

**For your Diary**

**Tue 3 Aug** – Sales table and Fair Trade

**Wed 25 Aug** – Next Committee meeting

**Sat 28 Aug** – Crypt rehearsal 10:00am – 12:30pm (tbc)

**Fri 3 Sep** – Kings/Queens PAC rehearsal 7:30 – 10:00pm

**Sat 4 Sep** – Rehearsal 2:00 – 4:00pm

**Sat 4 Sep** – *Zimbe!* Performance 7:30pm

**Tue 7 Sep** – Sales table and Fair Trade

**Tue 5 Oct** – Sales table and Fair Trade

**Tue 12 Oct** – No rehearsal

**Sat 20 Nov** – Britten's *Saint Nicolas*

**A Word from the Chair**

*Zimbe!* makes quite a refreshing change for the Choir. Alexander L'Estrange, the composer, said of it "the songs ... are fun and infectiously, joyously tuneful", and looking across at the sopranos last week, I saw only beaming singers, swinging and swaying to the music. The work is certainly causing a buzz.

*Zimbe!* requires for movement so the committee is considering what steps to take in this regard! In keeping with this, we will abandon black folders in favour of the bright covers of the scores and we're looking at different options for our uniforms to complete a vivid and vibrant scene.

Talking of buzz, three cheers to Rosi for dreaming up and running the Buzz Quiz. It created a happy buzz in the crypt. Thanks, too, Rosi and Leta, for your enthusiastic organisation of the Sales Tables, which are generating good sums each month.

The spirit in the Choir is strong and very positive and it's great for the committee especially in such a year when we have been

hamstrung with much of our planning. The support shown for the 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations is great and fundraising has been given a kick start with a very generous donation from one member. All fundraising ideas are gratefully received.

In joyful singing, Deborah

**Apologies**

Phone Loraine 454-4534 or email [members@cityofdunedinchoir.org.nz](mailto:members@cityofdunedinchoir.org.nz)

If you are going to be away for 2 or more rehearsals please record the absences in the back of the roll books. Thanks.

**Reminder**

Please destroy all *Zimbe!* photocopies handed out over the past few weeks as these are not legal copies. They were made for short-term use only, while we were waiting on the published scores to arrive. The Choir does not want to be in breach of copyright laws!

The Choir purchased 120 scores of *Zimbe!* at a considerable cost and we anticipate they will be in demand for use by other choirs throughout New Zealand. The expectation, therefore, is that we can recoup a significant portion of their cost, or possibly, make a profit and add to our library fund. Please treat them with the greatest respect and care for this asset.

**Fund-raising Corner**

Thanks to all members for an excellent Sales Table effort; we banked \$223.80 for July. Without your enthusiasm we could not do it!

Place your orders for Fair Trade goodies with Julia Lawson. See her at rehearsal or phone 454-5383 or [jmlawson@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jmlawson@xtra.co.nz)

The mid-year raffle was once again a success, adding an awesome \$620 to the kitty. Thanks to all for participating and to Rebecca for organising! Yay! Do we rock or what?



The Buzz Quiz is all the buzz! Remember to bring your dollar on all Tuesdays except sales table nights. Guess the answer and win a prize!

## **African music: feel the rhythm**

*By Leta*

Since we are getting well into rehearsing the *Zimbe!* songs now, I thought I might point singers to the official *Zimbe!* website at [www.zimbe.net](http://www.zimbe.net) for a look-see and finding out more about the work and Alexander L'Estrange, the composer.

"Composer Alexander L'Estrange, himself a highly regarded jazz pianist and bass player, has chosen songs from all over Africa and arranged them wonderfully, interleaving the choral writing with the instruments of the jazz ensemble." Visit the *Zimbe!* site and read more about it there.

I have no doubt that City of Dunedin Choir and David Burchell will make a huge success of the forthcoming performance in September, but I cannot help wondering how easy (or hard) it will be for singers schooled mainly in the British tradition of choral singing, and mainly in music of the Renaissance era, to loosen up and warm up to traditional African folk music.

One main characteristic of 'original' traditional singers in Africa is that they had no voice tuition (and now I am not referring to the modern groups in Africa performing traditional songs) so their notes were often slurred. I've noticed that L'Estrange portrays that effect with small grace notes and deliberate slurs. The danger is that singers from Western cultures will sing the notes too precisely as written.

Something to keep in mind is that traditionally the African tribes sang while they worked, walked long distances, danced and, of course, also while sitting quietly in pensive mood. Mostly there is much movement associated with their singing. Westerners need to "loosen up" and feel the rhythm in their bones if they want to sound authentic singing these songs of Africa.

Before coming to New Zealand I worked at the South African Bureau of Standards in Pretoria, which had 1400 employees at the time. The SABS also had a choir of about 25 members strong, directed by a capable young African woman. The membership was roughly one-third European (yes, 'moi' included) to two-thirds African peoples. The choir sang, but for one exception, only African songs. While rehearsing or performing the singers never stood with their feet planted - they always swayed from one foot to the other or forwards and backwards, even taking a step or two; like each song had its own unwritten dance. Someone would spontaneously and very naturally take the lead moving this way or that, and the rest would follow - the movements were never scripted or rehearsed. Quite naturally the European members would follow the lead of the African members. It always looked right - because the rhythms came from within.

Ah, yes, you must be wondering what the 'exception' was - are you ready?

*Gaudeamus igitur* !!! Mmmm... that performance was less successful, the African membership found the Latin words and precision of the music exceedingly hard to master. Anyway, much fun was had by all.

## **Notable Choir Blog Posts**



**Online Practice Resources** – Check out the links to the video clips and sound bites of the songs for the forthcoming concert. Don't miss Leanne's interesting post on the rhythm, movement and richness of black music.



<http://twitter.com/codchoir>



## **Last note**

"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything." - Plato

