



ArtSmarts

2004-2005 Wells Fargo School Matinee Series

Soweto Gospel Choir

Friday, March 18, 2005

11:00am

Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center

Dear Teacher:

We hope you find this CueSheet helpful in preparing your students for the Soweto Gospel Choir school matinee. This guide, which is intended to complement the Multicultural Music curriculum guide, provides information about the choir, its history and the gospel tradition in Africa, as well as a country profile. Also included is a review of audience etiquette.

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Soweto Gospel Choir



Soweto is an abbreviation of South Western Townships and is a district of Johannesburg, South Africa. Despite the name “Township”, Soweto is home to an estimated three million people. In 1994, South Africa’s years of struggle against the apartheid regime culminated in free elections and during these last ten years, the image of Soweto has been transformed. It has gone from a place that few persons would want to visit to being South Africa’s number one tourist destination.

The extraordinarily talented and stirring Soweto Gospel Choir draws the best voices from the many churches and communities in and around Soweto. The 32-member choir sings a wonderful blend of modern Western spirituals and African gospel in six of South Africa’s eleven official languages. Mixing live drumming, song, and dance, the performance comes from a church music scene where congregations prefer rhythm, movement, and soul to the more austere traditions of the West.

Since its emergence in 2002, Soweto Gospel Choir has achieved major success both overseas and in South Africa. Performing in sold-out tours of Australia, New Zealand, Edinburgh, Hamburg, and Singapore, the choir is securing its place as one of South Africa’s most exciting new offerings. Within a short space of time, the choir has performed at many prestigious events in Johannesburg and Cape Town, the most memorable being its performance in front of former President Nelson Mandela and international celebrities as part of the 46664 Aids Benefit Concert. In November 2003, Mr. Mandela had launched a

worldwide music-led campaign to raise awareness of the devastating impact of AIDS in Africa, and through this concert, featuring top international and South African musicians, monies were raised for this cause. Soweto Gospel Choir performed with music legends Bono, Queen, Peter Gabriel, Anastacia, Jimmy Cliff, the Eurythmics and others. Soweto Gospel Choir was selected as the sole entertainment for the launch of a new education initiative, 'Mindset,' and the choir shared the stage with Mr. Mandela and his wife Graca Machel as well as the Ministers of Education and Arts and Culture. The choir recently performed for President Thabo Mbeki at the 49th World Conference for Small Businesses held in South Africa. In addition, they perform regularly at corporate and religious events.

The choir's mission is to showcase its talent around the world but at the same time, to give back to society as a thank you for the wonderful opportunities members of the choir have themselves been given over the past several years. With this in mind, Soweto Gospel Choir has performed several charity concerts, one of the most heart-warming being for old age pensioners and hospital patients from Diepkloof in Soweto. In the same spirit, the choir performed at St. Mary's Cathedral at the yearly memorial service for late AIDS activist and 12 year old hero, Nkosi Johnson. Later in 2003, the members sang at Nkosi's Haven, the home for HIV positive mothers and their children and handed over a check for over R50,000 (approximately \$8000 USD) from donations collected during their Edinburgh concerts.

The choir has recently set up its own charity foundation in association with Nkosi's Haven, called Nkosi's Haven/Vukani (meaning "to arise," "do something"), through which funds are raised for AIDS orphans establishments which receive no government or private funding. With the money the choir has raised, it has donated food parcels and other essential goods to several needy organizations that support child-headed families or AIDS orphans living with elderly grandparents.

In 2005, the choir is planning a series of concerts in the United States and South Africa as well as a return tour of Australia in August. In the meantime, it is sending out its message of joy and hope to all those who love music, no matter in what language or what faith it is sung.

