

NEWSLETTER

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Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life. ~ Berthold Auerbach

Dear Friends,

The CMDA has had a busy year, with many performances and numerous activities, the details of which we would love to share with you. In particular, the following have been major highlights for us:

Donor Concert - Held in March this concert created awareness for us and a generous response from our local community, and from donors further afield. An exciting and encouraging time for us.

Uplands Festival - several bands performed in the main entertainment tent at the Uplands Festival and the feedback was most positive, many people were amazed at the talent of our youngsters.

Innibos – two of our bands performed a 45 minute slot. This was particularly well received with some saying it was the best performance they had seen at the Festival.

Elvis Blue concert – this was a fabulous opportunity for our bands to perform with a star! Elvis connected with the youngsters and ran a workshop where he discussed his career and the various challenges and successes along the way. This was inspirational and exciting for the kids. Several bands performed at the concert, and a great evening was had by all, our largest audience at the PAC.

Parlotones - We are thrilled that the Parlotones have agreed to become Patrons of our Program. This gives us added exposure on a national level and it means that they will commit to a charity concert once every five years. All the income will benefit the program and our community.

FACILITIES AT THE PAC

Our beautiful 117 year old Schiedmayer & Sohne piano was recently refurbished, and sits proudly on the main stage. We purchased a valuable library of traditional African music from which to draw inspiration, and we were able to purchase a selection of marimba instruments. Gradually our range of instruments and equipment is expanding, enabling us to offer a first class facility for our young musicians.



In addition to the musical instruments and equipment at our PAC, we are putting together a mobile performing rig to allow our members to perform at schools and small venues in the area.

The purpose of this is to showcase the talent that is developing and to recruit additional members to our cause. In this regard, Musa and Jo have planned a 'township tour' for our bands beginning September at all the local high schools.

PEER TO PEER PROGRAM (P2P)

Our Peer to Peer program was launched in January 2012, and takes place at the PAC. This brings together members from all our hubs where with the assistance of music, drama and dance coaches we focus on skills development. Children who participate are able to spend the day learning drama techniques, including mime, and have the opportunity to hone their dance skills. The peer to peer gatherings now take place on the weekends, which means youngsters have a healthy and creative outlet for their energies, in other words they are off the streets, and onto the stage!



We were privileged in June to be visited by renowned and internationally acclaimed Mime artist John Jacobs (left) who has studied under the direction of Marcel Marceau in Paris, France. John was performing at Innibos and took the time out to visit our centre. He spent a day with us, giving our P2P group a lesson in performing. John was so impressed with the facilities at the PAC, and described them as 'world class'. John returns at the end of September for a week of intensive coaching and will put on a one man show on 5th October.

We are very grateful to the enthusiastic and willing coaches who give so generously of their time and expertise to teach CMDA members in our P2P program, and elsewhere.

COMMUNITY

We are proud to be able to offer our facilities to other non-profit organisations. This year the PAC has been used to host rehearsals and functions for Autotec Foundation. Lowveld Chamber Music Association will rehearse and perform the opera Carmen on our stage, in October. Rotary and WESSA have used the PAC, and we manage to generate some income by renting the facility to local community groups and individuals for private functions.



In April this year, Rotary's Camp Quality children spent a happy afternoon making music with several CMDA members, who gladly shared their skills. Children were able to try various instruments, participate in a drumming workshop and learnt some dance moves too.

A lot of fun was had by all and it was evident that when people make music together, the troubles of the world are laid aside, if only for a little while!





MPOWER OPEN MIC SERIES

The MPowerFM Open Mic Series is an initiative between MPowerFM and the CMDA to develop and provide exposure to unsigned musicians within Mpumalanga. It is hosted at the Performing Arts Centre in Casterbridge on a monthly basis and each event features eight performers.

Based on voting by MPowerFM listeners on the MPowerFM Website, the top four performers are then invited to participate in a radio interview and then progress to the semi final round.

The 14th September event is rumoured to feature the coach of the Puma's performing a few Neil Diamond numbers with the entire Puma's team in support of him in the audience.

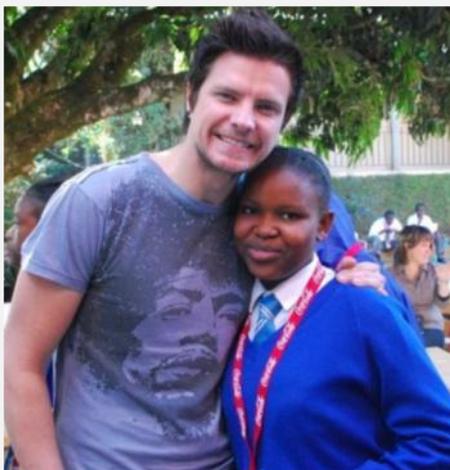
Watch this space!



