

## NEWSLETTER ONE 2007

Dear Buskaid Supporters



A very warm welcome to our first newsletter of 2007 – Buskaid’s tenth anniversary year - with great news of our first appearance at the BBC Promenade Concerts in London. We urge those of you who would like to come to our Prom to book soon, as this event may well sell out. Buskaid and Dance for All will be performing in the Arena, which means that there will be fewer ‘prom’ spaces available; if you intend to purchase tickets we suggest that you buy centre stalls seats which will afford the best views of the players and dancers. Please read on for the story behind this

event and visit [www.bbc.co.uk/proms/2007](http://www.bbc.co.uk/proms/2007) to make a booking.

### Forthcoming performances 2007

#### **July 15 - 7 pm** *The Royal Albert Hall, London*

This concert will be preceded by a BBC Proms Showcase at 5 pm featuring the Buskaid Ensemble performing a different programme of baroque music, presented by Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Rosemary Nalden. Admission is free to concert ticket-holders.

#### **July 7 - 2.30 pm** *Uniting Reformed Church, Diepkloof Zone 4, Soweto*

A special community concert preview of the Prom programme, with Buskaid and Dance for All; details from the Buskaid office, Johannesburg: 011 442 9676 (Transport can be provided.)

#### **September 24 (Heritage Day) - 3.30pm** *Linder Auditorium, Johannesburg*

Buskaid’s Tenth Anniversary Concert; details to be sent out later in the year.

#### **October 6 tbc** *The Buskaid Music School, Diepkloof Zone 3, Soweto*

Recital featuring soloists from the project playing their practical exam repertoire with pianist Jill Richards. We are entering some 14 students, mainly higher grades, for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examinations. Detail to follow.

### Tenth Anniversary celebrations

#### **Rameau Dance Project**

Anniversary celebrations have already begun with a flourish. Some eighteen months ago, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, who is the Patron of our UK Trust, asked me whether Buskaid would like to participate in a dance performance/ workshop featuring the music of Jean-Philippe Rameau, to take place in Paris in February 2007. Sir John Eliot still vividly recalled that extraordinary concert which he conducted in Johannesburg in February 1997 (which incidentally marked the early beginnings of the Buskaid project) when he inspirationally chose some Rameau dances for the fledgling ensemble to perform. Remembering how instinctively the Buskaid musicians had responded to this French baroque composer, he now wanted to contrast the period performance of Rameau by a

British orchestra and a French dance company with the very different interpretation of the Buskaid Ensemble, together with African dancers and drummers. So it was that, earlier this year, after many months of anxious fundraising efforts and intensive preparation, we found ourselves on the stage of the Cité de la Musique in Paris, performing alongside two of the finest specialist baroque groups in the world - the English Baroque Soloists (EBS) and the Compagnie Roussat-Lubek.

Sourcing sponsorship was of course a major issue, and a serendipitous coincidence of dates led me to approach the French company Total (South Africa), whose crucial support of Buskaid began exactly ten years ago, when its MD happened to come to the 1997 Gardiner concert. To our great delight, Total agreed to fund the entire airfares and related expenses as a tenth anniversary 'gift'. We are indebted to them for their generosity, which enabled us to accept Sir John Eliot's invitation.

Although we had originally planned to source dancers from within the Ensemble, I began to realise that this idea was highly impractical. Our violinist and singer, Teboho Semela, who was studying dance in Cape Town, came to Soweto on a number of occasions to work with some of our students; despite her best efforts however, we all knew that what we really needed were trained dancers - preferably young people like ours from a similar project. Another coincidence, another stroke of luck – in October 2006 we received a visit from a journalist and a photographer from *Le Figaro* magazine (whose feature on Buskaid appeared in one of the November 2006 issues). Immediately after leaving us, they visited Dance for All (DfA), a Cape Town-based dance project ([www.danceforall.co.za](http://www.danceforall.co.za)) which they identified as having much in common with Buskaid. A brief trip to Cape Town to see the dancers in action convinced me that this would indeed be a fruitful collaboration.



