



BUSKAID NEWS

HELPING YOUNG
BLACK MUSICIANS
IN SOUTH AFRICAN
TOWNSHIPS

2005

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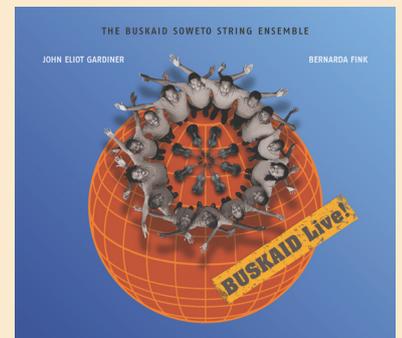
A LETTER TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Dear Buskaid Supporters

We start our 2005 newsletter with some excellent news. Our fourth album, *Buskaid Live!*, a compilation of the very finest recordings from national & international performances by the Ensemble between 2001 and 2005, has at last been released. This double album includes performances conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner (who recently won the prestigious Gramophone Award for Record of the Year), as well as a number of tracks featuring the internationally acclaimed mezzo soprano, Bernarda Fink. We are deeply honoured that both of these very distinguished artists gave permission for their appearances with Buskaid to be included on our CDs.

By the time you receive this newsletter, *Buskaid Live!* will be available in South Africa, the UK and the USA. If you live in South Africa, you can either contact us at our office, or visit the usual retail outlets. Worldwide sales will be available through our website www.buskaid.org.za by the beginning of December. These high quality recordings encompass an amazing range of composers and musical styles (including Biber, Purcell, Handel, Mozart, Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Bartók, as well as some new Kwela), whilst the album's packaging, designed once again by Aubrey Kurlansky, is very striking indeed. Included is a 34-page booklet of photographs, information, and sleeve notes written by our students. The CD production and booklet design were funded by Siemens, with Supporting Grant Funding from Business and Arts South Africa.

2005 has been yet another year of growth and success for all of us at Buskaid. Despite a number of tempting invitations to travel abroad this year, we decided not to undertake a major international tour with the Ensemble, as several of our students



were sitting their matric exams. However, we did offer a number of senior students the opportunity to take both practical and theory examinations with the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM). In addition we were kept extremely busy with learning a host of new repertoire for various local performances.

SOME AMAZING RESULTS!

On 30 September a total of 15 students were presented by Buskaid for ABRSM practical examinations, of which the majority were higher grades (6, 7& 8). The examiner was the distinguished British double bass player Bronwen Naish, who spent a whole day in the Music School. Apart from one student, whose results cannot be released as he failed the prerequisite theory paper, every single one of the remaining 14 students passed with distinction, an extraordinary achievement of which we are all extremely proud!

Furthermore, Kabelo Motlhommi, Innocentia Diamond and Nathi Ngcobo presented music as a subject for matric, through these ABRSM examinations. Having passed their practical exams with distinction, Kabelo and Innocentia also obtained distinctions in theory, resulting in their being the first students ever in Gauteng to be accredited with music as a matric subject, taken through the ABRSM.

These spectacular results would not have been possible without the incredible contribution of our Trustee and Acting Chair, Jill Richards, who despite an extremely busy international professional career, spent countless unpaid hours rehearsing down in Soweto with every single candidate. In addition Jill gives up a great deal of precious time assisting with the general running of the Trust. We are indebted to her for all she does for us.

The teaching of aural tests and theory were undertaken by Bruce Macrae and Herman Maree respectively. The results speak for themselves, and we really appreciate their time and patience in visiting the music school week after week, in the run up to the exams.

Over in the UK meanwhile, Samson Diamond completed his third year of study at the Royal Northern College of Music, gaining a magnificent 82% for his violin performance exam. Whilst on vacation in South Africa, Samson joined us for the little recital given by our exam candidates, and rounded off an enjoyable afternoon with the first movement of a Saint-Saëns violin concerto. His virtuoso playing not only brought the house down, but was also a source of great inspiration to all our

students, a number of whom are eager to make music their chosen career. In fact both Kabelo and Innocentia wish to pursue their instrumental studies at the Royal Northern College of Music next year, so the search is on once again for some generous sponsors!

