



In the early evening, we returned to the hotel for a freshen up and small rest before our concert at the Dutch Reform Church. Our concert went very well, the audience kept yelling "More!" (Bruce couldn't figure out whether they wanted an encore or if they were yelling his name!!) After the concert, we had a nice lasagna dinner accompanied by improv. numbers on the organ by various members of the choir. Then, after a quick jaunt to the candy store we headed back to the hotel once again. A party began just about as soon as we got back - everyone was trying Amarula that Charles had recommended, Andrew was singing and playing his guitar,

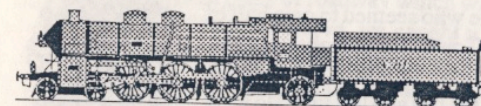
and everyone was talking and laughing until something broke the peaceful atmosphere...

Heidi

THURS. MAY 8 - COACH TO MOSSEL BAY.

STEAM TRAIN TRIP 8PM CONCERT AT MARITIME MUSEUM, AUDIENCE OF 50.

Day 15 of our tour started with a bang... or should I say, a hang! Shortly after midnight, three of our male choristers, who had thus far been fairly quiet, decided to streak through the party in A8. I applauded the bravery of these partners in crime, however, next time boys, lose the socks.



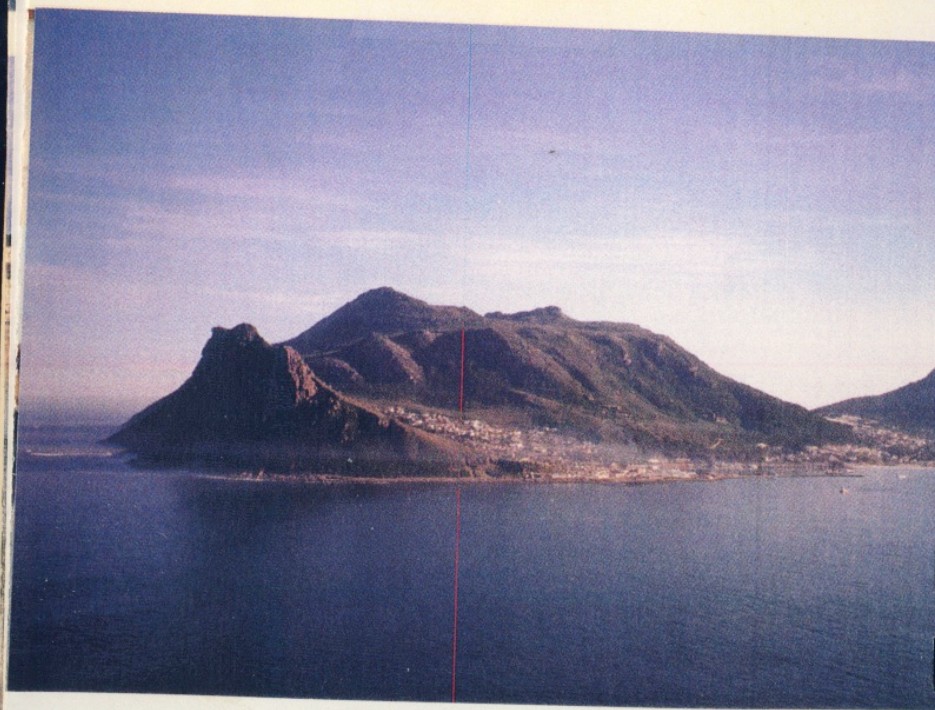
The next morning, everyone boarded the Lily Car of a South Africa Railway steam train, for a two and a half hour train ride to

George, where Charles would be patiently waiting for us. The trip took us through some beautiful country. At one stop, many of us got off for some food, and nearly didn't make it back on! We arrived in George, happy and covered in soot, where most had lunch. After an hour, the bus took us to Mossel Bay, where we (well, those of us not sleeping on the bus!) had a sound check at a Maritime Museum. We looked around for a while, and I actually saw pictures of a guy I met in Durban in a display on the wall. Most people seemed pleased with their billets. Jennifer and I were fortunate to experience an evening with a black couple in a township. They also took us around some more poverty-stricken townships. What an eye-opener! We saw animals roaming everywhere, little shacks where people lived, one which we actually were invited into, and a terrible schoolhouse with 7 rooms that housed 409 students! Not exactly a good learning environment.

