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DEAR BUSKAID SUPPORTERS

Unbelievably, it is twenty years ago this month since I happened to hear a news item on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme about a string project struggling to survive in Soweto. I responded, and the rest is history! Although our anniversary celebrations are always focused on the first UK fundraising 'busk' in March 1992 and the founding of the Buskaid string teaching programme in Soweto five years later, that random moment in late 1991 still gives me pause for reflection. After all, it completely changed my life, and has transformed the lives of many children in Soweto ever since.



Graham de Lacy

HISTORY OF THE MOST POSITIVE KIND CONTINUES TO BE MADE AT THE BUSKAID MUSIC SCHOOL. IN THE COURSE OF 2011 WE HAVE:

PERFORMED in the presence of two very distinguished visitors to South Africa, namely His Royal Highness Prince Charles, The Prince of Wales, and the First Lady of the United States of America, Mrs Michelle Obama

BENEFITED from a second year of generous funding from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, enabling us to start our youngest ever violin and cello beginners (aged between four and seven) - thereby increasing our membership to approximately 100

UNDERTAKEN a tour to Colombia, where we collaborated with El Colegio del Cuerpo, the internationally acclaimed Colombian contemporary dance company

ORGANISED a very productive 'bush' workshop for 40 of our students

PRESENTED a record eleven public concerts in South Africa and overseas

PRODUCED DVDs of live recordings from our Johannesburg concerts in 2010 and 2011

SENT three students to the Royal Academy of Music, London, two to commence their third year of study, and one to start the first of a four-year degree course

SUCCESSFULLY nominated TOTAL South Africa as winner of the category of International Sponsorship, for the Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) Awards 2011

RECEIVED generous donations in South Africa, the UK and the USA - including funding and sponsorships in South Africa from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, Redefine, TOTAL South Africa, the Umoja Foundation and the Doshi Group of Companies



HIGH PROFILE EVENTS



We are most honoured to have been invited to perform in the presence of two very distinguished visitors to South Africa in 2011. In late June we provided background music at a function held in the garden of the Ambassador of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr Donald H Gips, to welcome the First Lady of the United States of America, Mrs Michelle Obama. We hoped that she enjoyed our performance of Timothy Kraemer's arrangement of Lennon and McCartney's *Michelle* as much as we enjoyed her warm, natural interaction with our students. It was an unforgettable morning for us all.



Equally exciting was the invitation later in the year to play at a garden party for His Royal Highness Prince Charles, The Prince of Wales, in the grounds of the UK Trade Commissioner's residence (where we first performed in 1997). Three members of the Chamber Ensemble were subsequently presented to Prince Charles, who was delightfully relaxed when he spoke to us, recalling his cello-playing days with some nostalgia!

Another distinguished guest present at both functions was His Majesty The King of the Royal Bafokeng Nation, who is passionate about music and its power to effect social transformation, and has invited Buskaid to visit his kingdom, in the hope that a Buskaid performance there may serve as an inspiration to young people in Bafokeng.



We were further honoured by an invitation from the German Embassy in South Africa to play the German and South African Anthems at their German Day Celebrations, held in the gardens of the Ambassador's home in Pretoria.



Generally however the Ensemble has been negatively affected by the recession in 2011: we have played at far fewer corporate functions this year than in any other year. Our fees for these functions are effectively donations to Buskaid and therefore an important revenue stream.

Events at which we have been invited to play include a very elegantly presented private concert for the Swiss bank UBS at the beautifully restored Herbert Baker mansion, Villa Arcadia; a further performance at Arcadia for College Hill Pty Ltd; the launch of the Samsung 'Galaxy' at the up-market

Sandton nightclub, ZAR; a wonderfully surreal event at Investment Cars surrounded by all manner of exotic luxury vehicles; and a short performance in a sports medical centre.



NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDING AND THE GROWTH OF THE MUSIC SCHOOL

In last year's Newsletter I highlighted the significance of our three-year grant from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) and its impact on the Music School, in terms of enabling more children to join Buskaid, increasing our teaching staff, and offering apprenticeships (Learnerships) to aspiring young string players who wish to become professional musicians.

In 2011 we have continued to develop all these aspects of our work in Soweto, but this year, for the very first time, we took the decision to accept beginner groups of far younger children. When Sonja Bass (Buskaid's cello and bass teacher) and I were the sole Buskaid teachers this could not have happened, because in lieu of parental support we also lacked the presence of helpers in the room, so essential in the teaching of very young children. In February Cecelia Manyama, Keabetswe Goodman and Simiso Radebe, assisted by Lungile Zondo as a trainee teacher, started a 'baby' violin group; whilst Katlego Legodi, Pule Lekarapa and Didi Legae, together with their trainee assistant Nathi Matroos were given responsibility for the 'baby beginner' cellists and bassists. These children, whose ages range from four to seven, come twice a week after school for their classes, one of which is an ensemble of all 16 pupils, led by each teacher in turn - requiring from them some rudimentary knowledge of every instrument. Thus these classes are entirely run by groups of assistant and trainee teachers: Sonja and I are mere visitors, advisors and supervisors!