CONCERTS IN 2005

In July we presented our annual public concert at the Linder Auditorium, Johannesburg. This year, using funding from our Lottery grant, we advertised quite extensively on Classic FM. One of our students, Mathapelo Matabane, whose beautiful singing voice many of you have heard at our concerts, recorded a short radio ad, whilst Lesego Mokonoto, Buskaid viola player, teacher, and currently assistant administrator in our office, helped with the organisation of this concert as part of his Project Management course. In the past, despite our very best efforts, we have struggled to fill the Linder. 2005, with a near capacity audience, was a triumph!

Less than a month later, as guests of Richard Cock and the Chanticleer singers, we performed Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis* in Holy Trinity Church, Braamfontein at a concert celebrating the 500th anniversary of Thomas Tallis' birth. The Fantasia is written for a double string orchestra of some technical and musical sophistication, so the fact that our youngest player was twelve made this performance all the more extraordinary. The audience's response may well be summed up in an email we received shortly afterwards from the eminent South African musicologist, George King, who wrote "*everything was so wonderfully moulded, the sonorities were incredibly well-blended and spine-tingling, the dynamics were thrillingly whispery and full by turns, the shape of the music was realized so intelligently that the whole performance was absolutely stunning and deeply satisfying.*"

Our annual appearance in the Johannesburg Art Gallery in September gave us the opportunity to perform new repertoire and revisit some old favourites, including Bach's third Brandenburg Concerto. This was a vibrant performance directed by Samson and featured some of our younger emerging talent. Solo violinist Kabelo Motlhomi directed the first movement of *Spring* from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, whilst Innocentia Diamond gave a very moving performance of Bloch's Prayer.

We were delighted to welcome to this concert one of Johannesburg's leading music critics, Paul Boekkooi, who subsequently wrote a stunning review for our local daily paper

The Star. Sadly it was never published. Paul Boekkooi wrote *"One can't hold back any more: The Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble must be praised unstintingly. They are astoundingly inspirational, a formidable aggregation of talent, an embarrassment of riches". Take the opening piece of last Sunday morning's Art Gallery sojourn, the first movement from Mozart's Divertimento in D: Striking is the uncanny and unparalleled ability with which the Buskaid Strings step in and out of homophony to polyphony and vice versa. Also how they give meaning to the gossamer fineness of the dividing line. When last have we heard a real lilt in a waltz, like the one by Dvorak, which was the opposite of the familiarly cast 1-2-3 model? Here musical expression and the refinement of the composer's middle voices reigned. The subtlest of expressions were also achieved in Elgar's Elegy - Buskaid are also kings of the kwela, and their inspiration and sense of feeling spread the boundaries of authenticity widely. As infectious is their spontaneous joy in music making. One wishes some of our professional ensembles will take a leaf out of their book! - An event to treasure!*

What a pity this generous critique was not published! We find it both puzzling and frustrating that local musical talent - unless of course it is of the 'pop idols' variety - is rarely given the written media exposure it so richly deserves.

COMMUNITY CONCERTS

This year we played in two churches in Soweto, one in Diepkloof and the second in Protea North, which was our annual appearance at the Church of the Good Shepherd. Here, as always, we were warmly welcomed by Father Shaun von Lillienfeld and his congregants. The Diepkloof performance was recorded for the BBC's Songs of Praise and broadcast throughout the UK on July 3. Part of this very ebullient concert is featured on *Buskaid Live!*

OTHER MAJOR PERFORMANCES

In April, our loyal sponsors Leaders Unlimited once again hosted a memorable evening at the Johannesburg Country Club. This year, this generous company sponsored the entire soirée, as well as making a substantial donation - approximately 10% of our annual budget, in fact - to Buskaid. Corporate support of this nature and magnitude, offered on an annual basis, is a perfect example of a fruitful relationship between business and the arts, and we are full of appreciation to Leaders Unlimited. We're also looking forward to next year's soirée, on 26 March 2006.