Our concert went well, and we had a very small, but appreciative audience. Afterwards, they served us a lovely dinner (hmm... is that chicken?) and most went home to play cards or crash out before our journey to Kaapstad the next day.

(I just want to thank everyone for a terrific tour - the best one I have ever been on!)

Karian





To break up the drive to Cape Town, John suggested we take the steam train to George. The old steam train was great, although by the end of the journey, everyone was covered in charcoal. Once again, the South African scenery is terrific. When we arrived in George we started the three hour drive to Cape Town.

Nicole

Riddle:

What do the U. Vic. Chamber Singers have in common with the Portugese explorers?

Answer:

Both got wrecked all along the south coast of Africa.

Fri. May 9 - COACH TO CAPE TOWN

5 HOUR TRIP, ARR. BREAKWATER INN - 1 PM. AFTERNOON AND EVENING FREE IN WATERFRONT DISTRICT.

This morning we met at the bus at 8:00 am. to travel to Cape Town. Everyone seems quite tired this morning, but there seems to have been some interesting billets last night. Some people stayed in a black township while others stayed with people who seemed to own half of Mosselbaai. The drive to Cape Town is extremely beautiful, as most of South Africa seems to be. Charles (the incredible bus driver) gives us a rest from the bus and lets us off to walk to a beautiful Dutch Reform Church. We also have several short stops to look at terrific views on the way.

We arrive in Cape Town around 3:30 pm and check into the Breakwater Lodge. The hotel is actually a converted prison, this fact is especially apparent when you see the size of the room. After we have checked in we have the rest of the day free. I spent the day looking around the waterfront area, which is extremely touristy.

Cape Town is a great city. It's amazing to actually see places like the Table Top Mountains, which are even more beautiful than all the pictures I've seen.

Nicole



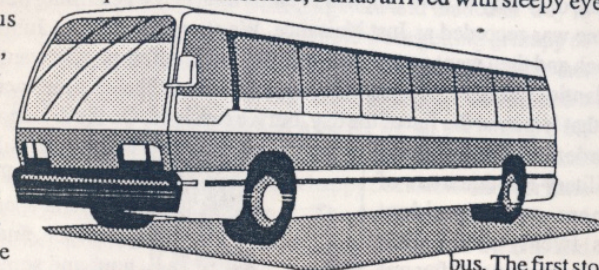
Sat. May 10 - CAPE TOWN

COACH DAY-TRIP TO CAPE POINT, COASTAL VILLAGES AND KIRSTENBOSCH. 8 PM CONCERT AT ST. SAVIOUR'S (ANGLICAN) CHURCH, CLAREMONT. AUDIENCE OF 40.

Day has dawned in Cape Town. having spent the first night in the old jail near the Breakwater, hence the name Breakwater Lodge, the prepaid continental breakfast only required a John Henry or a Jane Doe. The

yogurt was arguably the best I'd had on the tour and various other individuals had seconded that motion. This had to be eaten before 8:30 am because that was the rumoured time of departure for the Cape Point Tour. It turned out to be right, but Dallas was to be seen when Section Check was called, so after a recheck of the basses, courtesy of myself, tenors, courtesy of Mark Dyck altos, courtesy of Karian Brigadier, and finally Robin Streb for the Sopranos; he was officially not on the bus. So after some quick reconnaissance, Dallas arrived with sleepy eyes.

The bus tour had begun, Wendy our tour guide was explaining it seemed everything viewable in the 360° degrees around the



bus. The first stop was at a point overlooking Maidens Cove where some brave soul had donned a wet suit to go body surfing. The road out towards the Point of the Cape came to Chapman's Peak, a piece of road, Italian engineered, which rivals the curves on the TransCanada Highway east of Golden, BC. We stopped for a photo shoot overlooking some piece of roadway which was a cliff. After entering the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, we caught a prolonged glimpse of a zebra at 10:30 am and six minutes later an ostrich appeared, and Wendy informed us that only the males are black and the females are more greyish.