For more information on the Soweto Gospel Choir, visit www.SowetoGospelChoir.com

For video clips of the company, visit:

http://www.mondavicenter.org/events/1supplemental_info.lasso?id=1384&supplement=1 and

http://www.mondavicenter.org/events/1supplemental_info.lasso?id=1384&supplement=2 and

http://www.mondavicenter.org/events/1supplemental_info.lasso?id=1384&supplement=3

“Voices from Heaven”

The school matinee performance will include selections from the following repertoire:

Jikela Emaweni (Fighting Sticks of Young Men)	The Manhattan Brothers
Vuma (Believe, In Heaven There Are Promises)	Traditional
Thina Simnqobile (We Have Overcome the Devil)	Gift Vilakazi, Nkululeko Vilakazi
Mudimo	Traditional
Zanele (The name of a beautiful woman)	Traditional
Paradise Road	Patric Van Blerk, Fransua Roos
Ride On Moses	Traditional
Ahuna Ya Tswanag Le Jesu (There's Nobody Like Jesus)	Traditional
Kammatla (Kwaito song of praise)	V. Jiyane, L. Bok, N. Vilakazi, J. Mcineka
Mbube (The Lion Sleeps Tonight)	Solomon Linda
Many Rivers to Cross	Jimmy Cliff
Going Down Jordan	L. Humphries, T. Woods, I. Burgie
Amen	Traditional, arranged by Otis Redding
Amazing Grace	Traditional
Jerusalem	Traditional
Malaika (My Beautiful Angel)	Traditional
Thula Baba	Traditional
Sikulandile (We Have Taken The Bride)	Traditional
Hlanganani (Unite)	Hamilton Nzimande
Siliwelile (We've Crossed Jordan)	Namba/Mkhize/Hlongweni
Bayete (Oh Hail)	Traditional
Holy City/Bayete	Wetherley, Adams/ Traditional
African Dream	Alan Lazar

African Gospel Music



African gospel originated as a blend of traditional music rooted in song and percussion combined with the influence of 19th century missionary music. Many songs are polyphonic meaning that separate but compatible melodic lines are woven on the background of time. A round is a kind of polyphonic music. Call and response is style is also characteristic of African singing. Sometimes a leader will sing the verses of a song and a chorus will return the refrain. In addition, the language of the song also influences the music. Listen to how well the sounds of the African languages fit with the melodies.

With gospel music the voice is all-important; it soars to the heavens and descends to the deepest miseries of the human condition. South Africa's gospel music draws on diverse traditions. Listeners from abroad will instantly pick up on the American influences of much of the output. Pentecostal churches from the US have made a big impact in South Africa and have large followings. In addition, American gospel music is a staple in the media, just like its secular musical counterparts.

However, the African influences still render South Africa's gospel music unique. This is particularly the case with the Zionist churches, which have been fiercely independent since the beginning of the twentieth century and have consciously incorporated African traditions into their rituals and music. South African songs are dance songs so movement is an integral part of the songs. Singers would find it difficult to separate the music from the movements of the song.

Gospel is among the best-selling music in contemporary South Africa, sustained by the millions of church goers who prefer religion to have rhythm and soul. The country's choirs have become a mainstay on the European festival circuit, and have exerted a major influence throughout African gospel music.

Despite the enormous number of gospel recordings of every style, most gospel still goes

unrecorded for lack of opportunity. Yet every township and rural area has countless choirs, groups and soloists, many of whom are powerful and moving beyond belief. Live performances, whether in a church, a night vigil, or simply in someone's back yard, are a rich and unforgettable part of South African cultural life, providing important clues about the sources of its people's justly legendary resilience and forbearance.

---Excerpted from: Mthembu-Salter, Gregory. "South Africa: Gospel Music." World Music: Africa, Europe and the Middle East. London: Rough Guides, Ltd., 1999: 658-59.

South Africa



-map taken from www.lonelyplanet.com

Full country name: The Republic of South Africa

Area: 1.23 million sq km

Population: 43.8 million

Capital City: Pretoria (official); Bloemfontein (judicial) and Cape Town (legislative).