Also in April we played at the beginning of Pavarotti's *Farewell to Africa* concert at the Centurion Cricket ground. Our performance was underwritten by Rand Merchant Bank as their generous contribution to the funding for *Crazy* (our next CD, to be released in early 2006). The co-sponsors of *Crazy* are De Beers, and we are indebted to both these organisations. None of us will ever forget the downpour which occurred just as the audience arrived and Buskaid started its (open air) performance. With good-humoured assistance from many members of the audience, we continued a somewhat damp performance under a panoply of umbrellas.

In early October we were invited by the Italian Consulate, in collaboration with the Italian South African Cultural Centre, to participate in a public concert given by a group of distinguished musicians from Italy's Piedmont region. Apart from performing two of Respighi's *Ancient Airs & Dances*, our Ensemble entertained this mainly Italian audience with some of their kwela arrangements, which were rapturously received. This concert marked the end of our formal appearances in Johannesburg for the year.

Apart from all the above performances, the Buskaid Ensemble and the Buskaid Quartet have played at some 20 corporate and private functions in 2005, thereby generating additional revenue for the Trust.

VISITORS TO THE MUSIC SCHOOL

In 2005 we welcomed two leading British musicians to our Music School, both of whom most generously donated their time and travel costs to Buskaid.

The first, Liz Bradley, a fine double bass player, (who is also writing a paper for the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, based on her observations of string tuition at our school), worked intensively for ten days in July with our eight double bass students, all of whom thoroughly enjoyed her classes.

The second, the distinguished violinist Alison Bury, who is a leader of the English Baroque Soloists and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, spent two weeks with us in September, a visit which fortuitously coincided with the run up to our Associated Board exams. Ally's help and expertise were especially invaluable for us all at this time.

In early August we received our first visit from the award-winning British music and arts documentary film maker,

Mark Kidel, who is making a documentary about Buskaid, from its beginnings right up to the present. This documentary, which is in development with BBC television, will be shot over the next two to three years and will also chart the progress of a few individual students, some of them currently beginners.

Finally, a word of appreciation for the work of Nanette Andersen, our 'resident' Alexander teacher, whose Saturday visits are as popular as ever, and perfectly complement our own teaching approach.

FATHER KINGSTON ERSON - COMMUNITY OF THE RESURRECTION

It was with great sadness that we received news in July of the passing of our beloved Trustee and dearest friend, Father Kingston Erson CR. We were aware that Father Kingston had not been well for some time, but his death was a great shock to all of us. We already miss his regular unannounced visits to the Music School when he often brought guests to listen to our weekend rehearsals. He also gave significant support to many of our students at difficult stages of their lives. His funeral, which was led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and at which the Ensemble played, was a joyous celebration of the life of a truly good man. We have dedicated *Buskaid Live!* to his memory.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS IN THE UK & USA

This year we have benefited from some meaningful support from both our UK and US Trustees.

In June, three Buskaid students travelled to the UK, joining up with Samson and Gilbert to appear at a fundraising concert for the Rory Peck Trust. By underwriting our travel and subsistence costs, the Rory Peck Trust (www.rorypecktrust.org) enabled us to give our own private fundraising event, organised by Buskaid's UK trustees, at Hoares Bank. On a beautiful summer's evening, in the most elegant setting of this historic building, our young musicians performed in front of an invited audience, as the guests of Venetia Hoare and Hoares Bank. We were especially delighted that our new patron, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, accepted an invitation from Andre Kidel, the chairman of the UK trust, to introduce the concert. A number of generous donations were received thereafter. We are indebted to our UK trustees and administrator, Cathy Boyes, for the time they devoted to this event.

In late October I travelled to the USA for our very first fundraising event there. The newly- formed US trust is being energetically run by Brenda Shick, Jim Halliday and Greville Ward, all of whom had already had made donations to Buskaid, before making a far bigger commitment in terms of their time and expertise. The event, most skilfully organised by Greville and Christine Ward together with a group of their friends, was held at Soho House, in the meat-packing district of Manhattan and was introduced by Mark Malloch Brown, Chief of Staff to Kofi Annan. Guests included Hollywood actors Mark Baldwin and Chas Palmitera. The evening was focused around an exhibition of photographs of our students taken by British photographer, James Sparshatt (www.sparshattgalleries.com), in the course of two visits to the Music School. James's striking and atmospheric pictures attracted much attention and sold well; all proceeds will go to Buskaid. We also hope that this event will raise Buskaid's profile, ahead of our planned US tour in 2006 (see below).