Throughout 2011 we have employed seven salaried Assistant Teachers (nine when Kabelo Monnathebe and Tiisetso Mashishi are in South Africa), five Trainee Teachers and eleven Learnership students. These Learnership and Teaching employment numbers, though modest in the extreme, are Buskaid's positive response to South Africa's alarmingly high unemployment rate, currently standing at 25%. In many cases our students are the sole breadwinners for their immediate and extended families. Given the continuing high demand for string teaching in the townships and for quality string players throughout the country, it seems likely that these young people's expertise will be in demand for a very long time to come.

We also employ four part-time teachers, Nanette Andersen (Alexander Technique), Michael Watt (piano and aural), Christi-Louise Swanepoel (advanced double bass) and Kabelo Motlhomli, a former Buskaid violin student who gives intermittent lessons to some senior violinists. All four teachers lead very busy professional lives and we appreciate their continuing loyalty to Buskaid.



Pierre du Toit



Pierre du Toit



Pierre du Toit



Graham de Lacy



STRING WORKSHOP AT PARNASSUS FARM

Once again we were fortunate to receive funding from the NLDTF for a music/ team-building/ environmental workshop during the Easter holidays. We decided to invite a smaller group of students than in 2010, in order to give the Senior Ensemble more time to study and rehearse intensively. Altogether 40 students attended – a combination of Junior and Senior Ensemble members, with an age range of between 10 and 29.

This year the Director of the Ubungani Wilderness Experience, Hanneke van der Merwe, who leads the team-building and environmental elements of the workshop, suggested a new venue, Parnassus Farm. This centre is situated in 250 acres of unspoilt land just outside Magaliesburg about 100km west of Johannesburg, in a beautiful valley alongside the Magalies River and overlooked by the Witwatersberg mountains. To add to its charm the whole area, including the Farm, is generously populated by troops of curious and very vocal baboons.

As Sonja was unable to attend, we invited Christopher Poffley to join us. Christopher is a leading UK cellist who plays with internationally acclaimed groups and has wide experience of the teaching approach used at the Buskaid Music School. As one of the original ensemble of UK musicians who came out from London in 1997 with Sir John Eliot Gardiner for Buskaid's inaugural concert, he was delighted to be invited to work once again with the Buskaid musicians (some of whom had played in that concert) 14 years later.

Whilst Christopher spent most of his time teaching the Junior Ensemble and giving individual cello lessons, the Senior Ensemble and I were hard at work learning a difficult new programme which we would subsequently perform in South Africa and abroad. Mornings were spent rehearsing, late afternoons practising, and every evening Simiso Radebe led sessions at which new gospel and kwela arrangements were painstakingly arranged and put together.

To balance our somewhat sedentary musical activities, Hanneke and her officers devised a challenging outdoor afternoon programme. The youngsters were initially divided into four teams which they colourfully named King Baboons, Indigenous Forests, Venomous Buskers and Savannah, and activities included composing and acting out a team 'war cry', designing and painting a team flag, inventing new ballgames and a 'blindfold and sighted' team game to build communication skills and trust. Juniors and seniors were randomly mixed together, and these games reinforced skills similar to those which they must develop when playing in a musical ensemble.



TOUR TO COLOMBIA

One day was spent abseiling from the high mountains surrounding the Farm, an activity strictly supervised by a specialist company. Some students found this very daunting, whilst others embraced it with fearless enthusiasm!

The final morning was devoted to a concert for visitors to the Farm, which was held outside under a canopy. The concert concluded with a lively performance of Simiso's choreographed arrangement of an African gospel song, *Emmanuel*, played, sung and danced by all 40 young musicians; and the entire workshop was rounded off by a spectacular Highveld thunderstorm!



Exactly a year ago I received an email from Álvaro Restrepo, the Director of El Colegio del Cuerpo, a contemporary dance organisation based in Cartagena, Colombia. He had just finished watching Mark Kidel's documentary *Soweto Strings* on the Film and Arts channel. He wrote: *Deep and magical coincidences with your work and way of approaching life and education through the Arts motivated me to write this short message to thank you for the beauty, dignity and value of what I felt after seeing and listening to your kids playing and talking about who they have become through the power of music and integral human education... Maybe some day we could dream of a project together: dancers from Colombia and musicians from South Africa showing the world why it is possible to share not only wealth but, most important, opportunities and talent...*

What followed was a very determined effort on the part of both of us to bring about that collaboration in 2011. For some years I have been trying without success to establish links between Buskaid and El Sistema, in neighbouring Venezuela. The warmth and enthusiasm of Álvaro's first and subsequent communications led me to believe that we should rather work towards a project with his dancers. Our very supportive sponsor TOTAL South Africa agreed to be the principal sponsor, provided we limit our visit to Cartagena and travel via the USA. We were then offered further generous financial support from the Umoja Foundation, through its founder Ivor Ichikowitz. The Doshi Group of Companies kindly helped us to make up the shortfall.

A week of rehearsals, workshops, community performances and public concerts was planned in great detail, for the period 2 to 10 July. Álvaro, Marie France Delieuvin (the school's co-director and co-founder) and I agreed on certain repertoire that we would perform together: choreographed versions of the first movement of Karl Jenkins' violin concerto *Sarikiz*, and of Bela Bartók's *Rumanian Dances*.



