



November 16, 2015 by Andy Wilding FMR

## Gala Celebrity Concert with Maria Kliegel and Albie van Schalkwyk

Cape Town Concert Series, Baxter Concert Hall, Saturday 14 November 2015

**Cello:** Maria Kliegel

**Piano:** Albie van Schalkwyk

For the second time in three days, Cape Town audiences were treated to a stunning performance by one of the world's leading cellists. The program was book-ended by sonatas, Saint-Saëns to begin and Grieg to close, giving the concert a Ferrero Rocher feeling – crunchy and substantial on the outsides, with a smooth delicious core. After two quite meditative works at the City Hall last Thursday, (Bruch's Kol Nidrei and Bloch's Shelomo) the sonatas were a refreshing counterpart that revealed the academic side of Kliegel's diversity: astounding accuracy and perfect intonation, with surreal double stops. Within the more stringent form of the sonatas, her amazing resonance and harmonic-rich bow technique opens a wonderful depth to her tone, striking an immediate chord with her mentor Rostropovich. She expresses a clear fondness for exotic modes through her amazing



As a duo, Kliegel and van Schalkwyk are well matched, as much in their elegant taste, as in technique and passion. The “smooth delicious core” of the program, (de Falla, Granados, Cassadó) conjured a carnival-like flavour of festivity, frequently wondering into mysterious knowing. De Falla's “Nana” was the second time in three days that I was too spell bound to write. (The first was during Kliegel's Kol Nidrei at the City Hall.) Originally a song, the cello melody is a beautiful lullaby in the Spanish

phrygian mode, accompanied by an ethereal, unearthly piano. The duo's interpretation transcended wisdom with simplicity – Kliegel's bow seeming to describe the inevitable movement of the planets over aeons, as van Schalkwyk's notes dropped like glacial water from stalactites.

Kliegel gave two encores, a prayer by Bruch, and a dance by Saint-Saëns.