



## HISTORY AND ACCOLADES

### THE CHOIR

The Stellenberg Girls Choir was established in 1999 under the baton of André van der Merwe. Members are all attending the Stellenberg High School in Cape Town, which has become known as an institution where choral singing is celebrated. Since its inception, the choir has won numerous first places in national and international choral competitions and is regarded as one of the best girls' choirs in the world.

- 2017 overall winners of the Johannes Brahms Choir competition in Wernigerode, Germany
- Overall winners of the *ATKV Nasionale Applous-kompetisie* 16 times - 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2016.
- 2014 during the World Choir Games in Riga, Latvia the SMK achieved a second place in the category "Spirit and Faith" with 94% to China who won with 94,5%. They also achieved a second place in the category "Contemporanea" with 93,5% and a third place in the category " Popular Choral Music" with an unbelievable 95% !
- 2012 won 2 categories (Music of the Religions and Musica Contemporanea) at the *World Choir Games* in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA.
- 2008 the Stellenberg Girls Choir achieved an outstanding 96.7% in the category 'Even Voices' at the 5th *Olympic Competition for Choirs* in Graz, Austria. This is the highest achievement ever recorded.
- 2007 they are awarded third place on the world ranking list compiled by Musica Mundi.
- 2006 they won the much acclaimed Choir of the World trophy in Llangollen Wales.
- 2004 they were awarded the highest percentage for any choir at the World Choir Olympics. These achievements are a testimony to the girls' talent, dedication and enthusiasm.
- 2002 they won the category for Women's Choirs at the *Llangollen International Eisteddfod* in Wales.

### MORE ABOUT ANDRE VAN DER MERWE

#### Guest Lecturer and Conductor

- Clinician and jury member for the British TV production *CorCymru* (February – April 2013).
- Guest conductor and lecturer for the **Choral Summer School** at the **Ionian University**, Greece (June 2013).
- Adjudicator and Clinician at the **Portuguese Summer Choral Festival**, for the **Escola Superior de Musica de Lisboa** (June 2013).
- Adjudicator and clinician for the **Llangollen International Eisteddfod**, Wales (July 2013).
- Guest Conductor and lecturer for the **Taipei International Choral Festival** and the **Taipei Philharmonic** (August 2013).

## Personal Acknowledgements

- Publication: André's arrangements of African music are published by *Earthsongs* in the USA - [www.earthsongschoralmusic.com](http://www.earthsongschoralmusic.com)
- Since 2012 André has been selected as the South African representative on the **World Choir Council** for **Interkultur**– [www.interkultur.com](http://www.interkultur.com)
- In 2012 **KykNET** announced André as the best presenter for the television programme **Fiesta**.
- In November 2012 André received a ministerial cultural award (Western Cape Government) for his work with choirs and the youth.
- In May 2012 André received a civic honorary award from the **City of Cape Town** for his work with the Stellenbosch University Choir and the South African Youth Choir.
- In October 2012 the Stellenbosch University Choir was announced as the number one choir on the **World Ranking List** (for the top 1000 international choirs) of Interkultur.

**The four choirs that he has conducted have won many national and international awards and prizes. Highlights include:**

**The South African Youth Choir** is a first for South Africa. Learners from all over South Africa and from various cultural backgrounds have been auditioned and selected to comprise this uniquely South African export product. At a personal performance for President Zuma in 2011 the president regarded the choir as a true example of the "Rainbow nation successfully in action."

- In July 2008 the choir participated at the "International Choral Kathaumixw" in Canada and won 1<sup>st</sup> places in the categories for Folklore and Chamber Choirs.

### **Pro Cantu:**

- Choir of the World (Llangollen, Wales, 2002)

### **Stellenbosch University Choir:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Mixed Youth Choirs (*World Choir Games, Bremen, 2004*)
- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Musica Sacra (*World Choir Games, Graz, 2008*)
- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Mixed Choirs & Musica Contemporanea (*World Choir Games, China, 2010*)
- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Mixed Choirs & Musica Sacra (*World Choir Games, Cincinnati, USA, 2012*).
- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Overall winners (World Choir Games, Riga 2014).
- The University Choir is currently ranked number 1 on *Interkultur's* world ranking list of the top 1000 international choirs.

### **Stellenberg Girls Choir:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Youth Choirs of Equal Voices (*World Choir Games, Bremen, 2004*)
- Overall winners: "Choir of the World" (*Llangollen, Wales, 2006*)
- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Youth Choirs of Equal Voices (*World Choir Games, Graz, 2008*)
- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Musica Contemporanea & Music of the Religions (*World Choir Games, Cincinnati, USA, 2012*)
- During the World Choir Games in Riga, Latvia the SMK achieved a second place in the category "Spirit and Faith" with 94% to China who won with 94,5%. They also achieved a second place in the category "Contemporanea" with 93,5% and a third place in the category "Popular Choral Music" with an unbelievable 95% !
- The Stellenberg Girls Choir is currently ranked number 7 on *Interkultur's* world ranking list of the top 1000 international choirs. They also are ranked number 2 on the list for international Youth Choirs.
- During the World Choir Games in Riga, Latvia the SMK achieved a second place in the category "Spirit and Faith" with 94% to China who won with 94,5%. They also achieved a second place in the

category “ Contemporanea” with 93,5% and a third place in the category “ Popular Choral Music” with an unbelievable 95% !

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- 2017 overall winners of the Johannes Brahms Choir competition in Wernigerode, Germany - <https://youtu.be/YJ2plpaeK90>

### **2017 Stellenberg Meisieskoor (SMK) en Stellenberg Seunskoor (SSK) wenners tydens die ATKV- Applouskompetisie**

En so kry André van der Merwe en sy hoërskoolkore dit weer reg! Ten spyte van ‘n terugslag vir André toe hy gedurende Meimaand ‘n dubbele hartaanval gehad het, asook kernlede van die Meisieskoor wat as gevolg van sportverpligtinge nie aan die kompetisie kon deelneem nie, seëvier beide SMK en SSK in hul onderskeie kategorieë. SMK word ook as die Algehele Wenner in die Meer Ervare Hoërskool- kategorie aangewys.

Die uitslag vir SMK is soos volg:

- Beste uitvoering van 'n Voorgeskrewe Lied (Meer Ervare Hoërskole)
- Beste Meer Ervare Hoërskool Meisieskoor: (94,37%)
- Algehele wenner Beste Meer Ervare Hoërskoolkoor

SSK is in 2015 gestig. Na slegs een jaar en na landwye uitdunronndtes is hul een van die 9 hoërskoolkore wat aangewys is om in die Nasionale ATKV-Aplous -kompetisie in die kategorie "Meer Ervare Hoërskole" mee te ding. Hulle word as die Beste Seunskoor (87,29%) aangewys.

Nie net voer André gedurende ‘n moeilike en veeleisende 2016 sy hoërskoolkore tot hierdie hoogtes nie, maar hy slaag ook daarin om tydens die Wêreldkoorspele in Sochi, Rusland met die USK (Universiteit Stellenbosch Koor) wêreldwyd die eerste plek vir kore te behaal.

END.