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Premier performance of Namibia's first opera

- **Siemens empowers world premiere of the Opera Namibia project**
Chief Hijangua in Windhoek
- **Opera staged by a multinational team of artists from Namibia, Germany and South Africa**

On September 9, 2022, an ensemble of artists from Namibia, Germany and South Africa presented at the National Theatre of Namibia the premier performance of Namibia's very first opera in the country's capital, Windhoek. *Chief Hijangua* is a celebration of a bilingual and intercultural exchange on the dramatic history that Namibia and Germany shared during colonial times and is sung in Otjiherero – one of Namibia's national languages – and German.

Led by musical director and Namibian composer Eslon Hindundu, an international team comprising everyone from producers to stage and costume designers worked with the opera's director Kim Mira Meyer and librettist Dr. Nikolaus Frei – both with German origins – to create the opera. The Siemens Arts Program has been fostering and supporting this project since December 2021.

“All across the globe, talented young people need experienced partners who believe in them,” said Stephan Frucht, Artistic Director of the Siemens Arts Program. “The innovative musical approach and the artistic diversity of this project really won us over, as well as this young team's courage and drive to organize such a unique project across multiple national borders. These efforts truly deserve our full respect and support.”

Sabine Dall'Omo, Chief Executive Officer of Siemens Southern and Eastern Africa, added, “The Opera Namibia project gives previously unknown talents from Namibia and South Africa an opportunity to prove their mettle on a major stage and advance

their careers as performing artists. Our aim at Siemens is to empower every human being by ensuring them access to equal opportunities for personal development – both within and outside the company.”

Director Kim Mira Meyer had this to say about the project: “It’s such a great honor to work so closely with people from different countries and backgrounds in an open and creative environment. Every bit of research and preparation and every rehearsal brought us a step closer to executing the performance we envisaged. Working with the singers can be very intense sometimes, as opera requires musicians to fully embody the character of the story – mentally, emotionally and psychologically. It’s about much more than just singing, dancing or reciting a few lines.”

As composer Eslon Hindundu explained, “The motivation for me to start Opera Namibia has always been to open the eyes and minds of the people of Namibia to classical music and create a gateway for talented Namibian musicians who hope to pursue professional careers in this field.”

In the opera *Chief Hijangua*, a Namibian chief’s son, Hijangua, is unhappily in love and forced to leave his homeland. Wandering in exile, he meets a group of German missionaries who initially take him in. Later, however, the story takes a tragic turn that ends with the death of Hijangua’s father and brother. Namibia’s colonial history and its traditional folklore inspired the team of artists. The opera aims to shed light on the country’s dark history and to contribute to international understanding. After its 2022 world premier performances in Windhoek, the piece is also to be performed in Munich, Germany, in 2023.

The Siemens Arts Program is active in the fields of music, the visual arts and cultural education and sees itself as a creative platform for the company’s arts and cultural projects. One of the program’s main aims is to nurture the development of outstanding emerging talents worldwide. This is done by initiating competitions for emerging talent and by forging links between young artists and established international cultural institutions (Bavarian State Opera, Carnegie Hall New York, Salzburg Festival and the ARD International Music Competition). More information about the Siemens Arts Program is available at:

www.siemens.com/artsprogram

This press release is available at: <https://sie.ag/3L0lhFM>

Contact for journalists

Florian Martini

Phone: +49 174 155 2072; e-mail: florian.martini@siemens.com

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In fiscal 2021, which ended on September 30, 2021, the Siemens Group generated revenue of €62.3 billion and net income of €6.7 billion. As of September 30, 2021, the company had around 303,000 employees worldwide. Further information is available on the Internet at www.siemens.com.