singers for 7 - 10 days
- two rehearsal spaces with piano
- a concert venue for end of residency concert with piano or orchestra
- honorariums in the amount of R10 000 per participant
- travel between participants' home within South Africa and residency
- sponsorship of internationally renowned singer to collaborate with resident artists (optional)



Guild Hall & Bel Canto Boot Camp Resident Artist Series, The Potions of Love: Bel Canto Arias and Ensembles, at St. Lukes Episcopal Church in East Hampton, NY, July 20, 2022. Photo: Jessica Dalene Photography

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# GLOBAL MUSICAL LITERACY

## A LONG TERM DREAM TO EMPOWER SINGERS AND AUDIENCES

Bel Canto Boot Camp believes that the future of the arts depends on the musical literacy of its audience as much as it does on the education of its practitioners.

Music is a language and music notation is its alphabet. The **increasing global absence of music education in our schools** leads to audiences which experience performances (and recordings) without the ability to participate in music making themselves. Moreover, such audiences are dwindling. Even more alarming is the number of would-be singers who are hampered by lack of musicianship skills originating in lack of proficiency in reading music notation.

**Most programs teaching music notation** are focused on **children learning musical instruments** - and often at a very early age. This **non-inclusive model** depends on the presence of a piano, a violin, a flute - most often attached to the affluence of the family. Singers who were not trained as instrumentalists at an early age tend to lag behind in music school and never truly catch up with their instrumental peers. The simple truth is that a singer cannot start rigorous training until after puberty - we owe it to them to right this wrong.

BCBC seeks partners interested in joining us in developing **free online musical literacy programs** geared towards young adults and adults based on the use of the unamplified voice as the vehicle for putting sound to symbol. **Why not use the instrument we all have?**

**The human voice was always the gateway to musical literacy and participation.** It is truly the mother of all instruments. Instrumentalists strive to make their instruments "sing" every day and while the best of the best achieve this, nothing truly compares with the beauty and intimacy of the unamplified voice.

Today scores are as freely available online as recordings. Buying sheet music used to be impossibly expensive. **Why not celebrate the availability of musical texts by teaching the world to read them?**



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# TESTIMONIALS

## GUILD HALL & BCBC RESIDENT ARTIST SERIES

Rachelle and Derrick are some of the most informed and scholarly artists I have learned from, but what comes through most while working with them is their compassion. Our instruments live within us and it can be challenging to separate technical critique from personal critique. For many singers who have gone through conservatory their experience leaves them feeling constantly scrutinized and often devalued. **At BCBC there is no judgment - only collaboration.** The goal is simply to make beautiful music using the skills and perspectives of everyone in the room. I made more progress in two weeks of daily work with Derrick and Rachelle than I had in the entire year prior - not least of all because my mindset towards preparation changed. I came to coachings eager to dive in and make mistakes, trusting my technique and forging ahead unafraid of using my voice in creative ways to fully explore the musicality and expression of Donizetti's work. I now look at my singing as pre-BCBC and post-BCBC.

**Michael Leyte-Vidal**

The Guild Hall and BCBC residency was truly one of the most detailed and fruitful programs I have ever had the pleasure of participating in. With their dedication to detailed work and true collaboration, **Derrick and Rachelle have created a very accessible program that will benefit any singer that is lucky enough to participate.**

**Juan Hernández**

It's hard to sum up my feelings about Rachelle and Derrick, and of course BCBC. It was a pleasure to spend the week with them and my colleagues exploring the fundamentals of singing and their application to such stunning repertoire. **After coaching with them, I feel empowered and invigorated to tackle new repertoire.** Their approach, founded on principles set forth by some of opera's greatest teachers, singers, and composers, allows the singer to reexamine their voice through an entirely different lens. Derrick and Rachelle are a breath of fresh air, always supportive and insightful, **they speak 'singer' and just get us!** I know first hand their passion for singing and the human voice - and it shows! I am incredibly grateful to continue learning from them, and **I am a better equipped and more knowledgeable singer because of their hard work.**

**Derrek Stark**

Rachelle and Derrick through BCBC are revolutionizing music education in the style of bel canto with unparalleled energy and expertise. They demystify the core concepts of the bel canto style making it approachable for any level of singer. **I find their work most fascinating and exciting as it applies to the professional level singer, helping them unlock their musical imagination by giving them the tools to do so -- within the structure they provide there are infinite possibilities. I have been the beneficiary of this empowerment firsthand, and it is nothing that I have seen offered in all my years of musical education.** There is no question that they deserve every ounce of support given to them!

