

Take Note



DRAKENSBERG
BOYS CHOIR SCHOOL

50
YEARS
1967-2017

ISSUE

84



- **HOW DRAKIES CAPTURED MY HEART**

- **HORSE RIDING**

THIS HAS BEEN A GOOD WEEK!

We have welcomed back to Drakies, Miss Charlotte Botha, known to many of you from her earlier sojourn here. We trust that her short stay with us will be both refreshing and rewarding, as she takes a break from her doctoral research.

Follow me to page 2



MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE HEAD

THIS HAS BEEN A GOOD WEEK! ... (Continued from page 1)

The senior boys played a very good game of rugby against Michaelhouse on Tuesday and really showed our hosts what Drakie gees is all about. Aside from the fact that, as their coach, I nearly went into cardiac arrest from the excitement of watching them play, it was a splendid afternoon and the boys returned to school in high spirits.


The boys have also returned from our short tour to Johannesburg having received critical acclaim both on stage and from host parents, a number of whom wrote to me to commend the boys on their manners and good Drakie behaviour whilst guests in their homes. This is always music to a Headmaster's ears! My Inbox is most often the arrival point for everything the boys do wrong, so to receive the occasional snippet of good news is always welcomed.

In my assembly on Monday and our staff meeting the same day, the need to pull back for a few weeks was emphasised. Tour season is over and, at least until the middle of June, we can focus all our efforts on classroom activities and exams. I have already noticed a number of the senior boys working in quiet spaces here and there and away from the bustle of the dormitories. They are taking their examination preparation seriously, which is good to see.

We also ran a series of study-skills workshops for the boys last week. These provided them with sound practical tips on how to prepare, how to study and how to approach examinations, which, as we all know, can be very stressful for some people. So this week, I have borrowed unashamedly from my good friend, Adam Rogers, the College Headmaster at Reddam House Umhlanga, who recently addressed his parent community on the issue of examinations. I have taken the liberty of amending his article here and there to fit the specific circumstances of our school...

Dr Judy Willis, an American neurologist writes in her article, "Brain-Based Strategies to Reduce Stress," that, *"...from a neurological perspective, high stress disrupts the brain's learning circuits and diminishes memory construction, storage, and retrieval. Neuroimaging research shows us that, when stresses are high, brains do not work optimally, resulting in decreased understanding and memory. In addition, stress reduces efficient retrieval of knowledge from the memory storage networks, so when under pressure, students find it harder to access information previously studied and learned."*

I am also well aware that as parents, you become very stressful around exam time, especially as you are not able to spend time with your boy, helping him prepare.



At the same time, my teachers realise that you cannot judge a child's academic ability or engagements based on a single examination result. More often than not, an examination or test result is merely a snapshot of a student's performance in a single assessment in a single moment on a single day. We, therefore, do not rely on examinations alone to derive a final mark for a subject.

Some parents and students have voiced their concern that too much time has been taken up in the pre-examination period with homework activities, assignments, sport and tours. The goal of learning is not only examination preparation. Students also need to be able to apply their learning to different contexts. We, therefore, try to engage our students in other performance tasks such as orals, practical work and investigation and also project-based learning to help deepen their understanding on both the factual and conceptual levels. This is what we term Continuous Assessment and it is through these activities that we believe our students not only experience their learning more meaningfully but Continuous Assessment also provides motivation to strengthen our students' long-term, durable memory networks. It is unfortunate that some boys believe that a concerted, short-term effort in the examinations will suffice for work shoddily done or not submitted during the term. They realise that mid-year examinations count for 60% of the term mark and fail to understand that by neglecting to work consistently all term, they are in fact leaving close to 40% of their marks on the table.

Smaller cycle tests, assignments and projects have been designed to assist the students in their examination preparation. Some might argue that these assignments are a better gauge of learning than formal examinations as they allow for better knowledge retrieval and application (and longer term access) than rote memory. Nevertheless, a combination of both the results from a formal academically rigorous examination together with other forms of assessment provides a more accurate final mark in a subject.