The choreography for the suite of dances I had chosen from Rameau's opera *Platée* was subsequently developed at a five-day music and environmental workshop we held at the beginning of January 2007, our first chance to gather together the musicians and dancers. Our venue was the Botshabelo Historic Nature Reserve, an old mission station surrounded by beautiful African bush, northeast of Johannesburg. We spent up to seven hours a day in soaring temperatures working at our Paris programmes, our main distraction being the

troupes of inquisitive vervet monkeys who continually invaded our rehearsal spaces! Because the dancers found the genre unfamiliar, we chose a small 'committee' of players to work in close collaboration with them, with Teboho heading up the entire group. What began as an exploratory exercise developed into a truly innovative educational experience. It also demonstrated the extraordinary creativity of the Buskaid students, who were able to translate sophisticated French Baroque music into energetic and rhythmic African movement. Soon everyone became involved. Each evening over supper there was fierce debate amongst the teachers and the Buskaid students as to whether the movements were appropriate for the music, whether they should be more (or less) African. Part of our



musical interpretation of Rameau, involved African drumming, an innovation which led to our identifying some new (female) drummers from within the group. This workshop, together with the one which preceded it immediately after Christmas (when we took nearly 50 students to Botshabelo) was once again generously funded by the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, marking the end of a very significant three-year grant to the Buskaid Trust.

Meanwhile we had been most fortunate to have received a pledge of support from IFAS, the Institut français d'Afrique du Sud, whose Director Laurent Clavel visited the Music School during the early stages of our Rameau rehearsals. IFAS' subsequent financial contribution helped significantly towards the additional costs incurred by our inclusion of the DfA dancers. IFAS also generously facilitated and funded our visa applications.

### ***Paris visit – two stunning concerts***

As the visit to Paris drew closer, activities at the Music School intensified. In addition to the Rameau performance on February 11<sup>th</sup> we had been invited by the Cité de la Musique



to present our own concert two days later, for which we needed to prepare an entirely different programme. As an added challenge, these two performances had to be played at two different pitches, one baroque and one modern. Furthermore, as we had recently lost three senior violinists from the Ensemble, (one to have a baby, another because of pressure of university work, and the third, Kabelo Motlhommi, to study in the UK), we were now training three junior violinists to take their places. These youngsters (one of whom had been learning for less than three years), whose performing 'début' took place on the stage of one of Paris's most prestigious concert halls, rose admirably to the occasion and are now regular members of the Ensemble.

Meanwhile we faced challenges of a different kind in our office. Apart from the inevitable problems associated with obtaining passports, our chosen airline told us - less than a month before our departure - that we would have to buy a further twelve seats to accommodate the cellos and double basses. In a panic I phoned the CEO of the Paramount Group, Ivor Ichikowitz, who responded unhesitatingly to my request for help, a further demonstration of the fund of goodwill and generosity surrounding this venture.

On 8<sup>th</sup> February Buskaid's party of 21 musicians, four dancers, two chaperones and one music director, together with 21 stringed instruments, three African drums, a suitcase of costumes – including five pairs of gumboots – two cases of music and two of CDs, set out from Oliver Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, bound for Paris.

What followed was five days of stimulating, exciting, rewarding and exhausting activity. On the afternoon of our arrival, we were joined by Samson and Kabelo, both of whom had flown in from Manchester; we started rehearsals almost immediately, as the very next day we were due to join forces with John Eliot Gardiner, the EBS and the Roussat dancers.

The moment when the Buskaid musicians joined the EBS on stage for the first time was for me very emotionally charged, bringing together the two most powerful aspects of my musical life. For the first time ever I listened – as an audience member – to the orchestra of which I have been a member for the past 27 years, but now as the teacher and director

of the young African musicians standing alongside my colleagues. The sound of this combined baroque orchestra playing Rameau was riveting. From the ensemble playing, the stylistic approach and the intonation, this sounded like a large, fully professional world class baroque orchestra, with added African drums!

