

AGT Top 10, from left: Arno du Toit, Sandile Mathebula, Lungelo Sithole, Arnaud la Moer, Chester Fisch (AGT 2024 winner), Chanthel Boonzaaier, Davon Johnson, Franklin Hermanus, Ferencia Scheepers and Bonginkosi Nkosi



Chester Fisch WINS AGT 2024

AGT 2024 winner Chester Fisch certainly had everyone feeling the music on 11 October.

With a rapt audience, Chester Fisch poured everything into his renditions of Michael Jackson's "The Way You Make Me Feel" and Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come" (1964). He deservedly walked away with the Agri's Got Talent 2024 winner's trophy at this stellar occasion at Dawn Mountains, Simondium.

It was not only Fisch's extraordinary vocal abilities that impressed the judges, his dance

moves and showmanship all contributed to his win. And the politically inspired "A Change is Gonna Come" – his second song – spoke poignantly to the heart and soul of South Africa's agricultural community.

Fisch from Mountain Ridge, Wolseley, a seasonal worker in the wine industry, said in an interview with Food for Mzansi that he believed in the future of agriculture, "because the world was built on it, and the world cannot survive without it."

"People need to eat and that is why farming is important. I want to contribute towards promoting agriculture, especially amongst the youth."

Beyond wine making, Fisch is equally passionate about music. By winning AGT

2024 he hopes to advance his music career and wants to help young artists grow and develop their talent.

He was encouraged by his partner, Felicity, to enter AGT. Although the gospel genre is his first love, Fisch also excels in R&B and pop. "I am versatile and would like to grow in all areas when it comes to music."

For him, participating in AGT was not about winning, but learning and growing as an artist. "In every competition, there are no winners or losers. We are all learners," he said.

Chantel Boonzaaier, from DGB (Ltd) Franschhoek, took second place, and Sandile Mathebula from Macdaring Farm, Mbombela, came third.



Chester Fisch,
AGT 2024 winner



Chanthel Boonzaaier,
second prize



Sandile Mathebula,
third prize

Top to bottom: Chester Fisch, AGT 2024 winner. Chanthel Boonzaaier, second prize. Sandile Mathebula, third prize.



AGT 2024 judges, from left: Jason Baartman, Almarie du Preez, Chester Fisch (winner), Melanie Willis and Jade Paige

The AGT judges said the 2024 competition was the toughest one to date, with a very small scoring margin separating the first three contestants.

Lungelo Sithole, from KMI Farming in Mbombela, won the prize for the best singer in an indigenous language, awarded by the Afrikaans Language Council (Afrikaanse Taalraad/ATR). Her version of Zahara's emotional, Xa bendingena Mama, was a powerhouse performance second to none. The lyrics, in isiXhosa, were a tribute to Zahara's mother who has passed away.

Dr Conrad Steenkamp, CEO of the ATR said that AGT is a unique project that gives people from the agricultural sector a chance to sing in their mother tongue. "In South Africa we have several indigenous languages to be proud of, Afrikaans being one of them. We pass on our language to our children through singing. It is not just about Afrikaans, it is about encouraging and supporting the arts in the mother tongue."

Thea van Zyl, AGT Project Coordinator,

said the project is more than a singing competition, it is also about skills development – skills that the contestants take back to their homes, farms and communities. "It is about building bridges and inspiring talented agricultural workers to reach for their dreams. Agri workers are the backbone of the fruit and wine industries. The contest gives these unsung heroes a platform to be heard."

AGT was started in 2013 by Hortgro, the South African deciduous fruit industry organisation. This was the 11th anniversary of the project, which is sponsored by Hortgro, Citrus Growers' Association, South African Table Grape Industry body, SA Wine, and the Western Cape Department of Agriculture. The project is also supported by Fruitfly Africa, BerriesZA and Culdevco.

For more information, follow AGT on social media, visit www.agriscottalent.com, or contact Thea van Zyl at info@agriscottalent.com.