People: 77% black, 10% white (60% of whites are of Afrikaaner descent, most of the rest are of British descent), 8% mixed race, 2.5% of Indian or Asian descent

Language: Afrikaans, Xhosa, English, Zulu, Tswana

Religion: Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and traditional religions

Government: republic and independent member of the British Commonwealth

Head of State: President Thabo Mbeki

Head of Government: Prime Minister Jacob Zuma

Major Industries: Mining, finance, insurance, food processing

Major Trading Partners: USA, UK, Germany, Japan, Italy

Political History

Although the nomadic San (also known as Bushmen) have possibly lived in Southern Africa since around 100,000 BC, they didn't reach the Cape of Good Hope until about 2000 years ago. Because of the close relationship between the San and the Khoikhoi peoples, who intermarried and coexisted, both are often referred to as Khoisan. By the 15th century most arable land had been settled by encroaching Bantu pastoral tribes.

Southern Africa became a popular stop for European crews after Vasco de Gama opened the Cape of Good Hope spice route in 1498, and, by the mid-17th century, scurvy and shipwreck had induced Dutch traders to opt for a permanent settlement in Table Bay on the site of present-day Cape Town. The mostly Dutch burghers pushed slowly north, decimating the Khoisan with violence and disease as they went. Towards the end of the 18th century, with Dutch power fading, Britain came to settle this part of Africa. It was hoped that British settlers would inhabit a buffer zone between skirmishing pastoral Boers and the Xhosa, but most of the British immigrant families retreated to town, entrenching the rural-urban divide that is evident in South Africa even today. Although slavery was abolished in 1833, the division of labor on the basis of color was too deep for any real attempt at change.

Upheaval in black Southern Africa wasn't only generated by the Europeans. The *difaqane* ('forced migration' in Sotho) or *mfeqane* ('the crushing' in Zulu) was a time of immense upheaval and suffering, a terror campaign masterminded by the Zulu chief, Shaka. This wave of disruption through Southern Africa left some tribes wiped out, others enslaved and the lucky ones running. Into this chaos disgruntled Boers stomped on their Great Trek away from British rule in search of freedom. Most of the pastures the Boers trekked through were deserted or inhabited by traumatized refugees. The Zulus were no pushovers however. They put up strong and bloody resistance to the Boers before eventually ceding to superior firepower. Boer republics popped up through the interior, and were annexed one by one by Britain through treaties, diplomacy and violence during the middle part of the 19th century. Just when it looked like the British flag was going to fly from Cairo to the Cape, diamonds were discovered in Kimberley, and the Dutch resistance became suddenly stronger.

The first Anglo-Boer War ended in a Boer victory and the establishment of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek. The British backed off until a huge reef of gold was discovered around Johannesburg and then marched in again for the second Anglo-Boer War. By 1902 the Boers had exhausted their conventional resources and resorted to commando-style raids, denying the British control of the countryside. The

British quashed resistance with disproportionate reprisals: if a railway line was blown up, the nearest farmhouse was destroyed; if a shot was fired from a farm, the house was burnt down, the crops destroyed and the animals killed. The women and children from the farms were collected and taken to concentration camps - a British invention - where 26,000 died of disease and neglect. The Boers were compelled to sign an ignominious and bitter peace.

Soon after the Union of South Africa was established in 1910, a barrage of racist legislation was passed restricting black rights and laying the foundations for apartheid. After a last flutter with military rebellion during WWI, the Afrikaners began controlling South Africa politically. In the 1948 elections, the Afrikaner-dominated and ultra-right National Party took over.

Under apartheid, every individual was classified by race, and race determined where you could live, work, pray and learn. Irrespective of where they had been born, blacks were divided into one of 10 tribal groups, forcibly dispossessed and dumped in rural backwaters, the so-called Homelands. The plan was to restrict blacks to Homelands that were, according to the propaganda, to become self-sufficient, self-governing states. In reality, these lands had virtually no infrastructure and no industry, and were therefore incapable of producing sufficient food for the black population. There was intense, widespread suffering and many families returned to squalid squatter camps in the cities from which they had been evicted. Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi was pivotal in the Inkatha movement, a failed attempt to unite Homeland leaders. Black resistance developed in the form of strikes, acts of public disobedience and protest marches, and was supported by international opinion from the early 1960s, after 69 protesters were killed in Sharpeville and African National Congress (ANC) leaders, including Nelson Mandela, were jailed.