My teachers also provide further assistance to our boys in preparing for examinations by making themselves available after school hours, for a total of 4 hours/week, to reinforce the work covered in class or to provide answers to questions that have cropped up in the students' studying. We encourage the boys to take full advantage of this facility. Again, sadly, some of them do not avail themselves of this assistance.

Examinations are an unavoidable reality, but they are not the only indicator of academic success or failure. When we as teachers (and parents to a lesser degree) guide the boys with strategies to reduce examination stress, we also help them to build emotional resilience, learn more efficiently, and activate their highest levels of cognition to do the best that they can in the examinations.

I wish all our boys and teachers well in the preparation and writing of the mid-year examinations. Good luck!

.....
We look forward to welcoming parents to the campus this weekend for our quarterly Parents' Weekend, as well as members of our Board, gathering here for their quarterly Board meeting.
.....

Last Word.

80% of the exam is always based on the one lesson that you missed and the one topic that you didn't prepare.

Till next time,

Greg Brooks

Executive Head

NEWS FROM THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

WEDNESDAY CONCERT AWARDS COMMENDABLE PERFORMANCES



Owen Mngewu



Angus Sommerville



Lukhanyo Zulu



Brian Xulu



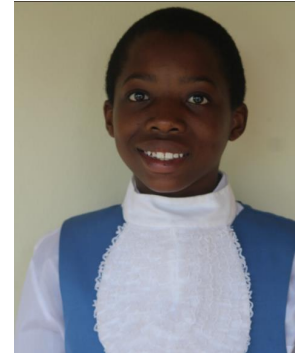
Joshua Naidoo



Matthew Robinson



Luke Brown



Albert Sibanda

VOICE GROUP OF THE WEEK: TENORS



CHORISTER OF THE WEEK



Max Tanesse

OUTSTANDING SOLOIST



Neo Ramalitse (Iza Ngomso)

MENTORS OF THE WEEK



Chris de Scally - Joshua Stuart's mentor



Sean Morruck - André Coetsee's mentor

NEW BOY OF THE WEEK



Tristan Hellberg

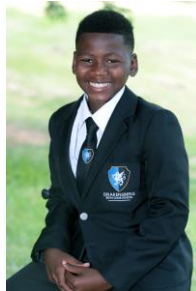
NEW BOYS: COMMENDABLE PERFORMANCES



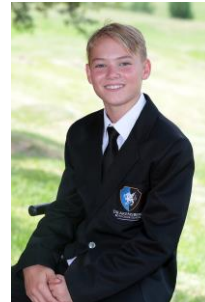
Tshiamo Boikhutso



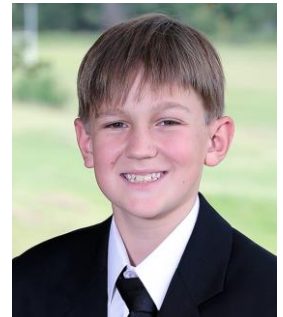
Sabelo Skosana



Kwanele Dlamini



L J Hay



James Jooste



Aidan McArthur



Stefan Pretorius



Lunga Mazibuko



André Coetsee

NEWS FROM A PASSIONATE SUPPORTER

HOW DRAKIES CAPTURED MY HEART

The first time I attended a concert of the Drakensberg Boys Choir was in 1997. Having attended many choir concerts from a young age, I immediately fell in love with this choir and instantly became a Drakies supporter.

When the choir came to Japan in 2001 and 2002 I took my family to their concerts and, before long, my husband, daughter and mother became equally avid Drakies fans.

My husband, Makoto, was already a music fan, enjoying jazz, classical music and pop music. Although the Drakies' genre of music was a new experience for him, he quickly embraced it. Thanks for making us so happy, Drakies!

My daughter, Ellie, accompanied me to South Africa in December 2001 and we thoroughly enjoyed our visit. Since then I have visited South Africa almost thirty times and have really appreciated all the assistance and hospitality I have received from Drakies families and staff.

