

1 April 2008

I do hope you're all having a wonderful time and that the April Fool hasn't managed to catch you!

We have only one birthday this month. Congratulations to **Siwa** (29th). May there be many more!

19 March 2008

And the holidays are upon us! Tonight's *Parent Concert* bore testimony to the fact that a lot of hard work took place over the past 10 weeks, despite the heat and hectic school and other extramural programmes.

Have a wonderful holiday (it's longer than usual if you haven't noticed), travel safely if you are going away and come back well rested and ready for ACTION! The second term also marks the start of our concert program.

7 March 2008



They say a change is as good as a holiday! On Wednesday Mr Van Zyl introduced three of his students to the choir, who then taught us two traditional Xhosa songs. A lot of fun was had by all and the students commented on how quickly the children learnt the music. They are looking forward to returning for another session to refine the movements.

2 March 2008

To the spectator it may see that not much is happening at the moment. Let me assure you that this is a definite case of *looks are deceiving!* Our performance calendar is filling up fast and, like previous years, the wait to hear us will definitely be worthwhile!

Congratulations to the choristers born in March. No fewer than nine members are celebrating their birthdays! They are **Lauren** (4th), **Annchen** (6th), **Cheswin** (11th), **Suné** (14th), **Maxine** (17th), **Shannon** (26th), **Jan** (27th) and **Jason and Christene** (30th).

1 February 2008

It is hard to believe, but January has come and gone. You may pat yourselves on the back for the tremendous amount of music already learnt. Judging by this we are definitely going to have a spectacular year!

Happy birthday to the following members celebrating their birthdays this month: **Yolanda N** (3rd), **Hendrik** (9th), **Nobuntu** (10th), **Anine** (24th) and **Dillan** (24th). May your year be as sunny as the month of February!

14 January 2008

Hats off to the choristers, Mr Van Zyl, Tannie Amanda and Lucretia for achieving so much over the past weekend. Especially as the weather was far more conducive to swimming than singing! Thank you to the seniors who went out of their way to make the camp fun for the first years.

Apart from ten hours of rehearsal time, there was plenty of time for swimming, jumping on the trampoline and even for painting nails! On Saturday evening we pitted the different chalets against each other in a game of volleyball and other games. It was no small wonder that we still had voices for Sunday morning!

The little performance for the parents on Sunday was a great hit and, as predicted, quite a few parents wiped away a tear of pride. And this was only a taste of what is still to come!

11 January 2008

Welcome in 2008! Today is the official start of the choir year when we kick off with our annual choir camp. We hope you enjoy the camp and everything that follows. It sure promises to be a very exciting year!

We also became the victims of hackers over the past month, resulting in the loss of almost two months' worth of journal entries.

To the members who celebrate birthdays during December and January, we hope it was a wonderful day and that the year ahead will be extra special for you. In December we thought of **Sinovuyo (12th)**, **Sinokuhle (16th)**, **Nwabisa (21st)**, **Jolene (29th)** and **Janke (30th)**, and in January **André de J (1st)**, **Emma (6th)**, **Marizanne (18th)** and **Juanel (30th)**.

10 November 2007

What a way to end off a year! Was the CD launch not a wonderful event? Well done to each and every chorister for the participation in the creation of this really classy piece! And for you who sometimes wonder, we hope that Emile Engela's inspirational words showed that all the effort definitely pays off.

Now it is time to say goodbye after a very busy and exciting year. Good luck with your exams and have a wonderful holiday. Make sure you relax, because next year is going to be another busy one!

31 October 2007

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he warmest of welcomes to the following children who had successful auditions. We hope you will have a wonderful time as members of the ECCC family!

- Bjorn Bester, Laerskool Innes
- Shannon Leigh Bradford, Clarendon Park Primary School
- Danielle Du Plessis, Laerskool Sonop
- Emma Finestone, Theodor Herzl
- Annchen Gerber, Laerskool Verkenner
- Litha Hewitt-Coleman, St Dominic's Priory
- Mishke Heydenrych, Laerskool Verkenner
- Kylie Hughes, Parkside Primary School
- Jeane Jonker, Laerskool Verkenner
- Paula Langenberg, Mount Pleasant Laerskool
- Laura Ashley Light, Mount Pleasant Laerskool
- Kyle Lötter, Laerskool Lorraine
- Maxine Ludewig, Laerskool Innes
- Misha Meintjes, Laerskool Frans Conradie
- Ryan Miller, Laerskool Verkenner
- Roux Mulder, Laerskool Frans Conradie
- Juanel Nel, Laerskool Verkenner
- Carmen Schoonraad, Laerskool Verkenner
- Lindi Suka, Walmer-West Primary School
- Jenna Van der Watt, Summerwood Primary
- Nicola Van Niekerk, Laerskool Walmer-Wes
- Ilse-Mari Visser, Clarendon Park Primary

While we're at it, happy birthday to the following old and new choristers who are celebrating their special day during November. We hope you have a wonderful day, month and year! **Ilse-Mari** (3rd), **Rory** (5th), **Sara** (10th), **Stefan** (14th) and **Khanya** (20th).