Our mission: To use music to develop shared values between communities and cultures; identify and grow talented youthful musicians whose skill set will be enhanced; within an inspirational and respectful program

THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT - OUR MEMBERS!

The concerts, performances and bells and whistles are wonderful but what the CMDA is really about are the members of our program; young people from varying backgrounds, different communities, all sharing a love of learning, and a love of making music. It has been rewarding for us to work with these children, and to watch them develop and grow, both in skills and more importantly in confidence. We interviewed several of them, as we were interested to hear how being a part of the CMDA has impacted on their lives.



Sibahle Chauke

Sibhale (15) lives with her parents and 3 siblings in kaBokweni, and she attends Victory Park Combined School. At our first hub launch at the Alliance Church hub Sibahle was there with her photo and form completed, ready to register. She was also one of the first girls to audition for a spot in the Emazweni band. At that stage she was a very shy girl, who knew she could sing but was definitely unsure about standing up and demonstrating her skills in front of a panel of judges.

A year and a half later and Sibhale is one of the lead singers in Emazweni band and she also sings in Vital Crew. She has performed in all of our concerts, including our Donors Concert which her mother was able to attend, much to her delight.

When speaking to Sibahle, she is keen to let us know that she regards the CMDA as 'her home'. The new friends she has made have enhanced her life, and she loves to learn from Aggi and the other teachers. She is at the Alliance hub twice a week for Coaching sessions, and attends the weekend Peer to Peer workshops at the PAC, where she is learning new skills such as drama and dance.

With a huge smile Sibahle tells us how proud she is when CMDA posters go up in kaBokweni and her peers ask her 'is that you?' Her confidence has grown with exposure to new people and places, and she was thrilled to meet Elvis Blue (above). She has signed up at her local hub to learn bass guitar. She manages her school commitments with her CMDA participation well, and is soon to add dance classes at the PAC to her schedule.

A very gentle and confident young woman, Sibahle is an asset to our program.

'the CMDA is my home' - Sibahle Chauke



Robert Pienaar

Rob is 18, and has been with us since the inception of the CMDA, and is in Matric this year at Uplands College. Sadly this means he will be saying goodbye to us as he heads off to Rhodes University in 2013, but it will not be farewell forever. Rob says he has every intention of participating in CMDA activities when he is home on his varsity vacs. He has been a vibrant member of the Jive Chronicles band, and is well known for his orange pants and enormous energy on stage.

When the initial idea of the academy was in its infancy several kids were invited to pop round to the Barnyard if they were interested in jamming. Rob was one of the youngsters who pitched up, 16 years old at the time, with his guitar in hand. Being a quiet teenager without much of an interest in school sports, Rob was only too delighted to find a place where he could fit in with other music loving people.

This is one of the things he says he loves about being at the PAC. As he walks through the door he immediately feels welcome, and at home. There are no differences here, everyone may come from varied backgrounds but their love for music makes them all the same, and he has always felt totally comfortable and an integral part of what happens here.

From initially being a shy and nervous performer, Rob is now 'out there'; rocking, jamming, rapping and pleasing the crowds with his excellent guitar and harmonica renditions of well known songs, and also some of his own compositions. He is already composing pieces for our upcoming Composers Competition, fitting this in between his academic preps for Matric. He feels his confidence has grown hugely and wherever he goes now he is comfortable in his skin, knowing that music is his 'mojo'. He has enjoyed making new friends at the CMDA and feels the social cohesion is great. He would like to see more coaches at the CMDA, making the range of skills and instruments wider.

'When you walk through the door at the PAC you're the same as everyone else' - Rob Pienaar



Neville Mlaba

Neville (18) is an enthusiastic young man with a huge smile and a passion for learning new things. He lives with his grandparents and attends school in Kabokweni, and is a member of the Alliance Church hub. Neville is blessed to have a grandfather who encouraged him to pursue an interest in music, and in Grade 7 he found a local music school where he could learn the keyboard. The CMDA held a concert at the Alliance Church and a friend of Neville's invited him along. As luck would have it, the band Emazweni had no keyboard player that day so Neville put his hand up to play, and hasn't looked back. He needs no music, playing by ear and intently taking instruction from the coaches. His most favourite coach is Aggi, who rehearses all of our bands and who is quite a hard task master! Neville laughs about this and says he loves Aggi and has learnt so much from him.