PLANS FOR 2006

In mid 2006, we would like to travel with the Ensemble to the US. This visit will be our response to the overwhelming number of individuals and organisations who contacted us following the *60 Minutes II* broadcast in the US in 2004. We now know that some of those people are hurricane victims, and our resolve to perform for them is even stronger! We also hope to present a number of high profile concerts to raise even more awareness of the extraordinary talent we are identifying through Buskaid. Funds for this trip have yet to be generated - any suggestions (and donations) will be gratefully received!

At the end of December 2005 and the beginning of January 2006 we are taking the majority of our students on two workshops; the first at Botshabelo, in Middleburg, will cater for the 2003 beginners' group, now developing well into a little ensemble, albeit still very elementary. Our trainee teachers will be very much involved in the organisation and running of this camp. The day after we return to Johannesburg, we shall set off once again, this time with the senior ensemble to Zebra Lodge. Each workshop will culminate in a concert at the venue. Please check our website for details nearer the time. We are thrilled that Hanneke van der Merwe and her Ubungani team (www.ubungani.org.za) will once again lead the 'life skills and environmental awareness' aspects of these two workshops.

We plan to offer at least one public concert and one community concert in Gauteng next year, and will give you more detail when it is available.

FUNDING, SPONSORSHIP AND THE FUTURE

Happily, 2005 has been one of the most financially secure years we have experienced since our inception. This was due to a large extent to two substantial donations; one, a continuation of the Lottery funding we were awarded in 2004, and the other a marvellous unsolicited gift from the Annenberg Foundation in the USA, to whom we are extremely grateful. The loyalty of our other sponsors during this funding period, both here and abroad, is also vital to our sustainability. Without this financial support we cannot exist.

Anyone who has ever attempted to learn a stringed instrument knows all too well what a very long term commitment is required. Both to teach and to learn these instruments needs patience and vision - there is no 'quick fix'. I frequently marvel at the dedication I observe in many of our students. At the same time I also see how their commitment to music positively impacts on almost all other aspects of their lives. Most senior Buskaid students are determined to do well academically; they also know that studying an instrument and listening to classical music has a very positive effect on their ability to learn in general. Their obvious pride in the group and its achievements are palpable. Furthermore, living in a country which has the highest HIV rate in the world, we do take pride in the fact that - to our knowledge - only one of our students has contracted the disease since our inception. Students with drug related problems are supported at Buskaid, usually with 'tough love'. Bereaved students take refuge at the Music School, where they receive much comfort and support.

To maintain and develop our work at Buskaid we depend on the continuing support of sponsorship, and the loyalty of our friends worldwide. We thank all of you who give us this support and wish you all Compliments of the Season, good health in the year to come and a great 2006!

Rosemary, Sonja, the Trustees, and all 70 Buskaid students.

SPONSORS 2005

South Africa

National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund,
Leaders Unlimited, Anglo American Chairman's Fund,
The Jim Joel Education and Training Fund, The Raith Foundation,
Universal Music (Pty) Ltd

International

The Annenberg Foundation (USA),
Buskaid (UK), Buskaid (USA)

Fund for Tertiary Study Abroad

The Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, The Royal Northern
College of Music (Manchester), Jonathan and Teresa Sumption,
Jonathan Beare, Brenda Shick

CD Sponsorship

Buskaid Live! Siemens, with Supporting Grant Funding from
Business and Arts South Africa (BASA)

Crazy De Beers, Rand Merchant Bank Fund

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SOUTH AFRICA

National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, Leaders Unlimited,
Anglo American Chairman's Fund, The Jim Joel Education and
Training Fund, The Raith Foundation, Universal Music (Pty) Ltd

INTERNATIONAL

The Annenberg Foundation (USA), Buskaid (UK), Buskaid (USA)

FUND FOR TERTIARY STUDY

The Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, The Royal Northern
College of Music (Manchester), Jonathan and Teresa Sumption,
Jonathan Beare, Brenda Shick

CD SPONSORSHIP

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Crazy De Beers, Rand Merchant Bank Fund