Fortunately, having thoroughly rehearsed in South Africa, we were completely prepared, since to my great consternation we were given only fifteen minutes' rehearsal time on stage for our fifteen-minute 'stand-alone' sequence with the dancers. As we finished the first dance, spontaneous cheering and clapping erupted from the auditorium, as every member of EBS and many of the very supportive Cité staff had come to listen and watch. The following morning, our only dress rehearsal, we were again given very limited rehearsal time. The solution was to stay until 1pm and spend a further hour rehearsing our dances. The concert was due to start at 4.30pm, so there was very little time to return to the hotel, eat, change and arrive back at the Cité in time to tune. Several of our players who were doubling as drummers wore full African dress – skins for the boys and beads for the girls – and needed extra time to change. Such demands require high levels of discipline and steady nerves, attributes which our Buskaid students have acquired over the years and from which they are able to draw strength in this sort of situation.



When our moment finally arrived and we walked on stage to start the performance, with a dramatic build-up of African drumming from Nathi, Tumi and Zandile, the atmosphere in the packed hall was electric. The suite of dances from *Platée* was thrilling and the audience responded accordingly. The whole sequence culminated in a raunchy township pantsula, and the audience rose to its feet as one. The reception we received was an overwhelming affirmation of the talent and commitment of every musician and dancer; we were called back on stage and gave the audience the encore they demanded. The evening was rounded off with a joint choreography of the *Chaconne* from *Nai's* and the *Contredanses* from *Les Boréades* involving both the French company and DfA (who had donned gumboots for their traditional miners' dance), with the Buskaid musicians playing alongside EBS, a juxtaposition of cultures and styles which had a breathtaking impact. (Paris dance pictures courtesy Marie-Sophie Willis, Monteverdi organisation)

The following day the DfA members were treated to a day out in Paris, whilst we spent six hours preparing our programme of Mozart, Grieg, Bartók and Geminiani for our concert on Tuesday. The dancers were once again to be featured in a slightly extended Rameau sequence, and joined us to rehearse on stage that evening.

On the morning of the concert we had agreed that Mark Kidel would film the entire dress rehearsal to give him additional material for his recording of the concert. For the past two years Mark, who is one of the world's leading arts and music documentary film makers, has been making a major feature-length documentary about Buskaid, which will be shown by the BBC later in 2007. Buskaid's Paris appearances marked the climax of his film; we are also hoping that some of the concert material will be made into a separate DVD.



Once again the Ensemble members excelled themselves in performance, in terms of their focus, their musicality and the overall execution of the music. Playing Mozart, which is so transparent, and which requires the finest attention to detail, is always risky for a non-professional orchestra. We took the risk and the results were spectacular, as born out by the comments afterwards and subsequent emails, as well as a rave review in *Le Monde* (reproduced below). The Geminani/Corelli Folia was most capably directed by Samson, with his sister Innocentia playing the very difficult concertino cello part. Grieg, Bartók and some lighter repertoire, including Kwela, comprised the rest of the programme, with the Rameau dance sequence closing the first half.

Booking for this concert had initially been disappointing, but many of Sunday's audience returned with their friends, and the hall was nearly full. After the concert we were surrounded backstage by dozens of people, including a number of distinguished musicians. Two Norwegian members of the Oslo Grieg Society approached me to invite us to Norway. Extracts from an article written by one of them upon her return home are quoted below. The distinguished violinist Ivry Gitlis, now in his eighties, expressed the wish to visit us in Soweto, an offer of which we should like to avail ourselves.

### ***BBC Prom invitation!***

The most extraordinary consequence of our resounding successes in Paris was an invitation to Buskaid and Dance for All from the BBC and Sir John Eliot Gardiner to collaborate once again in the EBS and Monteverdi Choir's appearance at the Royal Albert Hall Promenade Concert, (as detailed above). We are indebted to Riitta Hirvonen, Monteverdi's General Manager, for raising the sponsorship to cover all the costs incurred from the mining company Xstrata plc, whose generosity has made our participation possible. This concert will be broadcast simultaneously on BBC TV 4 and BBC Radio 3. We believe Buskaid to be the first South African classical orchestra to perform at the Proms in its entire 113 year history.

### ***Trip to the USA Easter 2007***



For seven Ensemble members a further international tour was just around the corner! Our US Trustees, headed by Greville Ward, had been very busy setting up a visit to Boston and New York in March/ April to raise awareness of Buskaid in anticipation of a much bigger future tour. Once again we found ourselves at the airport, this time preparing to face the long journey from Johannesburg to Boston. Here we were wonderfully looked after by Anna Davol, who had set up performances at a variety of venues, including the St Botolph's Club, the Boston Arts Academy, the United

Union Methodist Church, St Paul AME Church and the Boston State House, where we played for Governor Deval Patrick, whose childhood circumstances resonate with those of many a Buskaid student.

