Soweto Gospel Choir
**Program subject to change**

Musical Directors  David Mulovhedzi (1948-2009), Diniloxolo Ndlakuse, Kevin Williams

Producers:  Andrew Kay
Executive Producer /Director  Beverly Bryer
Associate Producers  Margot Teele & Toni Rudov
Company Manager:  Jimmy Mulovhedzi
Choreographer/Choir Master  Shimmy Jiyane
Costume Designer  Lyn Leventhorpe
Record Producer  Diniloxolo Ndlakuse & various (Divine Decade)
Tour Manager  Tessa Kay
Production/Lighting  Tyrone White
Stage Manager  Maija Putans
Sound Operator  Nichola Walker

www.sowetogospelchoir.com

Exclusive North American Representation:
IMG Artists
Carnegie Hall Tower
152 West 57th Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10019
Phone: 212-994-3500, Fax: 212-994-3550, www.imgartists.com
Hiyo Mthate
Ziyama’umelusi
Kae Le Kae
Libala Kuye
Emlanjeni/Yelele
Asimbonanga/Biko
Avulekile Amasango/One Love
Calvary
Meadowlands
Put Your Hand in the Hand medley
Nomalanga
Dance
Lizalis’indingalako/Thina Sizwe
Shosholoza
Many Rivers to Cross/Swing Low
Njalo
Shosholoza
Arms of An Angel
Ziphinkomo
Eli
Pata Pata

Traditional
Traditional
Traditional Arr: V. Jiyane/F. Sidumo
Trad Arrs: V. Shabalala, V Madondo, L Mhlongo
Trad Arranger: J. Mulovhedzi
J Clegg/P Gabriel
A. Shabalala/B. Marley
Traditional Arr: B. Neube
P. Simon/A. Garfunkel
S. Vilakazi
G McLellan/M Dawson/S Ford
M Shabalala
Traditional
Traditional
Trad Arr: L Bok/V Msimango
J Cliff/Traditional Arr: J Mulovhedzi
Traditional
Traditional Arr: L. Bok/V. Msimango
Sarah Maclachlan
C Semenya
Z Bala/V Shabalala/S Nxumalo/R Nyamane
Makeba/Ragovoy
SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR – BIOGRAPHY

• Soweto Gospel Choir was formed in November, 2002
• In December, 2002 their first album “Voices of Heaven” was recorded and went on to reach the No. 1 spot on Billboard’s World Music Chart within 3 weeks of its release in the US
• In 2003 the choir won its first award, a Helpmann Award, Australia’s prestigious Performing Arts Award, for “Best Contemporary Music Concert”
• This success was followed when they won a 2003 American Gospel Music Award for “Best Choir”
• In the same year, they won an American Gospel Music Award for “Best International Choir”
• They performed for President Bill Clinton at a corporate function in Little Rock, Arkansas
• In October 2006, the choir performed as invited guests for their Patron, Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s 75th Birthday Celebrations, in front of an illustrious audience which included former President Nelson Mandela, Mrs Zanele Mbeki, Tokyo Sexwale, Samuel L Jackson, Alfre Woodard and Carlos Santana
• They featured on a guest appearance with Diana Ross, Deborah Cox and Danny K for the “Unite of the Stars” Gala Banquet in South Africa in November 2006
• They were invited guests on NBC’s “Today Show” as well as on “Late Night with Conan O’Brien”
• The choir have also made a guest appearance on ‘The Tonight Show with Jay Leno’
• In December 2006 they performed at Sun City, South Africa, for Oprah Winfrey and 200 of her V.I.P. guests, including Mariah Carey, Mary J Blige, Tina Turner, Patti Labelle, Sydney Poitier and Quincy Jones
• On 11 February 2007, Soweto Gospel Choir received its greatest accolade, a Grammy Award for their second CD “Blessed”, in the category “Best Traditional World Music”
• At the same time, they were nominated for the 26th International Reggae and World Music Awards, held at the Apollo Theatre, Harlem, on 5 May, in the category “Contribution to World Music”, alongside Jimmy Cliff, Salif Keita, Youssou N’Dour and Ziggy Marley
• In May 2007, the choir won a SAMA Award (South African Music Association Award) in the Category “Best Live Performance DVD”
• In June 2007 Soweto Gospel Choir was the support act for the Red Hot Chilli Peppers at their concerts in Germany
• To add to their string of national and international awards, in November 2007 Soweto Gospel Choir won a Metro FM Music Award for Best Gospel Album for “African Spirit”, based on nominations submitted by the radio station’s listeners, and the public
• In February 2008, the choir was awarded a second Grammy Award for their third album “African Spirit”, in the “Best Traditional World Music” category
• Also in February 2008, the choir was honoured with the PanSALB Award for Multilingualism and Nation Building, for “Album of the Decade”
• They performed with Celine Dion during her “Taking Chances” tour of South Africa
• The choir has had the honour of performing with gospel legends Bebe Winans and Kirk Franklin
• While in New Orleans, they recorded a track with rock legend Robert Plant, which was included on a Fats Domino tribute album, with proceeds going to the victims of Hurricane Katrina
• Their 46664 London performance of “Weeping”, with Josh Groban and Vusi Mahlasela, is featured on Josh’s latest album “Collection”
• The choir has toured the world extensively, performing at prestigious venues like Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House, the Nelson Mandela Theatre and Royal Festival Hall in London.
• They have performed at high profile festivals such as the Edinburgh Festival, the Adelaide Festival, the Hong Kong Festival, and the London Festival, always to huge acclaim
• Soweto Gospel Choir received its third Grammy nomination in December 2008, this time in the category Best Contemporary World Music, for their album, “Live at the Nelson Mandela Theatre”
• The song “Down To Earth” from the blockbuster Wall-E movie, their collaboration with Peter Gabriel, won a Grammy in the Best Movie Song category
• In February 2009, the choir became the first South African artist to perform at the Academy Awards, when they sang “Down To Earth”, the Gabriel/Newman Oscar-nominated song, with John Legend
• In March 2009, they were nominated for three SAMAs (South African Music Awards), for their cd and dvd, “Live At the Nelson Mandela Theatre”, winning the Award for “Best Duo or Group”
• In May 2009, the choir was invited to perform at the Inauguration of South Africa’s new President
• In November, members of Soweto Gospel Choir were flown to Los Angeles to take part in a major Pepsi advertising campaign, alongside Akon and Keri Hilson
• The choir was one of three featured African artists for the FIFA World Cup Draw held in Cape Town in December 2009
In April 2010, Soweto Gospel Choir was honoured with the inaugural International Achievement Award, at the South African Music Awards held at Sun City.