Charles, the bus driver for the tour, decided to show us the westerly view off Cape Point, the trail: Hoek Van Bobbejaan. The view was incredibly breathtaking, the reason was not the wind blowing, but the beauty of the ocean meeting the beach on the rolling hills, which at points drove sharply into the sea. Robin and Maureen delayed the early departure at this stop because they wanted to stay and get some isolation pictures. Just after leaving this destination we saw the real life representation of the animal designated to be the name of the South African national Rugby Team: the "Spring Bok," further down the road - Eland (close relatives to Canadian Elk, in size.) Then we arrived at the main attraction: Cape Point Light Houses. The location was written on the sign, 34°21'24" south latitude and 18°29'51 east longitude. Over the next hour various groups explored different sections of the rocky hill with a lighthouse at the top, on which Bruce wrote "UVic Chamber Singers Concert Tour 1997." Heidi and Ian went down to explore the working lighthouse which is near to the water because the "Cape of Storms" as it is also called receives very dense fog and the light from the lighthouse on the top of the hill isn't sufficient. Once everyone was back down at the bottom, the baboon stories started to come. Dallas apparently had been within inches of one and Sally Whitmore mentioned that they moved so fast you could hear the wind generated by their movement. I was the last one to make a purchase but I caught up to Tara just as she got to the bus.



From "The Point" we headed towards Simon's Town, where the one South African Naval Base is. In this town there was a statue of a dog called just Nuisance, and he got the name because: after he had become mascot-like to the sailors at the base, by leading them to the right platform for the train and getting them back into the base safe and sound when they were drunk; Later on in life someone decided the dog was just a nuisance and was going to put him down, so the only way to save him was to enlist him, and when filling out the forms the name was recorded as Just Nuisance. We stopped briefly at Jubilee Square for lunch and then went on to Fish Hoek for lunch. A few people went wading in the Atlantic Ocean, well Michael Joyce and I, but our "beach time" was nonexistent, so that lessened the fun of the day, but we survived. On the drive to the Botanical Gardens of Kirstenbosch, we passed "Silvermine," the Cape, Pollsmoor Prison, Mandella spent six years of penitence, and the wine area hour and some more sound check at St. Saviours turned to our Breakwater of us survived the tour. Our and it went well despite the fifty people. Robert did an organ piece used in Dracula, and that was very well done, but it was the toughest audience of the whole tour. It was also the shortest in an out, in an hour and a half. Then we were back at the lodge to start the Nocturnal Rituals by 10:00 pm. One group went off to grab Ice Cream at the mall. Brian, Karian, Sally, Bruce, Alexis, Robin, Lindsay, Nicole, Michael, Beth, Neil, Shannon, Tara, and I followed later, but couldn't find them. The sleepers by 11:00 pm were: Bryan, Dallas, Rick, Mark, Ian, Karen, Heidi, Carrie Anne, Yolanda, and Jen. A few Party Night Hawks were Andre, Andrew, Gabe, Maureen, Melissa, and Robin till about 2:00 am.



Steve

#### SUN. MAY 11 - CAPE TOWN

SANG 6 PIECES AT 9:30AM SERVICE ST. MARY'S (HIGH ANGLICAN) CHURCH, GUGULETU, TEA FOLLOWING. 3PM CONCERT AT ALL SAINTS (ANGLICAN) CHURCH, SOMERSET WEST. BRAAI (BARBECUE) AND FINAL PARTY AT THE HOME OF KEVIN THOMSON (CHAMBER SINGERS ALUMNUS - GRAD, 1982).

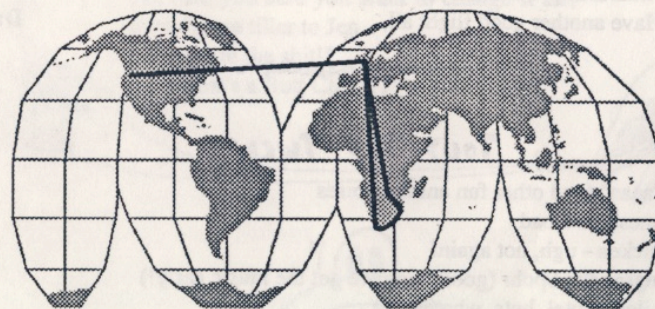
It is good to know we have turned a full circle: we began our tour with a concert in a black township, and now we finish in a township. Driving through Guguletu made me slightly nervous as there were shattered windows, and the day before there were tires burning on the roads. My fears were dispelled as we were welcomed very warmly into St. Mary Magdalene church. What struck me about the service was that it was primarily based on music (something our churches lack) and there was a tremendous commitment

to the music. It seemed to bind everyone together. Another striking factor was the length of the service. It was a whopping three and a half hours and no one (except us, who were not used to it) was bored. Our contribution was good. I think they were surprised at our repertoire. They mentioned that they did not know white people knew music, showing how much they appreciated us. After the service we attended a tea which was an additional hour.