As we all know, international travel is now neither straightforward nor enjoyable. When a party of 26 musicians with an age range of 10 to 30 takes to the skies, the preparations are extensive and complex. As we were flying via Miami we needed USA visas. During the weeks leading up to our departure the majority of our youngsters were sitting school exams; yet somehow we managed to take every child from Soweto - some of them twice - up to the US Embassy (which gave us most sympathetic support) for visa interviews. Our Schengen visas for the return journey were generously donated by the Spanish Embassy, as initially our flights were routed via Madrid.

Furthermore, Buskaid does not travel light: for the 26 people travelling out on June 30 (two adult members of the Ensemble followed two days later), we counted 46 pieces of checked luggage.

Space does not permit a detailed account of the gruesome journey to Colombia which we endured over the course of more than three days. What should have been a two-day journey, meticulously planned down to the last detail, gradually disintegrated into chaos. As we queued up for check-in to Cartagena in Miami airport, twenty of us were inexplicably taken off the flight, and subsequently spent nearly 30 hours in the departure area of the airport, with no clear indication for most of that time of how we would reach Cartagena. Chaos breeds chaos: an hour or so after we had somehow managed to confirm ourselves on to a flight via Panama (with a seven-hour stopover) I tripped and fell in the airport hotel where we were having breakfast, and was rushed by ambulance to the local hospital, where X-rays revealed a severe spinal fracture. Meanwhile Álvaro was desperately working on our behalf in Cartagena: magically, and at the very last minute, we were transferred on to a direct flight! Eighty-four hours after we left Soweto, we arrived in Cartagena. As I was pushed out of the airport in a wheelchair by Lesego, to a tumultuous welcome from Álvaro, Marie France and staff and students from El Colegio del Cuerpo, there was a sense of utter disbelief that we had finally made it.

Incredibly, the journey back to South Africa was also fraught with problems at every departure point – in Cartagena, in Miami and in Paris. The fallout from this sequence of events was far-reaching. After our return to South Africa, our travel agency held an enquiry into the actions of a number of its employees, all of whom were subsequently dismissed. Avoiding litigation however, we have since received a generous donation from the agency, whose senior staff were justifiably horrified at the scale of our ordeal.

Despite the challenging start, our young musicians displayed extraordinary professionalism, directing their energies over the next six days to playing superbly on every occasion. Deprived of one vital day of rehearsal we had to work twice as hard, both by ourselves and with the dancers, towards the high-profile performances at the end of the week. The temperature hovered constantly around a humid 40 degrees. We certainly derived much inspiration from the



wonderful young artists with whom we were collaborating, for somehow we found great reserves of energy for all our activities. El Colegio del Cuerpo (eCdC) is remarkably similar to Buskaid. As well as supporting and training a flagship performance group, they also run an almost identical teacher-training programme. Like our advanced musicians, their senior dancers are teachers and mentors for the younger students. Late one afternoon we were invited to watch the first year dancers, trained and choreographed by their senior colleagues, perform sequences which were inspired by pictures from the Metropolitan Museum in New York, to the music of Bach cello suites. We were intensely moved by both the dancing and the dedication of these young people and their teachers.

Like Johannesburg, Cartagena is a city of extremes of wealth and poverty; situated on Colombia's Caribbean coastline, it is densely populated by descendants of African slaves, the majority of whom still live in abject poverty. One afternoon we set off in a ramshackle bus for one of the deprived areas, known as Nelson Mandela, in which eCdC runs classes for local children. Somehow we all managed to cram ourselves, together with three double basses, into this ancient vehicle, and we rattled along the dirt roads of Nelson Mandela until we reached the local school where we were to give a concert. Our performance was received with huge enthusiasm by the audience, who sang along with delight when we included some Latin American favourites, and roared their appreciation of twelve-year-old Khotso's rendition of *Danza Latina!* Afterwards we were told that the fact that we had visited this area and played there was a source of great inspiration to all those who attended.



A UNESCO World Heritage site, Cartagena is known for the beauty of its walled city and the well-preserved buildings contained within. We stayed in one of those magnificent old houses, Casa Peter, which was situated within walking distance of the charming Teatro Adolfo Mejía where we gave three performances. The first of these took place on Thursday 7 July for the general public and was well received by the capacity audience. We played a wide variety of repertoire, most of which we would perform in Johannesburg some weeks later; but the crowning glory of every concert was our collaboration with the dancers in both the Karl Jenkins' concerto and the Bartók dances. The powerful choreography for these dances was created by eCdC's artistic directors, Marie France Delieuvin and Álvaro Restrepo. That intangible quality which so many audiences find so captivating in Buskaid's playing was there in equal measure in the sinuous, alluring and deeply-felt movements of the dancers of eCdC. But perhaps the most significant impact of these performances lay in the fact that this stage was shared by young people from similar communities with similar histories of social and political deprivation, all of whom were performing to the highest levels of artistic excellence.