23 October 2007

Our children worked hard and learnt a lot from Mr Berger during the master classes in August. Herewith his impressions of South Africa and our children.

“The Children dance all the time and everywhere”

Translation of an interview with Martin Berger (Würzburg Domkapellmeister) that was published in the *Pressestelle Ordinariat Würzburg's (POW) Nachrichten*.

During August 2007 Martin Berger from Würzburg presented Master Classes in choir singing and a concert with the Eastern Cape Children's Choir in Port Elizabeth. In this interview he spoke about his experiences "in another part of our planet".

POW: *You are presently a guest at the Eastern Cape Children's Choir and the Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. What new experiences did you gain from these master classes in South Africa?*

Martin Berger (MB): I find it enriching to work in another country with a different culture. South Africa is 12 000 kilometers from Germany in another part of our planet and is very different. Two years ago we travelled to South Africa with the Würzburger Domsingknaben, hosted by the Eastern Cape Children's Choir (ECCC), also giving a concert in Port Elizabeth. This concert received a lot of attention in the local press. Last year, the Würzburger Domsingknaben received the ECCC, one of the best children's choirs in South Africa, to perform in one of our church services and also give a concert. Lionel van Zyl, Leader of this choir and Deputy Head of the Music Department of the Nelson Mandela University, invited me to present Master Classes in Port Elizabeth. The goal was firstly to realise European choir music of a high standard with these children and secondly to use this visit to share new developments in the field of choir work with South African students and lecturers. His invitation and his many contacts gave me the opportunity to travel in the country to share my knowledge in the field of choir leadership and also to benefit from the knowledge of South African colleagues. The University has also appointed me as a jury member for the selection of highly talented students to receive scholarships from the renowned Charles Bryar Fund.

POW: *Choir leadership in South Africa: Can this be compared to your task in Würzburg? What are the differences?*

Berger: The main difference lies in the interaction between the different South African cultures and levels of society that are present in the ECCC. Afrikaner, Xhosa, Zulu, Coloured have their own distinct cultural and historical backgrounds and totally different approaches to singing. In Europe, singing is nearly exclusively practised as an art form, while for the indigenous South African population groups it is part of their identity. Black children dance and sing always and everywhere as expression of their emotions. For a musician this is a fantastic experience. The musical ground rules are immensely varied. South Africa has eleven official languages and as many population groups. For 90% of the population, English is not the mother tongue, but a general substitute language. This means that not only the choir leader, but also all the children are constantly engaging in a foreign language.

POW: *How do you mesh all these different cultures?*

Berger: The traditions and cultures of these children could not be more diverse. Xhosa and Zulu children find it difficult to embrace our European art music and our style of choir music. For them singing is the individual expression of emotion, and for many of them it is difficult to comprehend the concept of working intensively on a musical piece. My idea that a practice session should at least have a punctual beginning, was buried on the first day. Furthermore, the concept of musical precision is not an ideal in many of the cultures from which these children come. This is not a problem for musically trained children from mainly white well-off families. There are also enormous social differences. Children from very rich families sing together with children from the townships who often do not have a second meal per day to complement a school meal. It is difficult to imagine more extremes. Such a children's choir mirrors the situation in this country that must strive to even out the extremes and unite the differences.

POW: *How did you experience the African children and youth in the choir and in song?*

Berger: Very open, very motivated, very grateful and above all, very satisfied. The children often laugh unrestrained and with joy. Most touching is that nothing is taken for granted. The

fact that someone has come to them to work with them is colossal motivation for these children. I found their gratitude especially moving. There was hardly a child that did not write me a personal thank-you letter or card. It is not often that one experiences this in life. In Germany we perhaps take too much for granted - we could learn a lot from these South African children.

With thanks to translator, Ilse van Niekerk. Original in German available on request by sending and e-mail to info@eccchoir.com.

5 October 2007

This choir, through its song, has inspired not only composers, but also a poet or two. The latest to put pen to paper, is Mr Van Zyl's neighbour, Louis Kamfer. A warm thank you to you, sir!

***DIE OOS-KAAP KINDERKOOR
ONDER LEIDING VAN LIONEL VAN ZYL***

*Elke Woensdag, elke Vrydag
word daar rugbreek-hard gewerk.
Dan oefen Meester en sy kinders
aan hul koorsang vir die kerk.*

*Hy vorm uit reënboogkinders
die Oos-Kaap Kinderkoor,
wat hul harmonieë uitsing
soos in Halle laas gehoor.*

*Met die oplig van 'n vinger,
of die wegdraai van 'n wang
neem hy die onskuld van hul lewens
en sit dit in hul sang.*

*Hoor hoe sweef die kinderstemme!
Lewerik en nagtegaal!
So maak Lionel en sy kinders
van ons kerk 'n katedraal.*

Louis Kamfer. PE, 29/9/07

1 October 2007

Welcome back after the (very) short break and the final term of 2007. We hope you had time to catch your breath after the choir's third term marathon!

The following members will be celebrating their birthdays this month: **Dewald** (1st), **Mariska** (2nd), **Kate** and **Kendra** (12th), **Dalton** (22nd) and **Aleché** (27th). We wish you all a happy day and year ahead.