After withdrawing from the British Commonwealth in 1961, South Africa became increasingly isolated. Paranoia developed through the 1960s and 70s, as the last European powers withdrew from Africa and black, often socialist, states formed around South Africa's northern borders. South Africa's military responses ranged from limited strikes (Mozambique, Lesotho) to full-scale assault (Angola, Namibia). When Cuba intervened in Angola in 1988, South Africa suffered a major defeat and war looked much less attractive. As the spirit of Gorbachev-style detente permeated Southern Africa, Cuba pulled out of Angola, Namibia became independent and a stable peace was finally brokered in 1990.

The domestic situation was far from resolved. Violent responses to black protests increased commitment to a revolutionary struggle, and the United Nations finally imposed economic and political sanctions. But in the mid-1980s, black-on-black violence in the townships exploded. Although bitter lines

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were drawn between the left-wing, Xhosa-based ANC and the right-wing, Zulu-dominated Inkatha movement, such distinctions are simplistic in the context of the massive economic and social deprivation of black South Africa. There were clashes between political rivals, tribal enemies, opportunistic gangsters, and between those who lived in the huge migrant-workers' hostels and their township neighbors.

In 1989, the impact of economic sanctions was felt, the rand collapsed and reformist F.W. De Klerk came to power. Virtually all apartheid regulations were repealed, political prisoners were released and negotiations began on forming a multiracial government. Free elections in 1994 resulted in a decisive victory for the ANC and Nelson Mandela became president. De Klerk's National Party won just over 20% of the vote, and the Inkatha Freedom Party won 10.5%. South Africa rejoined the British Commonwealth a few months later.

Despite the scars of the past and the enormous problems ahead, South Africa today is immeasurably more optimistic and relaxed than it was a few years ago. The international community has embraced the new South Africa and the ANC's desire to create a truly nonracial nation. It will be some time before the black majority gain much economic benefit from their freedom, as economic inequality remains an overwhelming problem. However, the political structure seems strong enough to hold the diverse region together. There are huge expectations for the new South Africa.

Map, statistics, and history taken from the *Lonely Planet Guide to Africa*:
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/africa/south_africa/

Think About It!

Talking with your teacher, friends and family about a performance after attending the theater is part of the experience. When you share what you saw and felt, you learn more about the performance. You can now compare ideas and ask questions and find out how to learn even more. Here are some questions to think about:

1. How would you describe South African gospel music to a friend?
2. What feelings did you have while you listened to the songs?
3. What did you like best and why? Was the program different from what you expected? How?
4. Did you have a favorite selection? A least favorite? Explain.
5. Do your parents or grandparents celebrate holidays and special events with music and dance traditions? What are they?

This CueSheet was written by Anett Jessop,
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Attending the Theater

What is expected of student audiences at the matinee:

- * Enter the auditorium quietly and take seats immediately;
- * Show courtesy to the artist and other guests at all times;
- * Demonstrate appreciation for the artist's work by applauding at the appropriate times;
- * Refrain from making unnecessary noise or movements;
- * Please eat lunch before or after the performance to avoid disruption;
- * Please turn off cell phones and pagers.
- * Flash photography is strictly prohibited.
- * Relate any information acquired from the pre-matinee discussion to the new information gained from the matinee.

What you can expect of your experience in a performing arts theater:

A theater is a charged space, full of energy and anticipation. When the house lights (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, the excitement level goes up! Theaters are designed so that the voices of the singers and actors and the music of the musicians can be heard. But this also means that any sound in the audience: whispering, rustling of papers, speaking and moving about, can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. Distractions like these upset everyone's concentration and can spoil a performance.

The performers on stage show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their very best possible work. The audience shows respect for the performers by watching attentively. Applause is the best way for audience members to share their enthusiasm and to show their appreciation for the performers. Applaud at the end of a performance! Sometimes the audience will clap during a performance, such as after a featured solo. Audience members may feel like laughing if the action on stage is funny, crying if the action is sad, or sighing if something is seen or heard that is beautiful. Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form and the culture(s) of the people in the audience. While the audience at a dance performance will sit quietly, other types of performance invite audience participation.