Also in April, the choir was invited to perform at the Opening Ceremony of the 2010 World Trade Expo, held in Shanghai, as the African representative.

The choir collaborated with U2, as the featured South African artist, on the songs “Streets Have No Name”, “Magnificent” and “Boots” for ESPN’s promotional campaign for the 2010 World Cup. Excitingly, the campaign paid dividends, as along with ESPN and U2, Soweto Gospel Choir received a Sports Emmy Award as winners of the Outstanding Music Composition/Direction/Lyrics category on 2 May 2011.

They can then add an Emmy to their two Grammys, three ‘associated ‘Grammys, three SAMAS and one Oscar nomination – an amazing achievement.

The choir has also been featured in several prestigious magazines and books including in Time magazine and in Andrew Zuckerman's “Music”, alongside such music heavyweights as Russell Simmons, Herbie Hancock, Ozzy Osborne, John Legend and Mark Knopfler.

They performed at the FIFA World Cup Kick-Off Concert in Soweto, the night before the the opening of the World Cup in June, with a international and African line-up including the Black-Eyed Peas, Shakira, Angelique Kidjo and John Legend.

In December 2010, Soweto Gospel Choir received its fourth Grammy nomination, in the Best Traditional World Music category, for its album “Grace”. The choir was featured alongside the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the song “Baba Yetu” and on the album “Calling All Dawns”, both of which won Grammys in February 2011.

From May – July 2011, members of the choir toured Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, to rave reviews, while others performed in Guadeloupe, French Caribbean.

In July 2011, eighteen choir members performed six concerts in Maastricht, Holland, with top selling classical violinist, Andre Rieu. They joined the Harlem Gospel Choir on stage as a first time collaboration between these world famous choirs.

Soweto Gospel Choir joined Archbishop Desmond Tutu and his guests for his 80th birthday celebrations, held in Cape Town in October 2011. They performed at the launch of his new book, and backed Bono on “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For”, as a surprise for the Arch. They also sang with other artists at both the cathedral service and the private luncheon for their patron. Bono described them as “brilliant”!

They performed with leading South African artists at the ANC Centenary Celebrations in Bloemfontein on 8 January 2012.