We reluctantly tore ourselves away from Guguletu and made our way to our final concert in Somerset West. By this time, people were getting grumpy as we were all tired and had not eaten lunch. We managed to perform a fabulous last concert. We were all pleased with our work, and it was a great way to end a marvellous string of concerts. At the thought of a party, we all perked up a bit and gained our last bit of energy for the Braai at Kevin Thompson's house (Chamber Singers Alumnus - '81.) The party was a happy occasion and everyone seemed to forget the difficulties we encountered. The food was incredible and so were the people. Karian and Beth did a famous job with the tour awards and we all had a great laugh over them. I left early and had an early night.

I feel lucky to write about one of the best days on the tour: The people, music and good times will live in my heart.

Lindsay



#### MON. MAY 12 - CAPE TOWN

SHOPPING AND SIGHT-SEEING IN DOWNTOWN CAPE TOWN. 8:30 PM FLIGHT TO LONDON.

Our last day in South Africa. Everyone was winding down, and we all felt a mixture of sadness to be leaving and excitement to be going home. Most of us had Rand to spend, so it was off at Green Market Square in the morning. We split into small groups and shopped and sat in pubs, enjoying our last hours in Cape Town. In the afternoon we went for a tour of a diamond factory, with the exception of Jen, Rick, and Andrew who went for a beer. Little did they know that we all got free beer at the factory, but oh well. After the diamond factory we were off to the airport, where we sang in the terminal before boarding our twelve hour flight to London.



I just want to say, thanks to all of you for a fabulous tour, and I'll miss you next year.....Oh yeah, and most importantly:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY BETH!

Melissa

Tues. May 13 - 7:30 AM ARR. LONDON.

3:30PM, FLIGHT TO VANCOUVER, ARR. 4:30PM.

I think we are getting more used to air travel as we did not have a big party with all the free booze. I had my own party though, with 4 bottles (air plane size). My party ended not when Carrie-Anne's lap shared my wine, but when my lap shared my wine. Yolanda fortunately had an extra pair of shorts in her bag. I was able to use Schweppes Club Soda to absorb the stain. Unlike dinner, breakfast was awful. I have never been fond of powdered egg omelet.

Well, my tour with the Chamber Singers ends in London. I'm staying a little longer as I would be crazy not to when it only costs \$100 for a delayed flight back home.

Not that many interesting things happened on the Cape Town to London flight. Well, I guess seeing a little girl projectile vomit in the front row was slightly interesting, but that's it.

Have another good flight all,

Dan

### Tour Top Twenty

20. - "Baaaa" (and other fun animal noises)
19. - Lonesome Road
18. - Chicken - ugh, not again!
17. - Singing the Spohr (good thing we got the music early!)
16. - Toilets (hotel, butts, whatever..)
15. - Eyebrow Games
14. - "Ah'm moh cleverah than you ah!"
13. - Naked swimming (ocean, pool, w
12. - Cape of Good Hope
10. - Singing in Westminster Abbey
9. - Amarula
8. - Streakin' Trio
7. - Pusi Nofo
6. - Concert in Knysna
5. - Those f&\*%@ing knobs!
4. - Charles
3. - Castle Lager
2. - Soweto
1. - Being in South Africa South Africa and sharing the experience with an amazing group of people!



### Anonymous Quotes

(you know who you are!!)

1. "Don't let thieves and pickpockets have fun with your money." - London tube announcer.
2. "Don't take a drag off the wrong end of a Camel." - London billboard.
3. "Have you been drinking.....you're getting nasty."
4. "I get straight when I drink."
5. "But the f\*&@ing seals!"
6. "Do I have ketchup on my head?"
7. "Just go, André....I won't look."
8. "It must be the fish."
9. ".....and now from Samoa, a little piece of fluff, Pusi Nofo."
10. "Ah'm moh cleverah than you ah!" - Mavis.
11. "Are you sure you want to change it all?" - Eurochange tiller to Jen.
12. "You're the shit!"
13. "What's a Butt Cherry?"