These shared aspects of our two organisations were debated in some detail in a panel discussion in the theatre before the first concert, to which members of the public were invited. The panel consisted of Álvaro, Marie France, Father Rafael Castillo, a Catholic priest and expert on the theme of reconciliation, as well as some eCdC dancers and Buskaid musicians. Our discussion focused on the universality of the arts and their power to shift stereotypical concepts (such as, for example, the idea that Africans cannot/ should not play classical music) and

build bridges within and between communities. Behind us there was a continuous slideshow of historic pictures of former President Nelson Mandela, merging into pictures of our young musicians – symbolic juxtaposition which needed no words of explanation.

Our final concert in the theatre on Saturday 9 July was similar to the first, but presented to an invited audience of Colombian dignitaries, to launch an appeal for the funding of eCdC's proposed new premises. Again, this concert was a resounding success, and at its close we were given the Freedom of the City of Cartagena – a very great honour for Buskaid and for Soweto!



Between these two concerts, on Friday 8 July, our students enjoyed a very loud and energetic interaction with the Colombian Youth Philharmonic Orchestra (CYPO) which, by pure chance, happened to be playing in a nearby city. The two pieces which the Buskaid students and their Colombian counterparts rehearsed and subsequently performed in the theatre were *Malambo* from Ginastera's *Estancia Dances* and a traditional Colombian piece *Tierra Querida*, which offered Simiso Radebe the perfect opportunity to rise from his seat and produce an astonishingly Latin improvisation which brought the house down! We also played some Rameau and Kwela for the CYPO musicians, a performance which they received with great warmth and noisy enthusiasm.

Later that evening we were treated to a performance of *Inixilio*, Álvaro and Marie France's deeply moving choreography to Henryk Górecki's third symphony, *Sorrowful Songs*, which is dedicated to the displaced populations of Colombia and the world. For the first time we were able to experience the artistry and emotional commitment of the dancers with whom we had been working through the week.

Despite all the difficulties we endured to achieve this extraordinary interaction, we agreed unanimously that this was by far one of the most memorable tours that we have ever undertaken. We thoroughly appreciate the warmth, hospitality and enduring kindness we encountered in Cartagena. And I shall never forget the ministrations of eCdC's academic sub-director, May Posse, who with our chaperone, Hanneke van der Merwe, helped me to work through a week of excruciating pain!





CONCERTS

In the past we expected to present one major public concert a year in Johannesburg, often with a performance in Soweto of the same programme. Gradually we have been able to increase the numbers of these performances, and during 2011 we gave a record eleven public concerts, of which seven were local. Two took place in the near-perfect acoustic of the theatre in the Arts Centre at St Mary's School, Waverley in Johannesburg. The first was a concert sponsored by Redefine to mark the 75th Anniversary of Randje's Estate, a neighbouring retirement home. The second, which took place shortly after we returned from Colombia, was a fundraising evening for the benefit of the Siyafunda Trust, which supports rural education, with performances by the St Mary's Choir, the St John's College Jazz Band and the Buskaid Ensemble.

Buskaid's major Johannesburg event takes place annually in the Linder Auditorium, the city's most frequented concert hall. The hall seats 1000, and it is of course our aim to fill it! Despite the fact that this year our concert unfortunately coincided with a *Joy of Jazz* event, the combination of a generous advertising budget funded by the NLDTF, the extensive pro bono services of the PR company Total Exposure, and a great deal of free advertising on Classic FM, resulted in a very encouraging three-quarter capacity audience which gave us a wonderful standing ovation to close the concert.





This year's programme consisted of some lesser-known repertoire, some of which I had heard for the first time on Classic FM in South Africa. Since a number of these compositions turned out to be unavailable as commercial publications, I spent several weeks tracking down the scores. My first port of call was to the distinguished conductor and teacher Jorma Panula whom I actually telephoned in Finland to ask how I might access his arrangement for string orchestra of Oskar Merikanto's piano composition, *Romanssi*. Not only did Maestro Panula send us his manuscript parts of *Romanssi*, but he also included several of his string arrangements of other Merikanto music! We greatly appreciate his generosity to Buskaid.

Another piece which caught my attention was Pierre Montan Berton's *Nouvelle Chaconne*. I felt certain that our musicians would derive as much pleasure in playing this grand Rameau-like chaconne as our audiences would in hearing it performed live. Another challenging search ensued! Finally I wrote directly to the offices of the two orchestras which have performed the Chaconne, and received from one the contact details of their archivist, John Moffat. He in turn approached the early music specialist and conductor Reinhard Goebel who had edited and printed the parts. Within days the music had arrived on our computer! We are greatly indebted to both John Moffat, and Reinhard Goebel, as well as to Michael Pilkington, who arranged it for our string ensemble.

Musica notturna delle strade di Madrid, by Luigi Boccherini was the inspired suggestion of UK double bass player and broadcaster Chi-chi Nwanoku. This quirky piece of programme music depicts the sights and sounds of 18th century nocturnal Madrid and was an obvious choice for some creative Buskaid choreography! Whilst we were in Colombia, members of El Colegio del Cuerpo made some imaginative suggestions, which we then developed. The acting required that all the musicians memorise the entire piece – no mean feat, considering they also had to focus their attention on some quite complex dance moves.

