

## Obituary, Benjamin Fourie

The pianist Benjamin Fourie has sadly passed away on Monday 30 April, losing his life to cancer. He was just 57 years old.

He was an outstanding pianist who not only played classical and romantic repertoire but also championed new music, especially from South Africa. He has played solo piano compositions by Stefans Grové, Arnold van Wyk, Hubert du Plessis, Dirk de Klerk, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolf and Étienne van Rensburg among others and he has made recordings of some of their music. He recently made a recording of a recital he gave at last year's NewMusicSA Indaba in Pretoria which included Messiaen's 'Eight Preludes', Étienne van Rensburg's 'Sonate W36/94' and Malcolm Dedman's 'Four Kinds of Love'. This CD has now been officially released and tracks can be downloaded at <https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/benjaminfourie>.

One website provides the following information:

*Designated as 'Outstanding Man of the 20th Century' by the American Biographical Institute towards the year 2000, Benjamin Fourie is not only an experienced concert pianist, but also a successful recording artist, ensemble musician and music educator. He has served as juror for international piano competitions and also has some experience as church organist. In addition he has published a few articles on subjects related to performance and music events or works.*

*He lives in the town of Bethulie in the Free State province of South Africa, where he focuses mainly on freelance work as a concert artist. Although he has a special interest in contemporary piano music by South African composers, he also performs music by 20th century composers from Europe, such as Frank Martin, Olivier Messiaen and Henri Dutilleux. His nationwide performances of Messiaen's 'Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jesus' (Twenty Contemplations on the Christ Child) have been hailed by critics and music lovers as milestone events in this part of the world.*

*Fourie often demonstrates these specialized interests in innovative programming, combining lesser-known and newer music with well-loved works from the standard repertoire. His repertoire includes more than 50 concert programmes of various style periods. He has given numerous concerts in South Africa and Namibia. Since 1996 his concert activities have taken him to a number of European countries as well, namely Germany, the Czech Republic, Reunion (France), Bulgaria and Serbia.*

*Besides his activities as musician, he writes poetry from time to time. Selected poems have been published in South Africa, the USA and the UK. The composer Etienne van Rensburg set 21 of these to music in three vocal cycles with different settings.*

<https://www.musicinafrica.net/directory/benjamin-fourie>

He was well known in his home town, Bethulie, for his house concerts where he invited audiences staying in a local hotel to his home to hear some of his repertoire.

He will be sadly missed as a fine musician, not only in South Africa, but in other countries, especially in Europe. His performances demonstrated a deep understanding of the music he played. May God bless you Benjamin.

Malcolm Dedman