Artists rendition of the essence of  
the Chamber Singers' sound.



## THE TOUR AWARDS:

- Tara - "I've got the rhythm in my hips" Marston. Coppertone's Miss Melanoma 1997.  
 Maureen "Not tonight Bruce" Nicholson. Penis Envy Award.  
 Melissa "Not so 'Lonesome Road'" Plagemann. Award of Excellence in Zulu-ulu-lation.  
 Ian "Hat Head" Bullen. Tenor with Tenure Award.  
 Neil "I'm a Baywatch Extra" Bryant. Cock in the Sock Award.  
 Mark "Craazy Hat" Dyck. Cock in the Sock Award.  
 Steve "Well, well, well..." Davidson. Cock in the Sock Award.  
 Bryan "If you're obnoxious, and you know it, have a beer" Dimayuga. Conservation Officer Award.  
 Michael "Where's the f#@ing hole?!" Joyce. Mr. Nice Guy Award.  
 Brian "Let's get naked" Arens. Breast Envy Award.  
 Nicole "Nier means nier" Bugess. Anti-Diva Award.  
 Andrew "Is it lahbia or laybia?" Clarke. Lewis & Clark Navigational School Dropout (now studies accompanying).  
 Lindsay "Hey bud, he dude, hey...leave me alone" Sterk. Sangoma Award.  
 Karen "Amarula" Mang. Most Men Picked Up (...too bad they all had 4 legs) Award.  
 Dan "She's the 'Horny' One!" Lehton. Co-winner of the Velcro Award.  
 Yolanda "Come Up for air" Church. Co-winner of the Velcro Award.  
 André "Beaucoup de feu" Cormier. Rock Star '97 Award.  
 Alexis "Gopher" More. Superwoman Award.  
 Shannon "I don't collect dolls" Tyrrell. Full Moon Award.  
 Jen "Spork is a word!" White. Hard-Hearted Harbinger of Hematoma Award.  
 Heidi "How do you like me so far?" Muendel. Pacific Standard Time Award.  
 Sally "I still haven't learned to speak Bruce" Whitmore. Obsessively Compulsively Disorganized Award.  
 Gabe "is that violin from Wal-Mart?" Solomon. Murray Polisky Scholarship for Excellence in Early Alzheimer's.  
 Dallas "This isn't a Jewish wedding" Bergen. Most Improved Baritone Award.  
 Robin "Has anyone seen my Bible?" Streb. Runway Model of the Year Award.  
 Kevin "Being an ex-chamber singer, I should've known better" Thompson. Host of the Year Award.  
 John "I'm a tour courier, not a mail courier" Badminton. South African interpreter Award.  
 Bruce "E (or Eb)" More. Golden Pitch Pipe Award.  
 Charles "I'll see what I can do" Murphy. Schmooser Award.  
 Beth "Butt-cherry" Whitmore. Hooked on Phonics Worked for me Award.  
 Karian "The Plumber" Brigidear. Ah'm moh cleverah than you ah Award.  
 Rick "King of the 'Castle'" Knoles. Knob Watcher Award.  
 Robert "Mr. Thesaurus" Kwan. Rookie of the Year Award.  
 Carrie-Ann "Ebola" Matheson. Should Have used an Igloo Cooler & 5 Piggly-Wiggly Bags Award.  
 Carrie-Ann "Amadeus" Matheson. Optically Challenged Award.  
 Carrie-Ann "She's the shit" Matheson. Betty Ford Clinic Flunkie Award.  
 Carrie-Ann "Why does all this stuff happen to me?" Matheson. Most Awards Award.