In New York we visited The Hotchkiss School and were staggered by its amazing facilities and equipment, including a recording studio where our students helped edit a CD of the performance they had just given to the whole school. Our concert at the South African

Consulate at the UN included a wonderfully musical performance of the Bach double violin concerto as well as some beautiful singing from Mathapelo. This evening was rounded off with a magnificent South African buffet supper. The following day we gave a lunchtime concert at the World Financial Center Winter Garden, adjacent to Ground Zero. A day later we were off to



WNYC radio for a live performance and interviews. Finally, two concerts close to where we were staying, in upstate New York; one at a

private home in Bedford and the second in Bedford's beautiful, small Community Hall. The programmes we had chosen included – as well as the Bach - our first performance of a Rossini string sonata, the Barber Adagio, a Mozart Divertimento, Monti's Czardas and Gershwin's Lullaby, together with a variety of lighter repertoire and some kwela; our seven students were kept on their toes for the entire two weeks and on the last day enjoyed a well-earned day off in New York City, after which we prepared ourselves for the long flight back to South Africa.....

The Trustees of Buskaid USA, together with Anna Davol, worked extremely hard to set up this very well-organised tour and we are indebted to them for all they did for us. Most especially we appreciated the involvement of the whole of Greville Ward's family and Fernanda Marcuzzi, wife of trustee Jim Halliday, who acted as tour manager during our stay in Boston. Wherever we played we encountered a fund of goodwill and great generosity, which had a very positive impact on our young musicians.

In both Paris and the USA we were also very fortunate to have the dedicated support of our long-standing chaperone, Hanneke van der Merwe, who is very much part of the Buskaid 'family', having known and worked with some of us since 1994.

## Other news

### 2006/7

#### **Concerts and corporate performances**

In the second half of 2006 we gave a wide variety of performances ranging from public concerts to private functions. Our Durban debut, organised by Vera Dubin, attracted an enthusiastic audience to the Durban Jewish Club and resulted in our receiving a very handsome donation from Jonathan Beare, a most generous supporter of our project. (Sadly, the day after our return to Jo'burg all our cameras were stolen so that we have no photographic records of this concert.)



A month later, just before Kabelo left for Manchester, we gave a concert in Holy Trinity Church, Braamfontein featuring ten soloists from the Ensemble playing a variety of baroque concertos. We were very happy to have Samson with us on this occasion – he also was about to leave for the RNCM, but as a postgraduate student, whose research and violin studies have been most generously funded by an RNCM scholarship and the

Canon Collins Memorial Trust. You can read more news of Samson later in this letter. Our final concert of 2006 was a very successful and enjoyable Classic FM Soirée, when we were made very welcome, as always, by the Classic 'team'.

Apart from a wide variety of corporate 'gigs' we also played in the presence of HRH Prince Edward the Earl of Wessex and the British High Commissioner; at an evening at the presidential home, hosted by Mrs Zanele Mbeki, and, on January 2 2007, at the opening of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in Johannesburg. Most recently, the Buskaid sextet performed in the presence of Prime Minister Tony Blair, at a prestigious function hosted by the British High Commission in Pretoria to celebrate the official birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II.



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### ***Associated Board practical examination results***

Once again our students achieved excellent passes when they sat these international exams towards the end of 2006. Of the four candidates, three gained distinctions and one a merit.

### ***Barloworld presentation***

On August 16<sup>th</sup> 2006, at a Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra concert in the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg, the CEO of Barloworld, Tony Phillips, presented the Buskaid Trust with a cheque for R250 000 towards general expenditure 2006/7. This was the first of two annual donations to Buskaid from Barloworld, a company with which we are extremely proud to be associated. Later last year a group of Trustees and senior students were guests at their end-of-year party, a further demonstration of the warm personal contact we have with this company.