When asked if he found combining school with his music interests difficult, Neville said no, he manages it well and he will walk the distance to get to any CMDA rehearsal or gig, he is that passionate! He loves the new experiences, especially meeting new people and learning from other musicians. He had the pleasure of meeting the Parlotones when they visited the CMDA, and feels that his involvement with the CMDA has opened up a new world for him. Mike has taken Neville under his wing and is teaching him how to use a video camera, and how to edit the footage, a skill which will stand him in good stead. Neville would like to see more emphasis on social integration with kids from other schools and backgrounds, but says it is happening and it will be a gentle process. He is looking forward to the day when his grandparents will be able to watch him perform, and this should happen in the near future as the CMDA mobile rigs get into action within Kabokweni and neighbouring areas.

'Music is my life' - Neville Mlaba



If you're on a team, you're on the team, but you're in the band.
And in the band, there is no bench. - Dave Martin



In August the PAC welcomed the Parlotones, who popped in and spent some time seeing what the CMDA is about. We are thrilled that this home-grown South African band have agreed to be Patrons of our program. Mbuso Mathonsi and Innocent Mashaba link arms with the Parlotones.



CMDA membership stands at **327**, & will increase with new registrations in October.

Feedback from a parent: Parents are often concerned about the effect of CMDA participation on their child's academic studies; we are sensitive to this and do our best not to add undue pressure. That said, music is an outlet and therapy for many children, as this comment from one parent tells us:

'I realize that there might be a concern that the matrics are over exposed with performance and studies etc, so I just wanted to let you know that my daughter has a very limited extra mural schedule. Singing to her, is her way of expressing her emotions, therapy really (just much cheaper). She has her prelims study roster set up already and if she does not perform in school, it is because she has not studied not because of the Academy. The CMDA has made a huge difference in her life, it has given her a sense of belonging and an inner confidence that is growing with every performance. Thank you very much for your hard work and efforts'.



What's in the pipeline for CMDA members?



COMPOSERS COMPETITION

We are running a competition whereby our members are invited to submit their own musical compositions, and they make use of our professional recording studio to record themselves. We look forward to some great entries, there is already growing excitement around this competition.

Great prizes are to be had: First Prize is R10 000, second R7 500, third R5 000 in equipment from Harry Green.



ORCHESTRA

We are attempting to raise funds to support a local orchestra open to anyone in our community, including the youth. The CMDA plans to contribute towards the costs of the conductor and will cover the costs of its members to participate in this initiative. It will become another platform where music is used to create social cohesion. Anyone interested in assisting with this initiative please contact info@mpuma-music.org.za



I think music in itself is healing. It's an explosive expression of humanity. It's something we are all touched by. No matter what culture we're from, everyone loves music. - Billy Joel

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

We are developing a software tool to assist in registering and tracking utilisation of our facilities by our members. It will also include a training module that will assist us in delivering video training to our members. The application can be adapted to many Public Benefit Organisations and the higher purpose of the platform is to develop a coordinated effort between clusters of non profits to create meaningful empowerment within communities. It will operate under the 'support local' banner.



IN SEARCH OF PATRONS

We are constantly seeking the support of music patrons, either bands or musicians who will become patrons of our program. In doing so, they adopt our program as theirs, commit to a free fundraising concert every five years and assist us in creating social cohesion through music.

In addition, we are in search of patrons who will support our program on an on-going basis. This can be achieved through the GivenGain platform where a once off or small on-going donations can be made.



UPCOMING EVENTS FOR CMDA

- **Mango Groove Concert**, 22 Sept 2012 – we have a 45 minute slot opening for them featuring 3 of our bands, the proceeds of this concert go towards Save the Rhino fund.
- **Rhythm and Pulse Show** – 12 & 13 October - an adventurous show performed by a variety of our members, experimenting with music and sound of various origins and styles.
- **CMDA Birthday Concert in Kabokweni** - 28th October 2012 - celebration of one year anniversary, renewal of members hips and new registrations, with loads of music, prize giving and fun.
- **Night at the Movies** - 30th November and 1st December - we are hosting at the PAC a fabulous show that is touring the country, a musical tour from the 1950's through to present day, featuring a vibrant cast.
- **December Workshop** – with guests from the Vusi Mahlasela Foundation, and from Mozambique. This will be a week of workshops provided by top musicians for our guests and silver members. This is planned to become an annual event, and is subject to us securing funding which we hope to have by month end.
- **National Arts Council** is funding a music show starring CMDA members, and directed by Ingrid Wylde, a treat for the new year.

If you would like further information, or would like to book for a show please email info@mpuma-music.co.za

With thanks...

As you have read the team at the CMDA have been making great strides in fulfilling our dream for this program, although we still have much to achieve. We certainly wouldn't have been able to do all we have without the support and unyielding encouragement of individuals and companies, both locally and further afield. We are so grateful to each and every one.

We welcome feedback, constructive criticism and suggestions as to how we could do things better, as well as new avenues for us to explore. Your input is welcome, so please keep in touch with our team at info@mpuma-music.org.za or on our Facebook page.

Until next time,

The CMDA Team