**Patricia Westley**



# TESTIMONIALS

## UNIVERSITIES

Bel Canto Boot Camp master classes were some of the best masterclasses I have ever experienced. **It was both inviting and informative. I learned not only when I was the one on stage singing, but also when other students were working.** They helped me to think about my future in singing – I can make it if I can work everyday to achieve the greatness I can imagine.

**Calvin Mofokeng**

**The first and foremost thing that impressed me was how you guys made every singer at home.** I learned how the breath projects my voice. It was a wonderful experience.

**Goabaone Tiragalo Molemane**

The BCBC classes were very well presented with great skill and understanding. The students were inspired by the logic of explanation of Bel Canto singing aspects. **What impressed me most was the personal touch to every individual student's vocal abilities that were adhered to. The students and myself found it a very uplifting presentation.** Furthermore the students are still excited about the classes and can still remember what was portrayed. They try to apply what they had learned from participating or just watching. I do hope that they get the opportunity to working with the skilled musicians from BCBC soon in the near future. These classes were excellent at undergrad level as well as for more advanced students. Lastly it was great fun and learning experience.

**Dr. Antoinette Olivier, lecturer**

It was really interesting to learn how to make use of chest voice and when to use it. **I actually had fun singing the fast passages** and the facilitators were kind.

**Sisikelwe Mngenela**

We would love to get them back to South Africa again because of the limited time we had. **The changes that occurred in our voices in a short space of time made me wonder what would happen to the voices if we have more time with them.**

**Khayakazi Madlala**

# ABOUT BEL CANTO BOOT CAMP

**Bel Canto Boot Camp** was born during the pandemic when we reached out to singers around the world – singers who had no place and seemingly no reason to sing. To be honest, we needed to find a way to feed our own souls as well while we were cut off from music making – something we never even considered could possibly happen. We created **The Vaccai Project** – a unique online training course for singers. Just short of two thousand singers from America to South Africa, from Colombia to Russia practiced together for the day when stages would be open to them again and theaters would be filled with audiences. We published *The Vaccai Project* in book form in April 2022.

We discovered a beautiful new way to support singers – beautiful in its inclusivity, its expansion of the richness of the New York opera community to artists all over the world, the breaking of often prohibitive barriers of distance, cost, time and audition-only programs.

Now, as the world continues to emerge from Covid-19, Bel Canto Boot Camp strives to support artists in the physical world as we did (and continue to do) virtually. The Vaccai project is now available in book form at Amazon. BCBC recently announced a new partnership with Guild Hall of East Hampton: **The Guild Hall & Bel Canto Boot Camp Resident Artist Series** – a unique training and performance collaboration between operatic superstars, established professional singers, and promising singers still on the verge of an international career. In the summer of 2022 BCBC presented its first in person training week in New York City.

Our online platform allows us to stay in contact when we cannot be there physically – BCBC allows singers, teachers, and presenters to network effectively with each other in the ever growing BCBC community.

Recent and upcoming collaborations and lecture/master class visits outside of South Africa include Portland Opera, Peabody Preparatory, Michigan State University, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, San Diego State University, Missouri State University, Northwestern University (Chicago), San Diego National Association of Teachers of Singing (US) and The Association of Teachers of Singing (UK).

**THANK YOU FOR MAKING WHAT WE DO POSSIBLE**

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**SOUTH**  
**AFRICA**  
**2022**