Karl Jenkins' violin concerto *Sarikiz*, based in part on Kazakh folk melodies, struck me as a piece which would suit Simiso Radebe and the Ensemble very well. When we wrote to the composer asking how we might go about hiring the music of *Sarikiz*, he responded by sending us a set of parts on permanent loan, for which we are very grateful. For our performances we added African drum, celeste and tambourine.

A Buskaid concert without music by Jean-Philippe Rameau now feels very incomplete, and this year, nostalgically recalling our first Linder concert conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner in 1997, I chose music from Rameau's opera *Les Boréades*. But there are copyright issues to be taken into consideration when performing the Gardiner edition, so I contacted the leading authority on French baroque music, Graham Sadler, who very generously gave us access to his own unpublished edition, beautifully copied by hand at a time when 'Sibelius' did not exist!



After the Rameau we featured three Buskaid soloists: Gilbert Tsoke was the cello soloist in Bloch's *Prayer - From Jewish Life*, Cecelia Manyama and Mathapelo Matabane sang some lighter repertoire and the concert was rounded off with a bracket of very energetic new Kwela arrangements.

When we arrived back from Colombia I decided that we all needed a fresh challenge. Besides I had a particular piece in mind which I really wanted to perform whilst we had the soloists here to do so. And so on August 9, which in South Africa is Women's Day, in the beautiful acoustic and setting of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Braamfontein, we performed Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*. A few days before the concert I thought of preceding the performance with the actual Tallis theme, his *Third Mode Melody*: We divided the ensemble into a four-part choir, and with very little rehearsal, they sang this immediately before they played the *Fantasia*. To our amazement, many members of the audience approached us afterwards to comment on their beautiful singing!



This year we have given two community concerts in Soweto, both of them in the Dutch Reformed Church of Southern Africa in Diepkloof. The first was principally for the parents, families and friends of our students and was, as always, received most enthusiastically. A touching moment occurred right at the end of this concert, when a very old lady came up to me and asked if we could play *Bridge Over Troubled Water*. When we obliged, she burst into tears and fervently hugged our vocalist Cecelia! The second concert was our contribution to a fundraising event for Diepkloof Interdenominational Churches.

In 2010, and again in 2011 we decided to video-record the Johannesburg concerts and we are now in the process of producing these DVDs for sale on our website. They should be available for purchase early next year and we shall keep you updated on this project.

We have postponed presenting candidates for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music international examinations until next year, when we hope to report some excellent results.



Graham de Lacy



STUDENT NEWS

Kabelo Monnathebe and Tiisetso Mashishi successfully completed their second year at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in London, and thanks to the generosity of both the RAM, which awarded them four-year fee scholarships in 2009, and the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, which is funding their related costs, they have now returned to London to begin their third of a four-year BMus degree.



This year Simiso Radebe also left South Africa to commence his studies at the RAM towards a four-year BMus degree. Auditioning at a time of economic crisis, Simiso was not awarded the same fee scholarship from the RAM as Kabelo and Tiisetso, and we were faced with the prospect of having to raise nearly £30 000 annually for his fees and living expenses. Last year we acknowledged the generosity of the BBC *Songs of Praise* viewers who contributed to his studies after having seen him featured on that programme. Since then the fund has grown significantly, and combined with an extremely generous grant from the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, it enabled us to send Simiso off to London. We are most indebted to every single person who responded with such generosity to Simiso's story

and we acknowledge the principal donors at the end of this Newsletter.

Simiso's departure from the Music School required quite a measure of adjustment for all of us. Since Buskaid's inception we have had four stellar leaders of the Ensemble – Samson Diamond, Kabelo Motlhom, Kabelo Monnathebe and, most recently, Simiso. Each leader has been extraordinary in his own way and has made a very special individual contribution – but Simiso's boundless energy and originality combined with his flair for improvisation brought a distinctive quality to the Ensemble. When he left in September we all knew that this marked both an end and a beginning for Buskaid. It is to the credit of the Ensemble members that they have risen to the challenge and have worked very hard to build the group up again over the past weeks.

We are very proud of our first ever female leader, Cecelia Manyama, who is already showing excellent leadership qualities.



In April, violinists Samson Diamond and Onica Tlhoale celebrated their marriage in a beautiful outdoor setting just outside Johannesburg. Samson and Onica met at Buskaid in 1999 and their relationship flourished during a courtship lasting twelve years, which included Samson's seven-year period of study and work in the UK. Samson is now the newly-appointed principal second violin of the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, whilst Onica is a forensic social worker.

For those of you who recall the story of violist Bafana Mthembu, or who may have contributed to his drug rehabilitation in 2009, there is both disappointing and good news... Unfortunately we had to ask Bafana to leave Buskaid, owing to his continuing erratic behaviour. At about the same time his little son Lemohang stopped coming for violin lessons, as his mother had moved away from Soweto. A few months ago however, Lemohang was brought back to Diepkloof. I felt that this child, now eight years old, needed much support and a new challenge in his



life; and so, with NLDTF funding we purchased an 1/8 and a 1/16 double bass, one for him, and one for another beginner, the little sister of our double bass teacher Pule Lekarapa. Pule is teaching these two little children with great enthusiasm and Lemohang is in his element! Having been given this opportunity at such a young age, he stands a far better chance of resisting peer pressure to experiment with drugs later on - which was his father's downfall. Meanwhile, earlier this year we gave Bafana an inexpensive Buskaid viola on permanent loan (his 'fishing rod'!) and told him to go out into the world and sort himself out. Having spent several months 'clean' in 2009, he knows what is possible, and very recently asked Sonja if he could join her Johannesburg Philharmonic Academy Training Orchestra (an organisation independent of Buskaid). Sonja agreed, and once again Bafana has been given a lifeline through the viola.

