

Arts & Leisure



SOWETO SINGS: White Rock Concerts presents the 25-voice South African choir at White Rock Baptist Church on May 2.

*Peace Arch
News*

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The sounds of hope

The hopeful sounds of the new South Africa will be heard on Friday, May 2, at 8 p.m. when Soweto Sings appears for White Rock Concerts at White Rock Baptist Church.

It's the final concert for the 1996-97 concert series, but committee members already report 30 per cent renewals

for the long-running subscription series.

The appearance of the 25-voice African choir, directed by Enoch Yeni and conducted by Ntombi Mobassa, is tinged with sadness — the choir's founder, Jabulani Mazibuko, died just as Soweto Sings embarked on its Canadian tour.

The choir is dedicating its

White Rock performance to the memory of Mazibuko, who died 10 days short of his 82nd birthday.

Mazibuko, who founded the choir in 1969 while working as principal of a Soweto elementary school, had travelled to Canada with it for both the 1993 World Symposium of

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Choir brings message of peace

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Choral Music and for its triumphant tour of 1995.

Six weeks before the choir left for Canada he told friends he viewed his illness only as an inconvenient postponement of his return.

From his hospital bed he helped select the program. Sung in Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho, English and Afrikaans, it captures the vibrancy and warmth of Africa in songs that recount scenes of brav-

ery, sadness, kindness and love.

Soweto Sings is more than a touring choir on a visit to a foreign country far from its homeland. It is an ensemble that is determined to prove that its township of Soweto can now heal old wounds through great song, and need not be remembered solely for its sad history of violence, torture, murder and riots which

accompanied years of Apartheid.

Soweto Sings, which performs in the traditional garb of the many national groups it represents, is unique for its mixture of tribal heritages. There are members of each South African tribe in the choir, all of them personifying the legacies of these proud and ancient peoples while singing for peace and unity

among them.

The international success of the touring choir, an outgrowth of the Soweto Teachers' Choir, is proof that even forty years of apartheid could not kill the music of the tribes.

Mazibuko, born in the Orange Free State, spent most of his adult life in music and education. As principal of an elementary school in Soweto, he introduced music into the

school even though the subject was specifically excluded from the curriculum for township schools during the apartheid era.

In spite his lack of formal training, he was recognized in his lifetime as the doyen of South African choral conductors and musicians.

For further information on this concert and the White Rock Concerts series, call 538-2187 or 535-6692.