### ***Leaders Unlimited 2007 Soirée and other generous support***



On April 22 2007, Leaders Unlimited, which has demonstrated unflinching loyal support of Buskaid, hosted its fifth concert for our benefit. This year's Soirée, which also coincided with the company's fifth birthday, took place at the Liberty Theatre in Sandton. Our Junior Ensemble welcomed the guests at the entrance to the theatre with a very creditable performance, whilst the Ensemble's concert in the theatre was of a remarkable standard. Leaders

Unlimited not only provided its guests with a delicious buffet supper, but also presented Buskaid with a fantastic R160 000 cheque for our general funding. This ongoing relationship is one which we greatly value and appreciate.

We are also most indebted to the Linbury Trust in the UK for its substantial donation to the UK Trust towards teaching salaries. In South Africa, we appreciate the support of Sentinel Steel following the visit to the Music School of its CEO Sanjay Doshi.

Towards the end of 2006 Buskaid UK shipped out a further donation of instruments, most of which came from the UK, the USA and Germany. Since then Sonja has been very

busy in her workshop meticulously setting up a great many violins, some of which are amongst the finest we have received. Many of our senior students now play on these instruments, a privilege which they greatly appreciate. They remain the property of the Trust and are on loan to our students. Thank you to all those people who made these donations!

### ***Further support from the Annenberg Foundation***

We are very proud to have been awarded a second extremely generous grant from this philanthropic American organisation, whose support of Buskaid will have a meaningful impact on our activities in 2007.

### ***Kabelo Motlhommi***

In September Kabelo commenced his studies at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), Manchester, thanks to a substantial donation from an anonymous South African couple, further generous funding from the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, a donation from Jonathan and Teresa Sumption (who also assisted Samson with his studies) and an Entrance Award from the RNCM. We are indebted to all these individuals and organisations for their support of Kabelo.

### ***Samson's continuing successes***

After graduating with First Class Honours last year, Samson expressed the wish to stay on at the RNCM for a postgraduate year. Subsequently accepted by the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester as a participant in its Professional Experience Scheme for graduates of the RNCM, Samson's 'baptism' into the Hallé was as a first violinist in a performance of Richard Strauss's Heldenleben, when he made such an impression that he was then invited back to audition for regular freelance work. The Hallé's conductor, Mark Elder recently commented to me, 'We are all delighted to welcome Samson. He impressed us all so much with his playing, his preparation, his intensity and his commitment.' Samson was also accepted by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra to participate in a similar scheme. These positions are awarded to graduate students following keenly competitive auditions. Most recently he was chosen to co-lead the Freedom 200 Orchestra at a service in Westminster Abbey marking the bicentenary of the Abolition of Slavery, in the presence of HM the Queen. Samson's string quartet was also selected to participate in masterclasses at the London String Quartet Symposium 2007. At present we are encouraging him to gain as much experience as possible as a freelance violinist in the UK after he has completed his Masters Degree in violin performance.



Samson's graduation day

### ***The Music School 2007***

Despite the continuing challenge of 'too much work and too little time' faced by all of us involved in the project, we are a very positive and highly productive team, down in Soweto. Every weekday there are students receiving personal tuition from both Sonja and myself, as well as from our assistant and trainee teachers – Lesego, Gilbert, Innocentia, Didi, Tiisetso, and Cecilia. Weekday theory classes of varying levels, run by John Reid Coulter, Sonja and



Lesego helps Kgotso



Kgotso helps Mbali

Innocentia are available for every student. During the weekends, students can attend lessons in Alexander Technique with Nanette Anderson, before or after their group lessons and rehearsals. This year Tiisetso has been observing most of my lessons, whilst receiving intensive teacher-training. Junior students stay on after their groups to help with the little beginners, whilst those beginners are now proud to be helping with our most recent intake, a new violinists' class we started at the end of February. Teacher-training has taken on a new meaning and now has a certain cachet amongst the younger members! It is interesting to note that when I first started the project, boys far outnumbered girls: this latest class consists of seven girls and one boy, a reflection of increasing female confidence and changing attitudes in a historically male-dominated society.