In June 2012, Soweto Gospel Choir was invited by South African sensation Zahara, to perform with her and special guest Leroy Bell as part of two sold out concerts that were filmed for her forthcoming dvd.

Other artists the choir performed with in South Africa during 2012, as their special guests, were Andre Rieu and Johnny Clegg.

In December, Soweto Gospel Choir was nominated for its second Kora (All Africa) Award.

In March 2013, the choir’s fifth album “Soweto Gospel Choir & Friends - Divine Decade” was released as a celebration of the choir’s 10th Anniversary. They were joined on the album by several guest artists including local icons Zahara, The Soil, HHP, Elvis Blue, Corlea, Yvonne Chaka Chaka with Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Johnny Clegg, as well as international artists Joepraize from Nigeria, Eric Wainaina from Kenya, Paul Ruske from New Zealand, Robert Plant and U2.

Also in March, the choir returned to Australia and New Zealand to perform at WOMAD in front of many thousands of people, culminating in a sold out concert at the Sydney Opera House.

In May 2013, Soweto Gospel Choir was nominated for a SAMA in the Best Collaboration category for their collaboration with Zahara on the song “Bambelele”.

Later that month, the choir travelled to Addis Ababa to perform at the African Union’s 50th Celebrations, with other guest artists Papa Wemba, Salif Keita and Judith Sephuma.

In July, they performed for the first time at the Montreal Jazz Festival, as part of their 10th Anniversary celebrations, to rave audience responses and reviews.

The choir is an Ambassador for Nelson Mandela’s 46664 campaign and has performed at the Cape Town, Johannesburg, London and New York concerts with artists such as Peter Gabriel, Bono, Queen, Jimmy Cliff, Johnny Clegg, Eddie Grant Amy Winehouse, Queen Latifah, Wyclef Jean, Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder.

They are also Ambassadors for SHOUT, 1Goal, United Nation’s MDG Envos for Africa and Interpol’s “Proud to Be” campaign.

Soweto Gospel Choir has founded its own AIDS orphans foundation, Nkosi’s Haven Vukani, to assist organisations that receive little or no funding. To date, the choir has collected over R5 million for their foundation.

In South Africa, the choir performs for a variety of charitable organisations.
WHAT THEY’RE SAYING ABOUT SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR

“There is simply no flaw here”
Evening News, Scotland

“When they open their mouths, the sense of texture is flawless…here is energy and passion in song”
Business Day, Johannesburg

“The public will be blown away”
Daily Sun, Johannesburg

“These absolutely thrilling singers need nothing but their voices to make dazzling music”
Billboard

“Simply the best”
The Star Tonight, Johannesburg

“This is a tour de musical force….Soweto Gospel Choir is a slice of musical heaven”
Australian Stage, Melbourne

“A singularly joyful sound”
O Magazine, USA

“Occasionally, a diamond of such brilliance is unearthed that you find yourself compelled to develop a near-fanatical enthusiasm for it”
Manchester News

“The crowd was held in sway by the sheen and spectacle of a masterful performance”
Seattle News

“Meticulous and unstoppable…spirited and spectacular”
The New York Times

“I was left awestruck by the choir’s majestic and moving performance. There is no equal to their passion and power”
Three Weeks, Edinburgh

“Soweto Gospel Choir mesmerised the captive audience”
The Sowetan, Johannesburg

“You can’t fake those smiles…nor can you fake the sheer joy in just being alive which seemed to govern every move by these colourfully clad singers, dancers and instrumentalists”. The West Australian, May 2011

“An explosion of colour, music, dance and rhythm, and a full dose of life. When they sing, they mean it; when they dance, they mean it; when they smile, they mean it. From the first blast of harmonies, we were under the spell of Soweto Gospel Choir”. InDaily, Adelaide, June 2011

“African Grace is a celebration of the supreme joy of music, life, and love, and the beauty of human voices, movement and collaboration. The energy of Soweto Gospel Choir is truly amazing. The whirlpool of talent leaves you gobsmacked”
Australian Stage, June 2011

“Soweto Gospel Choir’s performance at the Cairns Civic Theatre was nothing short of magnificent”
The Cairns Post, June 2011

“Soweto Gospel Choir worked their magic on the audience last night.……the audience knew they have been blessed with a powerful and very remarkable performance”
Taranaki Daily News, New Zealand July 2011-
"The amazing performers transformed the starchy venue into a theatre of praise and celebration. They don’t need the ever-growing list of pop stars they’ve performed with to validate them. They stand on their own stunning merits, achievements and abilities"

Nottingham Post, 2011

“You cannot fail to have a smile on your face after watching a performance by Soweto Gospel Choir. Since the choir started in 2002, its style has become a worldwide phenomenon and you can see why”

This is Gloucestershire, 2011

“It was clear the choir were singing songs from the depths of their soul and the feeling behind them was electric. Verdict – amazing"

Kenilworth Weekly News, UK 2011

“The choir was brilliant!”