Our visit in 2004 was an especially memorable occasion for Makoto, Ellie and me - at MiMs that year, Bunny Ashley-Botha bestowed the *Freedom of Drakensberg Choir* on us. It was such an honour. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqScBP-ZXgM>

In 2005, I suggested to my dear friend Dr Ngubane (the South African Ambassador to Japan at the time) that Drakies be invited to represent Africa at the *Aichi Expo 2005* in Japan. Fortunately he agreed and the embassy arranged for eighteen selected Drakies boys to be flown across to Japan in September to participate in the expo. Afterwards, my family arranged for the boys to travel from Aichi to Niigata where their music brought much pleasure to the people. Through music the boys overcame the language barrier and brought smiles to the faces of many Japanese people. They made friends wherever they went in Japan. How fantastic is that!

When the full choir came to Japan, I took Bunny, the staff and boys shopping. We had lunch together and had a really good time. When it was time for them to return to South Africa, many of their new Japanese friends and fans saw them off at the airport with tears in their eyes.

During my travels to the USA, the UK, Germany, Austria, China and South Korea, I was able to attend some of their concerts and was treated as part of the Drakies family. I have been shown nothing but kindness and friendship from the very beginning and nothing has changed.

We enjoy the beautiful harmony and fine voices of classical music and popular music, as well as the lively movement which accompanies African music. The Drakies choir is different from any other boys' choir. The boys don't only sing beautifully but their performances are characterised by enthusiasm and powerful energy. All I can say is that the Drakensberg Boys Choir is the best one in the world.

I am proud of being a Drakies supporter. I have countless beautiful memories and feel as though I am part of the Drakies family.

Thank you so much with all my heart!

Chieko Suzuki

PAGING THROUGH CHIEKO'S PHOTO ALBUM



2005 with Bunny



2008 tour to Austria



2010 tour to Korea



2014 during MiMs



2016 during MiMs



2016 during MiMs

PLEASE KEEP THEM IN YOUR PRAYERS

Three members of our extended Drakies family are battling illness at the moment and we ask you kindly, to keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Geoff Thompson, who taught English here until just over a year ago, is very ill in hospital and was visited on Tuesday evening by a contingent of Drakies staff. Although unable to speak he did recognise his visitors and beamed as they entered the room. They spent considerable, quality time with him, but he is ailing badly and we fear the worst.

Tanya Hildebrand, continues her valiant fight against cancer and we are keeping in regular contact. She has lost a great deal of weight but this is part of her health-management plan and we trust for her complete recovery.

Then we ask you to uphold Lauren de Scally in your prayers as she undergoes surgery today. We have faith that Lauren will soon make a full and speedy recovery.

We have candle burning in the staff room, daily, as we each think of and uphold each of these good folk in your hearts and minds.

Greg Brooks

Executive Head



NEWS FROM THE ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT

Congratulations to the following boys that have made it to the final of the Maths Challenge:

Nicholas	Robinson	4	Walther	De Bruin	6
Ethan	Seagreen	4	Christiaan	Esterhuizen	6
Brian	Brits	5	Tristan	Hellberg	6
Pierre	Esterhuizen	5	Zipho	Mpofu	6
Tjama	Keta	5	Kieran	Griffin	7
Khwezi	Msimang	5	L J	Hay	7
Bupe	Chiluba	6	Geo	Kirsten	7
Caleb	Coffey	6	Luan	Wakeford	7
Finlay	Dalrymple	6			

Well done boys! We look forward to following your progress.

Keegan Bentley





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YOUTH DAY CONCERT

Saturday 16 June 2018



in concert with the
Cincinnati Boychoir

KEN MACKENZIE AUDITORIUM
Drakensberg Boys Choir School
15h00 — 16h30

BOOK YOUR TICKETS ONLINE AT
dbc.nutickets.co.za

www.dbchoir.com



Ken Mackenzie
Foundation



SNIPPETS FROM THE SAN

Never mind flu season – here in the mountains we seem to be suffering from wrist and arm season! Wrist season inevitably coincides with rugby season. Fortunately, broken arms tend to be less popular in other months. Not that one can necessarily depend on previous trends.