**.....and the Buskaid office**

Anne Bull, our new administrator, who recently took over from Sonia when she left earlier this year, remarked to me that we scarcely refer to the office in our newsletters, despite the fact that it plays such a crucial role. The administrative side of an organisation such as ours is complicated, multifaceted and extremely work-intensive. Three of us - Anne, Lesego and I - work every weekday in our two-roomed space - without stopping for lunch - from 8.30am until around 2.30 pm when Lesego and I leave for Soweto to teach. Anne then stays on for an extra couple of hours. From time to time we have to call upon Sonja to come in and help. On a daily basis we are dealing with a constant flow of emails, often from people all over the world enquiring about the project, as well as requests for gigs, preparation for tours (huge!), monthly accounts, reports, problems facing students in difficulties, long and short-term planning of workshops, concerts and tours, marketing, sourcing and arranging music, dealing with constant requests from individuals and the media to visit the school, addressing issues concerning our academic scholars and overseas students, and day-to-day general management. And as South Africans reading this newsletter will know all too well, it is quite likely that we may simultaneously be battling with faulty internet and phone lines, or one of Joburg's regular powercuts.....

Around these office and music school activities, I somehow have to structure vital fundraising to keep Buskaid afloat! Our very slimmed-down budget (excluding foreign tours and our support of overseas students) now stands at around R1.9 million pa (in the region of £140 / \$270,000); generating this amount of money annually is a constant source of anxiety. At the time of writing, despite the generous grants and sponsorships highlighted above, we are still living a fairly hand-to-mouth existence which I find hard to accept, considering the extraordinary impact this project has here, and around the world. If we could build our Endowment to a relatively modest R20 million (£1.5 / \$2.8 million), we could look forward to a secure future, with more energy focused on expanding our musical activities rather than writing funding proposals! Is there perhaps a multi-millionaire out there who would like to help?!

## **Future plans**

### ***New Zealand tour***

In addition to the concerts we plan to present in 2007, we are very much looking forward to touring New Zealand in December, as guests of Chamber Music New Zealand. Our last very successful NZ tour took place five years ago; this time our performances will be presented as part of a new series called *Encompass: quality music from around the globe*. Funds for this tour have been allocated from the NZ Government to complement those pledged by local event-sponsors and private donors.

### ***New Website***

Last, but by no means least, as a further celebration of ten extraordinary years, we are about to launch our new very funky website, designed by Aubrey Kurlansky, the London-based South African designer who is responsible for the artwork for both *Buskaid Live!* and *Tshwaranang*. We hope to have the site up-and-running in the next couple of weeks! Please visit us at [www.buskaid.org.za](http://www.buskaid.org.za)

Finally, we thank all of you for your continuing interest in and support of our organisation and its members, and look forward to seeing you at one or more concerts, here in South Africa, in the UK, or New Zealand in the course of this very exciting year.

Our warmest wishes to you all

Rosemary, and all the Buskaid students, trustees, teachers and administrative staff

Johannesburg June 2007

# Quand Soweto joue et transcende Rameau

CE MARDI SOIR, 13 février, on serait bien allé au concert de l'Orchestre du Concertgebouw d'Amsterdam qui venait, à Paris, faire entendre sa notable splendeur sonore au Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Mais on s'est éloigné des « beaux quartiers » et du « beau son » pour écouter un orchestre de jeunes musiciens noirs d'Afrique du Sud, invités par Sir John Eliot Gardiner dans le cadre de sa résidence parisienne à la Cité de la musique (*Le Monde* du 13 février).

Quelle belle et généreuse idée que l'avoir mis en lumière, dans la capitale où toutes les « étrangèretés » artistiques ont été bienvenues, le travail que fait l'altiste Rosemary Nalden, à Soweto (Afrique du Sud), depuis le début des années 1990. Elle a mis son énergie dans la fondation d'une école de musique et d'un orchestre, le Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble, dans les quartiers pauvres, s'y est mise en danger (au point d'être agressée physiquement) mais a tenu bon. L'un des résultats de cette entreprise est ce concert, émouvant et exaltant.

Gardiner, qui, il y a dix ans, avait fait ravaler ces jeunes musiciens, a vite constaté leur étonnante affinité avec la musique de Rameau. Ils l'ont donnée, dimanche 11 février, lors d'un grand

moment qui les faisait rencontrer un orchestre baroque, les English Baroque Soloists, retrouver Gardiner, en état de grâce, et la compagnie de danse ancienne Roussat-Lubek, d'une fantaisie poétique incomparable. Baroque, le Buskaid ne l'est en rien mais ses membres ont tout compris de la féline souplesse des danses ramistes, ce que confirment quatre danseurs qui transcendent à leur façon la cambure rythmique de cette musique.