Bono, Archbishop Tutu’s 80th Birthday celebrations, 2011

“Presenting grace of form and grace of God in one program is a tall order but the choir pulled it off to perfection. The costumes were brilliant, the songs powerful, the sound heavenly, and the dancing exuberant.

Classical Voice, North Carolina, 2012

“Breathtaking to the eye and ear, Soweto had the audience having a good time: clapping Soweto rhythms and waving its arms in unison, reminiscent of rock concerts with American youth melding”

The Boston Musical Intelligencer, 2012

“Dazzling and unified.....Soweto Gospel Choir was as much to look at as to listen to. The human spirit – this you couldn’t miss”

Los Angeles Times, 2012

“Lady patron (Stalls T11 & 12) was complaining that the people behind her were clapping too loudly, having too much fun, singing along and being very loud. I moved her into Stalls V31 & 32, to accommodate her, as I did not want to approach the other patrons because they were having too much fun!”

Perth Concert Hall Event Coordinator, March 2013

“Phenomenal Soweto Gospel Choir”

The Star, South Africa May 2013

“Boasting two Grammy Awards, an Emmy Award, SA Music Awards, and having performed at the Oscars all in just 10 years, easily makes this the world's best choir”

City Press, South Africa May 2013

“Celebrating its 10th Anniversary, Soweto Gospel Choir absolutely killed in a joyous, explosive performance at the Maison Symphonique de Montreal....One of the most inspired shows of this year’s Montreal Jazz Festival...the stuff of chills”

The Gazette, Montreal, July 2013

“Soweto Gospel Choir is nothing less than an international treasure. You simply can’t fake the type of joy that the singers pour into the music....fans were swept away”

JazzTimes, Montreal July 2013

“Grace” album reviews:

“Soweto Gospel Choir’s latest album “Grace”, is easily as exuberant and inspired as any of its past efforts. The aptly title 19-song set is a creative blending of traditional South African gospel numbers with elegantly conceived arrangements of contemporary tunes. The choir’s performance is a sustained display of individual and ensemble virtuosity, underwritten by its deep spiritual sensibility.”

Billboard, February 2010
“Beautiful voices, pristine musical arrangements and tremendous instrumentation permeate the 19 tunes on Grace. These singers bring real grace, human and divine, to this elegant, soulful album”.
Arkansas Gazette, February 2010

“If you have only 1 hour and 10 minutes, feed your soul with “Grace”. The 26 member troupe proves that joy is nondenominational”
The Oprah Magazine, USA, January 2010

“The 19 selection CD is certainly another award winning album. The harmony is almost perfect – if there is such a thing”.
Baltimore Times, February 2010

“Divine Decade” album reviews:
The Soweto Gospel Choir is known for their versatile style and ability to turn any sound into a melody. Their strong vocals and moving music has set them apart over the years. The 19-track album tells a story of praise and worship. Sedi Laka, Emlanjeni/Yelele, Mighty God, Angel and Rain On You will make you sing from bottom of your heart.
Sunday Sun, March 2013

“This is a world class eclectic offering that celebrates gospel standards, Motown soul, R & B and South African gospel, a landmark album that will surely launch them into the next decade on a high note”
Sowetan, March 2013

“They have a voice that stands out in the world after 10 years. The choir sings with a host of talent artists…..the result is a multi-faceted recording which shows the wonderful diversity of the group’s style, as a Gospel choir which is also able to perform in nearly all kinds of musical genres. The songs on the Divine Decade album have a little bit of everything, and this tuneful disc is bound to please a wide selection of music lovers”.
Sunbuzz, Sunday Sun April 2013

“A glorious treat…..they’ve managed to take praise and worship to a whole new level”.
Tvplus April 2013

Ratings: Sound Technical: 4/5     “I Like It Factor”: 9/10     MIO Rating: 4/5   
Music International Online, April 2013

“Divine Decade’ .....songs that showcase the choir’s incredible versatility. As trailblazers in the choral game, the choir is leading the way for other groups in the industry.”
Weekend Witness, May 2013

www.sowetogospelchoir.com