Post-match rugby injuries seem to have incapacitated the majority of our senior players this week. Chef is of course livid. Two chaps are on crutches. Several others couldn't perform in the more vigorous pieces during Wednesday's concert owing to crippling pain. Choreographed moves had to be cancelled in another song. Dearie, dearie, dear.

A variety of soft tissue injuries dominated the complaints presented by the ravaged crowd of Michaelhouse-inflicted casualties. There has fortunately been little need for aggressive interventions, and complete and rapid recovery is collectively expected. Except for one poor fellow and his arm, that is. It could be worse I suppose - we could have lost.

Rugby injuries are my biggest challenge when it comes to dredging up sympathy for boys. It is a personal choice for people to participate in the blimbling game. Everyone knows that people get hurt in rugby. Logic thus dictates that individuals who play, are choosing to be hurt. True or false? This pretty much means rugby injuries are self-inflicted, which doesn't lend itself to a gentle hand. Perhaps they should all be soundly whipped to dampen enthusiasm for their repeated stupidity. It could be fun – one lashing for a bruise, three for a sprain, six of the best for a fracture, and so on. I bet they would all switch to tennis in no time.

Sister Lianne

GRIFFIN HOUSE

The boys in Griffin House spent much of the weekend of 12 to 13 May catching up on all the sleep they had missed during their hectic but successful International Tour.

On Monday, 14 May it was back to the grindstone for them all with examinations looming and preparation under way for the World Choir games.

Griffin House is a very busy House with the boys working hard to pass their songs. Congratulations to all of those who achieved African status.

This week saw several boys seeking TLC after a thrilling and successful 7s rugby match against Michaelhouse, in which we emerged the victors by 44 points to 25.

I am look forward to seeing all of you who are attending Parents' Weekend and I am quite sure you can't wait to spend time with your boys.

Verna Ayliffe
House Parent



Rugby injuries



DRAKENSBERG
BOYS CHOIR SCHOOL

OPEN WEEKEND

22+23 June 2018



**Boys in Grade 3 - 7 are invited to audition
and spend the weekend with
South Africa's Singing Ambassadors.
Booking essential.**

036 468 1012 • Cell: 083 773 7450 • bespag@dbchoir.com
Twitter: @DBChoir • Facebook: Drakensberg Boys Choir School
www.dbchoir.com



DRAKENSBERG
BOYS CHOIR SCHOOL

OPEN WEEKEND

22 + 23 June 2018

PROGRAMME

Friday 22 June

- 12:00 - 15:00 Arrival and Welcome.
- Individual interviews with boys and parents.
- Voice assessments.
- 15:00 - 16:00 Information session for parents.
- 15:00 - 16:00 English assessment.
- 16:00 - 17:00 Fun activity for boys.
- 16:15 - 18:00 Cocktail party for parents.
- 18:00 - 20:00 Boys gather around the campfire.

Saturday 23 June

- 07:00 Boys wake up.
- 07:45 Breakfast is served to the boys.
- 08:30 Maths assessment.
- 09:30 Morning tea.
- 10:00 - 10:45 Music workshop for boys.
- 10:00 - 11:00 Q&A session for parents.
- 10:45 - 11:00 Q&A session for boys with Executive Head.
- 11:00 Performance by the Drakensberg Boys Choir.
- 11:30 Departure.

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NEWS FROM THE SPORT DEPARTMENT

HORSE RIDING

Drakies on horseback every Thursday afternoon at Cathkin Equestrian Centre.

Lorna Culwick

lculwick@dbchoir.com



Back: Mohau Tladi, Zipho Mpofu, Stanley Horing

Front: Siyabonga Mpofu, Vuyisile Mcanyana, Matthew Beuster

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Khezwi Msimang

6 June



Lukhanyo Zulu

6 June



Ithebogeng Machobane

7 June



Siphesihle Sigwebela

8 June



Albert Sibanda

10 June

DRAKENSBERG BOYS CHOIR SCHOOL

Calendar 1 June – 10 June 2018

DATE	EVENT	TIME
1-3 June	Parents' Weekend	
6 June	Wednesday Concert	15:30-17:30
9-15 June	Exams	



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