## Host Lists:

### Oxford:

- Oxford Youth Chamber Choir Director: Peter Hunt - . 011-44-1295-720940  
 John Allison - 011-44-193-67500  
 Mary Gill - 29 Gardiner St., Headington, Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-62879  
 Sue Manley - 26, Hayward Rd., Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-559677  
 The McLean Family - 331 Woodstock Rd., Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-511927  
 Mrs. Burnard - 110 Southmoor Rd., Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-554732  
 Mrs. Gwen Hunt - Brook Cottage, Bloxham, Oxon, U. K. 011-44-1295-721089  
 Sue Matthews - 6 Highfield Ave., Headington, Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-63453  
 Anne & Peter Haxworth - 17 Islip Rd., Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-559068  
 Sheila Allison - 3 Elms Drive, Marston, Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-63279  
 Mr. Gibbs - 2 Perrin St., Headington, Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-64649  
 The Briant family - 7 Canterbury Rd., Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-558-314  
 The Cochlin Family - Staddlestones, Dinton, Aylesbury, Oxon, U. K. 011-44-1296-748771  
 The Tyack Family - 50 Wytham St., Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-251302  
 The Devey Family - 346 Banbury Rd., Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-554286  
 The Parsons Family - 35 Chalfont Rd., Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-553247  
 Rita Burt - 2 Dlamare Way, Cumnor Hill, Oxon, U. K. 011-44-193-865153

### Pictormaritebur

(Data to Follow)



Another of Karen's little friends.

### MUSGRAVE (Durban)

- Graeme & Gill Leslie - 409 Ines Road, Morningside, Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-230344  
 Mervyn & Rosemary Payne - 208 Cato Rd., Glenwood, Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-214766.  
 Sue Barnes - 6 Mountain View Rd., Morningside, Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-280369  
 Sally Christie - 4 Knights Bridge, 360 Essenwood Road, Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-285562  
 Rose & Dallas Read - 367 Ridge Road, Bera, Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-285-746  
 Bob & Anne Youngleson - 140 Princess Alice Avenue, Glenwood, Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-252628  
 Peter & Belinda Croxon - po box 31021, Mayville, 4058, S.A. 011-27-31-282567  
 Raelene & Ivan Ruiters - St. Thomas' Church, po box 50868, Musgrave Rd., Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-222511  
 Denise Hill - 15 Brewers Ave., Glenwood, Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-2028693  
 Bob & Anne Knights Rayson - 14 Lindsay Ave., Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-299012  
 John & Barbara Mills - 84 Marriott Rd., Berea, Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-280504.  
 Sean Wolff - Cottage, St. Thomas' Church, po box 50868, Musgrave Rd., Durban, 4001, S.A. 011-27-31-218303



## East London:

Organizer: John Hollander - 15 Lower Ridge Road, Bonnie Doon, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-222511  
 Mrs. Joan Barrow - 9 Tait Road, Baysville, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-431650  
 Mrs. H A Born - 9, Darlington Rd., Berea, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-53829  
 Mr. I Vincent - 4 Dawson Rd., Selborne, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-28822  
 Mr. & Mrs. S. Anderson, 92 Smartt Rd., Nahoon, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-352083  
 Mr. & Mrs. E. Buswell - 5 Chestnut Crescent, Beacon Bay, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-473174  
 Miss Jilly Good - 29 Galway Rd., Stirling, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-353692  
 Mr. & Mrs. P. Dossin - 41 Kenilworth Rd., Stirling, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-352453  
 Mr. & Mrs. T. Howkins - 4 Montrose Place, Bunkers Hill, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-353418  
 Mr. & Mrs. J.P. Lechanteur - 14 Balmoral Rd., Vincent, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-57746  
 Adv. & Mrs. M. Jardine - 105 Vincent Rd., Vincent, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-54778  
 Mr. H.M. Bosworth-Smith - 8 Chellodene Rd., Nahoon, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-352930  
 Mr. & Mrs. A.L.B. Staples - 6 Fuchsia St., Vincent Heights, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-54445  
 Dr. & Mrs. B. Uys - 37 Princess Alice Drive, Nahoon, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-354486  
 Mrs. J. Barrow - 9 Tait Road, Baysville, East London, S.A. 011-27-431-431650

## Mossel Bay:

(Data to Follow)

Comments from John Badminton in an otherwise "business" letter:

Many thanks for your very kind comments. The pleasure was mutual and has taught me that a tour depends upon the leader (person in charge). In this case it was particularly true as your approach and view of things made success inevitable. I must also say that Canada could not have wished for better ambassadors.....One of the really gratifying sides of the tour was the way the members of the choir made me part of the group and showed concern for my well-being e.g. at the 'pit-stops' ensuring that I had something to eat and drink. When you consider that they were all younger than my children this was quite something..... You have a standing invitation to make a return visit.

