

# Brand South Africa collaborates with the Drakensberg Boys Choir for a Mauritius tour

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Drakensberg Boys Choir School is delighted to announce that Brand South Africa is committed to supporting the Drakensberg Boys Choir School (DBCS) for their upcoming tour to Mauritius from 17 to 24 September 2023.



"The Drakensberg Boys Choir is delighted to be travelling and performing for international audiences again. In particular, the choir is excited to experience Mauritius's rich heritage and cultural diversity, the pearl of the Indian Ocean," states DBCS executive head Dave Cato.

As the custodian of the Nation Brand, Brand South Africa is proud to collaborate with the 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.

The **Drakensberg Boys Choir Mauritius Tour** promises to be a true island highlight for local Mauritian audiences and the many international visitors. The tour highlights will include 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.

The Drakensberg Boys' Choir, a genuinely South African culture asset also fondly known as Drakies, is blessed and fortunate to bring choral and music lovers across the globe the most beautiful and entertaining music, either through live performances, streaming or recordings of their outstanding work. "Music is the ministry of the Drakensberg Boys Choir. DBCS builds character moulds 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 adds. "DBCS builds resilience, grows relationships, and fosters global ambassadors with music as the tool to spread its message of hope," states Cato.



He highlights that the school's internationally acclaimed programme combines the art of choral singing and performance with rigorous academic training. The boys who leave DBCS do so as well-adjusted young men who are adequately equipped to face the challenges of their late high school years and beyond. One of the highlights of the choir's proud 57-year history was an invitation from Pope John Paul II to perform in St. Peter's Square in 1983. The choir also performed for the first president of democratic South Africa, Mr Nelson Mandela, on top of a unique location in the majestic Drakensberg, a South African world heritage site. The choir was the first South African cultural group to perform behind the Iron Curtain in 1985. Drakensberg Boys Choir also performed at the American Choral Directors' Association Congress 2007.

"We are very excited after our successful performances, including the recent Music in the City 2023 concert at the Joburg Theatre and the performance at the invitation of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation to celebrate the former president's 81st birthday," says Vaughan van Zyl, artistic director, Drakensberg Boys Choir School. "We have a diversified programme ranging from classical choral work to popular contemporary and energetic Afro-Pop works," he adds.

The programme's first half includes 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. After the interval, the Afro Pop second half tells the story of South Africa through music. A lively, authentically South African set comprises the second half, where they perform unique arrangements of well-known hits by, among others, Miriam Makeba, Mango Groove, Johnny Clegg and songs from *Ipi Ntombi* and *The Lion King*. The audience is encouraged to sing along, get out of their seats and enjoy the spirit and vibe of South African music with us.

Since its establishment, the Drakensberg Boys Choir School has seen many different conductors and produced several successful musicians among 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.

Kutullo Matloga, marketing and activations coordinator, said, "This collaboration seeks 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."

"We are proud of the young men the school produces, and the benefits of choral music as part of the educational curriculum are well known. As evidence of this, our boys regularly win scholarships and are sought after by high-calibre

schools when they leave after grade 9," concludes Cato.

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