Get ready to let Amadeus rock you

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How often has your heart been broken? Richard Cock and Florian Uhlig, organisers of the Johannesburg International Mozart Festival, ponder love’s tremulous power this year. They have themed the festival “Un aura amorea” (“love’s dilemmas and delights” — a phrase from Mozart’s opera Cosi Fan Tutte) and compiled a programme promising everything from bubbly romantic love to grand aural manoeuvres to rock your equilibrium.

It starts next weekend. Now in its sixth year, the festival was started to celebrate Austrian-born composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s 250th birthday. Precocious and unbelievably prolific, he died at just 35, but he created a legacy defining beautiful music. This festival not only showcases Mozart — this year comprising 22 events, it features seven of his works — but provides a grand understanding of how love and music come face to face.

Highlights include:

- Two opportunities to experience fabulousness with Cinema Impresando, a silent film at The Bioscope in the Maboneng precinct.
- downtown, accompanied by local jazz great Paul Hamner on keyboard and McCoy Mrubata on sax, or Cario Mombelli on bass. This is the third festival in which this nostalgic novelty has featured. It is a hit;
- Seoul-born 21-year-old Hye-yeon Park is considered among the most promising violinists of her generation. From the age of 17, she has bagged the world’s top awards. At this festival, she is accompanied by Florian Uhlig on piano in a chamber music concert featuring music by Korngold, Strauss and others at Northwards House in Parktown;
- This year’s composer-in-residence is Clare Loveday. A graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand — she was awarded her doctorate in 2009 — her music has been described by critics as “big-boxed and raw”. Loveday is thrilled that her work is being presented in her hometown.
- “For the first time in my career, my mother can see it,” she said. “It’s wonderful to travel, but it can get lonely.”
- Two Loveday works will be performed in the festival’s final concert, including her new piano concerto, Three Portraits of Intimacy, on February 8 at St Mary’s School in Waverley. She is also involved in the sound installation at the Goethe Institut in Parkwood on February 7, a collaboration with violinist Waldo Alexander and visual artist Nandipha Mntambo. The work lasts 10 minutes and features a panel discussion; and
- 2014’s Standard Bank Young Artist for music, London-based contralto Njabulo Madlala, comes highly recommended as a mesmerising performer. He is singing in the opening concerts at the Linder Auditorium on January 25 and 26 and the choral concert there, featuring Brahms’s Requiem, on January 28.

Musical prodigy: Hye-yeon Park, 21, who is considered among the most promising violinists of her generation, will perform music by Korngold, Strauss and others.