Neo Makintle was a ten-year-old violin beginner when I first visited South Africa in 1992. In 1997 he joined the newly-formed Buskaid Ensemble as a founder member, but within four years he had left Buskaid, given up the violin and strayed into bad company. Earlier this year he asked, via another member, whether he could come and see me, with a view to returning to Buskaid. Having established that he was no longer taking drugs I welcomed him back and started him on the viola. When I asked Neo to write a paragraph describing what had happened to him in the intervening years he astonished me with the honesty and clarity of his response.

My name is Neo Makintle, I was born and raised in Diepkloof Soweto, I grew up in a family of five, both my parents and two brothers, I grew up as a violin player at Buskaid and all I ever wanted was to be a professional violin player by then only my father was working and my mother was unemployed. Everything was going well until I was 14 years old when my father was retrenched. That was when the suffering started. The situation forced me to leave school, when I was doing grade 11, because my parents couldn't afford to pay my school fees, after a year or so my two younger brothers also had to leave school as well.

This led me to wrong things, I started smoking "dagga" to take away and ease the pain of seeing us suffer like this, that's when my one younger brother and I tried to take care of the situation we resorted to crime, We started stealing, did a few house breakings, and he started hijacking, during the process life seemed a bit better until my younger brother went to jail. That was when the pressure sinked and I realised that crime doesn't pay, had to come up with a plan that would put food on the table and bail my brother out of jail, with the little money that I had and with the help of my grandmother's pension money I started a small business.

I opened a car wash along the help of my two friends, we bought all the necessary staff to help us start, and buy Gods Mercy the business was a success, it was at least generating money it wasn't enough but managed to put bread on the table and bailed my brother from jail.

He came back home just when I thought he has changed a few weeks he went back to crime and he was shot dead trying to steal and that was the most painful and difficult time of my life, and as years went by, one day I was laying on my bed and my eyes were full of tears I was thinking of things I went throw.



Graham de Lacy

I thought of ways of getting my life back on track.... I thought of Rosemary Nalden, the next day I told my parents that I was thinking of going back to "Buskaid" and they fully supported me. I started going to church again, stopped smoking and I was still washing cars. I spoke to my neighbour Mpumelelo who is also a violin player at Buskaid to talk to Rosemary that I would like to join the group again and the response I got from him was Rosemary said, all the doors are opened for me, and I didn't waste any time, I went to see Rosemary this year February and she gave me the second chance I needed in my life, she asked me to start learning the viola. Here I am today at the age of 29, I can still do it, its possible and am here very happy person, living my good life, no more smoking "dagga" no more hanging around with things and now am the bread winner at home I try by all means

to do everything for them, because I am the one that knows how life was like at home before going back to "Buskaid".

Am also able to support my son, that also like to play an instrument in the near future, and most of all I would like to thank God for answering my prayers, My parents for the support and the life guides they gave me and lastly one and the only person who bought the light at the end of the tunnel for me, Granny Rosemary for making my dreams come true, giving me hope, never giving up on me and helping me changing my life around.

The beauty of Buskaid is that it exists for both the Simisos and Neos of this community.

Although we emphasise the importance of balanced movements and freedom from tension in our teaching approach, and although we employ a teacher of the Alexander Technique, some of our more advanced students still suffer minor joint and muscle problems associated with prolonged practice and playing. We have been extremely fortunate that physiotherapists at the Centre for Sports Medicine in Johannesburg have offered to treat all Buskaid students free of charge. To express their appreciation for this invaluable support, a group of Buskaid musicians recently played at the Centre during an after-hours staff function and were delighted when their therapists energetically joined in the dancing!

We also try to seek professional help for students with psychiatric problems – not always easy in Soweto - and have been very fortunate in the advice and guidance of Jonathan Percalle, a Clinical Psychologist at Tara Hospital, Johannesburg, who has referred a few of our students to his colleagues at Baragwanath Hospital's Department of Psychiatric Medicine.

SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

Our second year of NLDTF funding has continued to transform the scale of certain specific activities, but we must continue fundraising for expenditure not covered by the Lottery. Generous sponsorship from the **Redefine Income Fund** has helped considerably towards this shortfall, as has the very loyal support of the **Doshi Group of Companies, Samro** and the **Lurgan Trust**. We are also in the privileged position of receiving a substantial grant towards core costs from **Buskaid UK**: this year those funds came principally from **EGB Ireland Ltd**, a sponsorship kindly facilitated by our honorary Independent Examiner, **Barbara Roberts**. **Buskaid USA** Trustee **James Halliday**, who has run many marathons for Buskaid, has been forced to postpone his seventh whilst recovering from an injury. He assures us he will be back pounding the streets of Brooklyn before the year ends!