Ce 13 février, ils jouent aussi Mozart, Bartok et Corelli, avec un débridé élégant, et des musiques urbaines sud-africaines, notamment le *kyéki*, semi-improvisation accorte et souriante, qui était pourtant le signal d'alerte de l'arrivée des cars policiers du temps des atrocités de l'apartheid.

L'une des violonistes danse, joue de la flûte, puis chante *Georgin on my Mind*, de Ray Charles, d'une voix à faire pâlir Diana Krall. Une altiste prend un mikro et entonne *Fever*, comme ça, de chic, donnant la musique en vrai partage. La salle est debout, et cette soirée à tomber. ■

BENOÏT MECHERY

« Domaine privé », de John Eliot Gardiner. Cité de la musique, Paris, jusqu'au 17 février. Tél. 01 44 84 44 84.

**VIKTIG SPØRSMÅL.** Ikke før er et nytt Grieg-år i gang før spørsmålene kommer: Er han stor, er han liten, er han europeer eller norsk, og hva skal vi egentlig med ham?

## Grieg fra Soweto

VEL, AKKURAT NÅ lever han i Paris der han spilles av musikere som i hvert fall ikke er ute etter å markere runde tall.

Dette skal hverken handle om hurrap for Norge eller Grieg, men han kommer overraskende imot meg midt mens jeg er på stipendreise til Ségolène Royals kommende rike, og tror jeg skal på konsert med John Eliot Gardiner.

Denne høyst levende dirigenten og pioneren når det gjelder såkalt autentisk framføring av tidlig, klassisk musikk feires nemlig i disse dager med en hel ukes konserter i den franske hovedstaden, og ikke bare med hans egne engelske barokksolistler.

**Rameau med rasta.** Mye kan sies om Gardiner, men det er ikke mitt ærend her, annet enn at når han nå feires, får vi



**SIGNERT**  
Synne Skovren

øye på noen fabelaktige ringvirkninger. Denne uken satt han ringside ved en konsert i Cité de la musique mens taket løftet seg i begeistring for ensemblet han har hentet for anledningen, og som han har invitert til å delta også ved flere av hans egne konserter: The Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble. Et ungdomsorkester à la Barntitt-Dues i Norge, som spiller særlig Rameau så rastadlettene skvetter.

Og altså Grieg. Og for eksempel Corelli. For en jente hentet fram fra bratsjrekken og synger «Fever!» så det søkker i oss, mens annerfjolinisten legger fra seg fela og trår til med en fulltonende «Georgia on my mind». Det klassiske strykerorkesteret har med ett skiftet spor, og snart er vi langt av gårde med zulurommer og dansere, som allerede har vært ellevilt og barokt til stede i Rameau. Historien om dette ensemblet av ung-

dommer fra Sør-Afrika er selvsagt en suksesshistorie, som startet med noen instrumenter i et lokalt kirkerom en gang på tittallet, initiert og holdt levende av ildsjeler. Den er både enestående og typisk for vår tid. Gi en talentfull ungdom en fele, en lærer og et rom å øve i, og se hva som skjer. Skaff flere fele, og flere talentfulle barn og unge og se om du ikke snart har et orkester. Se så om det behøver å ende fullt så forutsigbart som hittil.

**Det skjer noe.** Så vel her i Frankrike som hjemme i Norge skjer det endelig noe med konsertformer og uttrykk: bare tenk på Det Norske Kammerorkestrets nylig avholdte barokke helg. En konsert behøver ikke å begynne klokken halv åtte og vare i halvannen time; den behøver ikke å bestå av en Ouverture, den behøver ikke å begrense seg til én genre, og den kan inneholde også annet enn musikk.

Alt dette har vokst ut av årtier med ekstrem spesialisering, og av nye gener-

sjoners selvsagte forhold til multimediale og genremessig overskridende uttrykk. Jeg sitter ikke på en konsert med afrikanske musikere i Paris og føler patriotiske tårer over hvor dedikert de framfører Griegs elegiske melodier.

