

The Drakensberg Boys Choir thanks all partners and sponsors after the successful Mauritius tour

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The Drakensberg Boys Choir returned to South Africa for a well-deserved school holiday after the choir's successful week-long Drakensberg Boys Choir Hear Us Sing Mauritius tour. The boys travelled to showcase their talents to the diverse international audience on the famous Indian Ocean tourism and business island destination, also known as the pearl of the Indian Ocean. The Drakensberg Boys Choir School (DBCS) is a recognised South African treasure and brings music lovers the most beautiful music across classic choral, contemporary African and entertaining Afro-pop genres.

"The Drakensberg Boys Choir Mauritius Tour was a highlight for local Mauritian audiences and the many international visitors to the island. Our singing South African ambassadors received a warm welcome and were excited to experience Mauritius's rich heritage and cultural diversity," states DBCS executive head Dave Cato.

"The Mauritius tour would not have been possible without the incredible support from our partners and sponsors. We appreciate all the help and support we received in sponsorship, hosting, and ticket sales. We would like to especially mention Brand South Africa – the national flagship marketing organisation of the Republic of South Africa – who was a valued partner on this tour," states Cato. Apart from extending its official brand endorsement and a generous financial contribution towards the tour expenses, Brand SA ensured that the country flag was well represented with sponsored tour water bottles, selfie fun-frames, South African flags, journals and sun hats.



Kutullo Matloga, marketing and activations coordinator of Brand South Africa, said, "As the custodian of the Nation Brand, Brand South Africa is proud to collaborate with Drakensberg Boys Choir through the Play Your Part programme. The programme aims to lift the nation's spirit by inspiring all South Africans to contribute to positive change, become involved and start doing so. A nation of people who care deeply for one another and the environment in which they live is good for everyone. Supporting the Mauritius tour was our way to inspire, empower, and celebrate active citizenship in South Africa. The Drakensberg Boys Choir brings together our stories, share its message, our rich history and give global fans a feeling of South Africa's identity beyond the music."

Highlights from the tour included performances at the Caudan Arts Centre on 19 and 20 September, the South African Chamber of Commerce in Mauritius Gala Event on 21 September, and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute on 22 and 23 September.

"We hosted a diversified programme catering for many tastes ranging from classical choral work to popular contemporary and energetic Afro-Pop works," says Vaughan van Zyl, artistic director, Drakensberg Boys Choir School. "The tour programme included classic choral works like Mozart's first movement from *Regina Coeli in B flat major*, Eric Whitacre's *Fly to Paradise* and *Amigos Para Siempre*, the official song of the 1992 Summer Olympics, arrangements of well-known hits by Miriam Makeba, Mango Groove, Johnny Clegg and songs from *Ipi Ntombi* and *The Lion King*. The audiences thoroughly enjoyed the shows, singing along and enjoying the spirit and vibe of South African music with us," he adds.



Since its establishment, the Drakensberg Boys Choir School has seen many different conductors and delivered many successful musicians from the boys who have passed through its doors. The school consists of approximately 80 boys, from Grade 4 to Grade 9, selected through auditions held across South Africa. Each day, the boys have a full range of academic lessons, various music subjects, and two hours of choir rehearsals.

In addition to the organisations mentioned above, the DBCS wishes to also thank generous organisations for partnering on this memorable Hear Us Sing tour:

- South African High Commission
- SA Chamber of Commerce
- Le Meridien, Ile Maurice
- Conservatoire Francois Mitterrand
- Nelson Mandela Centre
- Mauritius Tourism Authority
- Drakie Parents Association (DPA) for tour arrangements and backpack and travel equipment

A special mention and word of thanks also goes to the following sponsors and contributors during the tour:

- Grant Cooper (owner of Frutti Swirl, a 'healthy fast food' outlet), a former Drakie (1979 - 1984) currently residing in Mauritius, who generously sponsored lunch for the staff and boys.
- Nando's Bagatelle and La Croisette branches for sponsored lunches.
- Debonairs Mauritius for the dinner provided at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute at a considerable discount.
- Spur Mauritius for a fully sponsored lunch.

"The DBCS builds character and develops boys to harness the gift of music to bring hope, impact and positive change in South Africa and beyond. We offer a unique, complete and diverse schooling experience that will forever change every Drakie boy's life by being part of this centre of excellence," Cato says. "We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to

showcase the hard work and talent of our boys on the world stage, and look forward to more great performances in our upcoming tours this year," he concludes.

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