International tours are a highlight for all of us, and this year once again we were extremely fortunate in having the support of **TOTAL South Africa**, our principal sponsor for the tour to Colombia. This tour was also funded by the **Umoja Foundation**, through the support of **Ivor Ichikowitz**, with some additional sponsorship from the **Doshi Group of Companies**. Following the unfortunate series of mishaps which befell us en route, **Corporate Traveller, Flight Centre RSA** donated generously to the Buskaid Trust, which we greatly appreciate.

Our three RAM students are once again the beneficiaries of a most substantial donation to the Buskaid Trust from the **Oppenheimer Memorial Trust**. **Kabelo** and **Tiisetso** are now receiving their third year of fee scholarships from the **Royal Academy of Music**, whilst **Simiso's** additional costs have been covered by well-wishers in South Africa and the UK. Specifically we should like to acknowledge the **Caring Trust** and **The Trust of Delia Fuchs**, which has supported Buskaid for the past two years, and this year doubled its donation in order to help **Simiso**. A number of other contributing Trusts are listed at the end of this Newsletter.



CAN YOU HELP US?

Proud as we are of our record number of children and young people attending the Buskaid Music School, the surge in numbers has brought with it a real and pressing problem. When our School opened in May 2000, it was intended to house 35 students and three teachers. Our numbers now stand at 100 students and twelve teachers. There are seven teaching/ practice rooms in the building and when these quickly fill up, so also do the grounds of the church. In summer this is tolerable, but in our very chilly winters it is not possible for frozen fingers to function outside! Earlier this year we consulted the original architect for the school, **Uwe Putlitz**, about our problem. **Uwe** brought in a Johannesburg-based architect, **Barry Kok**, to design

and draw up plans for extending the school. These plans are now ready for action! The estimated budget is for the entire build is R5 million – at current exchange rates that's £395 000, €460 000 or US\$ 635 000. We are now starting a Music School Extension Appeal with a view to raising this amount during 2012, an important anniversary year for Buskaid.

AN ACCOLADE FOR TOTAL SOUTH AFRICA



Since February 1997, **TOTAL South Africa**, our first corporate sponsor, has given us a great deal of very loyal support. Over the past five years **TOTAL** has sponsored four international tours for the Buskaid Ensemble, and we are proud to announce that, following our nomination of **TOTAL** for the International Sponsorship category of the Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) 2011 Awards, **TOTAL South Africa** was declared the winner for its sponsorship of our tour to Syria in 2010. We are very fortunate to have, through **BASA**, the means of highlighting the important role of companies such as **TOTAL** in supporting the arts in South Africa.

CATHY BOYES

For the past six years we have enjoyed the faultless skills, professionalism, warmth and enthusiasm of Cathy Boyes, our UK administrator. Very sadly for us, Cathy has accepted a new post as Festival Producer for the Brighton Early Music Festival. Though she will be sorely missed, we are delighted for Cathy and we wish her every success in her new post. We have recently appointed Imogen Haig, a highly experienced UK charity administrator, as Cathy's replacement and we extend Imogen a very warm welcome to Buskaid. Her contact details appear on the last page of this newsletter.

Our administrative staff in South Africa, Anne Bull, Lesego Mokonoto and myself, with invaluable input from Sonja Bass when she has time, continue to run a busy and complex office. Anne manages the admin associated with Lottery allocations, tour preparations, performance arrangements and much more besides; Lesego is our administrative link between the office and the Music School, as well as being a senior assistant violin and viola teacher, principal violist, and on occasions, 'kombi' driver.

The ability to multi-task is almost a prerequisite to working for Buskaid! Sonja, after all is our cello and double bass teacher *and* instrument repairer; two violin principals in the Ensemble, Cecelia Manyama and Keabetswe Goodman, are also senior assistant teachers and the Buskaid librarians – as well as young mothers

(a recent development). Cecelia also features regularly as a singer with Buskaid. Pule Lekarapa, our principal double bass player, is also our main bass teacher and the Music School's odd-job man!

We warmly thank our Trustees in South Africa, the UK and the USA for all that they have done for us over the past year – in particular our two Chairs, Andrey Kidel in the UK and Jill Richards (who is also our honorary pianist/ accompanist) in South Africa, both of whom manage to give generously of their time to Buskaid despite busy high-profile professional lives.

As another extraordinary and successful year for Buskaid draws to a close we are already looking forward to 2012 when we shall celebrate two major Buskaid anniversaries. Our continuing existence in the face of challenges of all kinds is a testament to the dedication of our young musicians and teachers, our office staff, our teachers, our trustees, and you, our loyal supporters, both local and international.