## Other Addresses

John Badminton - Suite 119, Postnet X18, Rondebosch 7700, South Africa. Tel/Fax: 011-27-21-686-8346

Charles Murphy - c/o Springbok Atlas, Cape Town office, 179 Albert Rd., Woodstock 7925, PO Box 819, Cape Town 8000, South Africa. Tel: 011-27-21-460-4700 Fax: 011-27-21-479472

Kevin Thompson - Cape Town Trombone Consort, 18 Bolmeur Rd., Rugby 7405, Cape Town, South Africa. Tel: 011-27-21-522986 Fax: 011-27-21-4345446

## press coverage

### RANGE OF UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA SINGERS IMPRESSES AUDIENCE.

University of Victoria Chamber Singers at St. John's Anglican Church, East London. Conductor, Bruce More has shaped his young group of musicians into a Chamber Choir which can range from the control required by Schütz's sublime *Selig Sind Die Toten*, through the light lieder-like performance of songs by the relatively unknown Fanny Hensel, to the full blooded sounds.....of the spritual Lord, I (know I) Have Been Changed.

The choir then relaxed into lighter vein and entertained us well.

Bruce More conducts with a minimum of fuss and has drawn from his talented young group something of great value - a love of music making and the technique to achieve a quality which takes their audience along with them.

Barabara Tome

Daily Dispatch, East London, South Africa, May 6, 1997.

The audience at St. Johns' Church clearly enjoyed the musical feast offered with such enthusiasm. The program was an ambitious one, but all the styles were sung with a confidence and an understanding beyond the years of the singers.

After a magical beginning from the upper voices of *O Successores* by Hildegard von Bingen, the whole choir sang the Heinrich Schütz motet with fine tuning, blend and great feeling for ..... and dynamics.

Outstanding in the first half, were the two songs from *Gärtenlieder* by Fanny Hensel, sister of Felix Mendelssohn. They were sung with an airy lightness, and the beautifully set words were crystal clear.

*Soir de Neige* by Francis Poulenc, with stark poems by Paul Eluard, offered the greatest challenge of the evening and the singers rose to it exceptionally well.

They made light of the difficult tuning, the demands of vocal range and sudden dynamic changes.

THE GAZETTE THURSDAY APRIL 17 1997 F9

ENTERTAINMENT

## CLASSICAL NOTES

### UVic choir flexes formidable talent in pre-tour concert

We're just entering the quiet time of the Victoria musical year, most musical organisations have either just given their final concert of the season or are busily rehearsing for it.

There is a great deal of musical theatre going on in town, from *The Three Penny Opera* to *Tosca*, but not a great deal else. Which is far from saying that there is nothing worth attending this week.

On Saturday night the University of Victoria Chamber Singers give their pre-tour concert at St. Andrew's Cathedral on Blanshard.

What distinguishes the Chamber Singers, apart from their very fine singing of course, is their adventurous nature. If ever there was a group of people who specialised in "boldly going where no choir has gone before" it is this select group of young singers.

Over the years the choir has visited over 50 cities in 22 countries around the world: cities including Beijing, Kiev, Brisbane, Leningrad, Auckland, Vienna, Taipei and Toronto. They have sung in Glinka Kapell, the recital hall in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), and in Symphony Hall in Beijing in 1991 they were one of the very first North American groups to perform in Estonia, Russia and Ukraine.

In 1992 the choir toured California, which, at first glance, appears a far less troubled destination than others they have visited. At first glance, but the choir, or perhaps it is director and conductor Bruce More, seems to have a nose for "interesting" places: they sang in Eureka the night before the earthquake; and in Los Angeles the night before the riots.

In 1993 they toured mainland China - again, they were one of the earliest North American groups to venture there - performing in Shanghai, Victoria's sister city South China, Beijing and Guangzhou.

This year's tour is no less exciting: on April 24 they embark for South Africa,

where they may well be the first ever visiting Canadian choir.

Of course, you can't fly direct to South Africa from Victoria, or even from Vancouver, so making a virtue of a necessity, the choir is spending four days in England. But sightseeing is hardly the leading item on their agenda, for they will be performing at Westminster Abbey and Merston College, Oxford - taking on the great English choral tradition on its home turf, as it were.