**Ikke for purister.** Jeg begeistres derimot over alle staur av at Grieg på ingen måte tilhører meg, der jeg sitter, og hører hvore varsomt musikkerne har lyttet seg inn til komponistens egenart. Grieg er der ute i den store smeltedigelen som tilhører alle eller ingen. Han kommer med disse ungdommene fra Soweto som dessuten bringer ugler til Athen: Rameau til Frankrike, på en garantert ny måte. Kultur er ikke for purister.

Men er det ikke nettopp det tidligmusikeren Gardiner er da? Nei. Samtidig står det en annen rank og sølvhåret dirigent foran dette ensemblet som noen snarest bør hente til Norge – en dirigent som har stått der hele veien. Navnet er Rosemary. Rosemary Nalden.

### Translation of Aftenposten article

#### GRIEG FROM SOWETO

Well, actually right now he is living in Paris, where he is played by musicians, who certainly are not focused on celebrating an anniversary.

This is not supposed to be about “hurrahs” for either Norway or Grieg, however he appears surprisingly while I am on a scholarship-trip to the coming realm of Ségolène Royal and believe I am going to a concert conducted by John Eliot Gardiner.

This very much alive conductor and pioneer in the field of early, classical music is being celebrated these days in the French capital and not only with his own English baroque soloists.

**Rameau with rasta.** Much can be said about Gardiner, but that is not my intention here, only that when he is now being celebrated, we see some fabulous further consequences. This week he was sitting ring-side at a concert in Cité de la musique while the roof was rising from the enthusiasm for the ensemble he had brought for this occasion, and which he has also invited to participate in some of his own concerts: the Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble- a youth orchestra à la Baratt-Due's in Norway, which is playing Rameau in a way that makes the rasta-braid fly.

And Grieg as well. And for example Corelli. Before a girl is taken out from the viola-players and sings “Fever” so we feel like being shaken and the second violin player puts aside the instrument and tunes in a great sounding “Georgia on my mind”. The classical string orchestra has all of a sudden changed track and soon we are far away with zulu-drums and dancers, who have already been vigorously present in Rameau.

The history of this youth ensemble from South Africa is of course a success story, which started with some instruments in a local church-room once in the nineties, initiated and kept alive by enthusiasts. It is both unique and typical for our times. Give a talented young person a fiddle, a teacher and a room to practise and see what happens. Get more fiddles, more talented children and youngsters and see if you shall not soon have an orchestra. See then if it has to end quite as expected as what is normal up to now.

**Not for purists.** On the contrary I am thrilled by the fact that Grieg in no way belongs to me, where I sit and hear how cautiously and sensitively the musicians have listened themselves into the composer's distinctive character. Grieg is out there in the big melting pot that belongs to everybody or nobody. He comes with these young people from Soweto, who further are bringing owls to Athens: Rameau to Paris in a guaranteed new way. Culture is not for purists.

But is that not exactly what the early musician Gardiner is? No. At the same time there stands a straight and silver-haired conductor in front of the ensemble who someone should invite to Norway immediately - a conductor who has been there all the way.

The name is Rosemary. Rosemary Nalden.

***A few more photographs***



Busy beginners



Lungile helping Tshegofatso



Selling T-shirts at Bedford Village Hall



Kabelo's interview, WNYC



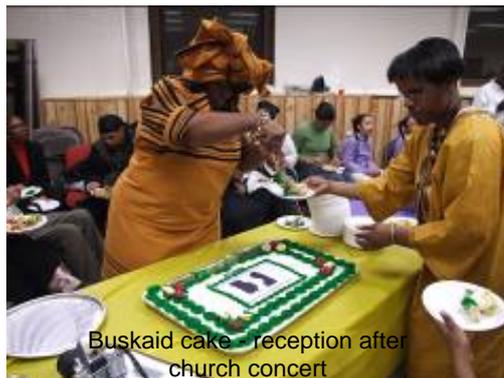
Standing ovation, Hotchkiss School,  
USA



Concert at the SA Embassy, New York



St Paul AME Church, Boston



Buskaid cake - reception after  
church concert