From all of us at Buskaid, we thank you, and warmly wish you Compliments of the Festive Season

ROSEMARY NALDEN
NOVEMBER 2011

PRINCIPAL SPONSORS 2011

SOUTH AFRICA

National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund
Redefine Income Fund
TOTAL South Africa
The Umoja Foundation
The Doshi Group of Companies
Corporate Traveller,
Flight Centre (Pty) Ltd, RSA
SAMRO
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Sponsorship in kind

Total Exposure – through the BASA Mentorship Programme
Universal Music
Classic FM
Centre for Sports Medicine, Rosebank
The Embassy of Spain, Pretoria

UNITED KINGDOM

General Funding (donations above £500)

The OVSH Trust
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The Trust of Delia Fuchs
Philip Green
Voorschotens Vocaal Ensemble
The Dean Close School Hockey Tour Fund
Roger & Rosemary Chadder
Tristan Jakob-Hoff & Amy Walker
Funds given in memory of Pauline Harvey
Ed & Brita Wolf

Simiso Radebe's Tertiary Study

The Caring Trust
The Trust of Delia Fuchs
The Austin & Hope Pilkington Trust
The Glynn Harper Trust
Viewers of BBC *Songs of Praise*

Sponsorships in kind

Grahams Hi-Fi
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Barbara Roberts

INTERNATIONAL TERTIARY STUDY

The Royal Academy of Music
The Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust



WEBSITES AND RELATED INFORMATION

Buskaid
www.buskaid.org.za

Ubungani
www.ubungani.org

El Colegio del Cuerpo
www.elcolegiodelcuerpo.org

Total Exposure
www.totalexposure.co.za

Graham de Lacy
www.grahamdelacy.com

Jill Richards
www.jillrichards.com

Pierre du Toit
www.mylensandi.com

Aubrey Kurlansky
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We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of Graham de Lacy and Pierre du Toit, whose beautiful photographs feature in this publication.



HELPING YOUNG BLACK MUSICIANS IN
SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIPS

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TONIGHTMUSIC

Buskaid students wow audience with talents

PAUL BOENKOOI

FROM humble beginnings in a Soweto church hall to a fully-fledged music school which desperately needs to be extended some 14 years later, is only part of the story of the Soweto String Project - initiated, inspired and managed by their energetic musical director, Rosemary Nalden. Their annual concert is essential listening for anyone believing in music education and the fruits it will bear on the pupils' lives. But it is also a fun evening in which you can experience the sense of belonging among the students, many of whom had life-changing experiences under the wings of Buskaid.

Last Saturday's concert, discreetly subtitled *Past, Present and Future*, opened with the youngest string-playing students from Buskaid's "crèche" as it were. These "baby beginners" were singing about a chocolate tree and plucking their instruments with abandon. Perhaps there's a therapeutic rationale behind all this. The sooner you can remove any form of stage fright from them, the better.

However, the core of any Buskaid concert is the ensemble of senior students, of which some are already hand-picked professionals from their ranks. The repertoire was far-reaching and stimulating.

The concert opened with *Nouvelle*

BUSKAIID SOWETO STRING ENSEMBLE

PROGRAMME: Music by Berton, Oscar Merikanto, Karl Jenkins, Boccherini, Rameau, Dvorak & Bloch, plus pop, gospel & kwela
DIRECTOR: Rosemary Nalden
SOLOISTS: Simiso Radebe, violin; Gilbert Tsoke, cello; Cecelia Matabane, vocals.
VENUE: Linder auditorium, Parktown
RATING: ★★★★★

Chaconne by the French Baroque composer Pierre Montan Berton. Not only was the rhythmic accentuation ever alive, but also the stretched melodic lines, sounding "vocal", were perfectly phrased and controlled. There were also tricky tempo changes and coherent dynamic graduations.

Romansi by the romantic Finnish composer Oscar Merikanto was arranged for string orchestra by his younger compatriot, Jorma Panula. It is a most attractive piece which brought out a deeper sheen in introduced by the lower strings, strong and full of character. We experienced some subtle flourishes, performed by Simiso Radebe, before

the opening theme returns. Radebe was the soloist in the opening movement (*Allegro*) of Karl Jenkins's *Sariziz*, a contemporary violin concerto strongly influenced by Kazakh folk melodies and rhythms. He gave a brilliant performance of a challenging solo part, while Nalden held the ensemble, including African drum, celeste and tambourine, tightly together.

Boccherini's *Night Music of the Streets of Madrid* is an early example of programme music. In it the players brought their body movement and dance talents very effectively to the fore.

In the extended *Suite* from Rameau's *Les Boréades*, the great demands on the players, particularly in terms of tessitura, was obvious. The performance had a frisson about it through the sound that blends and blooms. Rameau's specific ceremonial theatricality was reflected in the courtly dances.

The wealth of this music shone through Buskaid's refreshing melodic turn in every harmonic and insight in every phrase applied.

The *Cavatina* from Dvorak's *Miniatures* had a yearning quality which sounded fully inbred and not sentimental. The slight glissandi were perfectly in style, while the playing as a whole had an understated intensity.

The cellist Gilbert Tsoke sounded slightly restrained in his playing of Bloch's *Prayer*, although it was obvious his interpretation was a heartfelt one.

The kwela, gospel and popular section of this concert sounded more spontaneous than ever before. It's a pleasure to note Cecelia Manyama's and Mathapelo Matabane's singing has matured to a level where their voices are rounded and their diction just about perfect.

DONATIONS

The Buskaid Trust has Section 18A status in South Africa and donations are therefore tax exempt. Donations worldwide can be made online at www.buskaid.org.za or by post to the addresses shown opposite.