After England, they fly due south to South Africa for a two-week tour, which includes both conventional and rather less conventional venues, such as a school in Soweto and a black church in Cape Town. Once again they are venturing into the heartland of another venerable and deeply ingrained choral tradition.

On Saturday night Victorians have their final opportunity to catch the choir as they flex their vocal chords in a typically eclectic program, presumably the one they are taking on with them. The music ranges from the standard choral fare - Bach, Handel, Schütz - to the rather more unusual - a group of songs by Fanny Mendelssohn, a suite of pieces of Francis Poulenc (which Bruce More tells me is "formidable").

In addition there is 20th-century music by Arvo Part and József Kodály as well as several composers whose names are little more than just names to me: Bengt Halberg, Cyrillus Kreek, Christopher Marshall.

No doubt all of these composers' works will be sung in their original languages - German, French, Swedish, Estonian, Samoan - such is the Chamber Singers' dedication and versatility.

I know of few, no let's be honest, I can think of no other musical organisation which has such a range of styles and languages in its armory. It seems singularly appropriate that this polyglot choir should be our musical ambassadors to the newly emerging multicultural South Africa.

The St. Andrew's concert begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the door or from choir members (and no I don't have all their phone numbers).



DERYK BARKER



Press Release, June 20, 1997.

### *From Westminster Abbey to Soweto.*

The University of Victoria Chamber Singers have just returned from their 6th international concert tour. Over the past 10 years, they have performed in 22 countries and more than 60 cities. In April and May of this year, they performed 17 concerts in 19 days, thrilling audiences at Oxford University, London (Westminster Abbey), Johannesburg, Soweto, Durban, East London, Knysna, Mossel Bay and Cape Town. Concert venues ranged from the traditional evening formal concert, usually in a cathedral or church, to school concerts. The Chamber Singers are the first Canadian choir to sing in South Africa and the first white choir to sing in a school in Soweto. They were received with high enthusiasm by all their audiences, shown by standing ovations, multiple encores (several audiences demanded 4 or more) and call-backs.

Most of the singers would agree that the most electrifying experience was the performance in a Soweto High School. Rick Knoles, who will spend his summer directing cars onto the Coho Ferry said "I can't imagine a more moving experience!" "Singing outdoors to about 500 young school-uniformed and highly gregarious young people and having them sing for us was one of the most amazing musical experiences I have had" said André Cormier who experienced the entire tour from his wheelchair. Another highlight of the tour was the singers' participation in an Anglican Church service in Guguletu (a black township near Cape Town). The day before, there had been tire burnings on the freeway adjacent to the township (tires burned, cars stopped, occupants stoned), so there was a measure of nervousness about entering the township at this point. On Sunday morning, the all clear was given by the authorities and the group proceeded to St. Mary's Church. The high anglican service was unlike anything the choir had seen or heard before. It consisted of at least 90% choral singing, from the congregation, the church choir and the Chamber Singers, ranging from hymns to anglican chant and black spirituals - all in the Xhosa language. There was no piano, organ or any other musical instrument and every member of the approximately 400 congregation sang their part in perfect harmony. The service lasted for three and a half hours. Bruce More, conductor of the Chamber Singers said "It was the most profound musical experience of my life".

"South Africa is the most unique landscape imaginable", said Karen Mang, a North Vancouver RCMP officer and alumnus of the Chamber Singers who joined them for this year's tour. The singers were continually enthralled by the beauty of South Africa, from the High Veld of Johannesburg to the tropical splendour of Natal, the rolling grasslands of the Transkei region and the geological splendour of Cape Town. Free time included visits to superb beaches, a game park, a steam train ride through the mountains in the Knysna region and visits to restaurants and clubs. It was suggested that the corporation which manufactures the South African "Castle Beer", was an unwitting sponsor of the choir's visit.

Critical acclaim included the following comments by Barbara Tome of the East London Times: The program was an ambitious one, but all the styles were sung with a confidence and an understanding beyond the years of the singers. Fine tuning, blend and great feeling for phrase and dynamics....words were crystal clear. Bruce More conducts with a minimum of fuss and has drawn from his talented young group something of great value - a love of music making and the technique to achieve a quality which takes their audience along with them.

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