



South African World Music Sensation Soweto Gospel Choir Kicks Off 2007 with Highly Anticipated Shanachie Entertainment CD *African Spirit* Featuring South African Gospel & Mesmerizing Interpretations of Songs by Bob Dylan, Bob Marley & Jimmy Cliff, Plus an Inspiring Version of U2's Hit "One" with Special Guest Bono

The Critically Acclaimed Choir Continues Its Aids Crusade With Their Charity Nkosi's Haven/Vukani & Launches 47-City North American Tour

The Critics Are Raving About Soweto Gospel Choir:

"Soweto Gospel Choir makes our world seem beautifully small...The 26-member group performs in six languages, blending traditional hymns, Western pop, and their native South African harmonies into a singularly, joyful sound." -
Oprah Magazine

"...These luxuriantly full-voiced singers (think Ladysmith Black Mambazo expanded) combine joyful, spiritual vision with a global perspective...fresh and vibrant" -**USA Today**

"(The choir) has a cornucopia of remarkable voices: sharp, sweet, kindly, raspy and incantatory leads above a magnificently velvety blend...the music is both meticulous and unstoppable..."
The New York Times

"The South African Choir successfully coordinates intricate harmonies with hand claps, tambourines, djembe drums, and soulful singing, which beckon all to reclaim their spirit."
Vibe Magazine

Since Soweto Gospel Choir's introduction to American audiences three years ago, the instantly inviting, heart-warming and awe-inspiring choir has amassed a growing international fan-base, performed to sold out audiences throughout the world, sung alongside such icons as Bono, Peter Gabriel, Diana Ross and Jimmy Cliff, and has been heralded as the most exciting group to emerge in world music in years. 2006 was a banner year for Soweto Gospel Choir, who has made fans of Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu (the choir's patron). The electrifying choir performed a blockbuster 46-city US tour and released their critically acclaimed sophomore release ***Blessed***, which received coverage in such publications as Oprah Magazine, USA Today and Harper's Bazaar and landed them on such major national television shows as ***The Today Show***, ***Late Night with Conan O'Brien***, ***A&E's "Breakfast with the Arts"*** and ***Emeril Live***. Soweto Gospel Choir continues to demonstrate their rare ability to transcend cultural boundaries and connect with diverse audiences through the power of their music. In a time when people are yearning for positive messages and in an era of over-hyped and over-marketed synthetic music, Soweto Gospel Choir is filling an important void for audiences around the world. With the release of ***African Spirit*** (the Choir's third CD for Shanachie), the heartfelt, exuberant voices of Soweto Gospel Choir continue to spread their much needed messages of love, joy and hope to audiences throughout the world regardless of their color, language or faith.

On January 30, 2007 Shanachie Entertainment will release Soweto Gospel Choir's highly anticipated ***African Spirit***, a warm and exotic collection of moving traditional South African spiritual music, South African pop, American gospel and popular inspirational songs from around the world. The choir's honey toned harmonies, rich interwoven vocal textures and driving rhythmic patterns are instantly arresting and pleasing.

The choir's versatility shines through the CD's diverse mix of music ranging from a capella vocals, full band arrangements and spirited percussive tracks. While the choir sings in six of South Africa's eleven official languages, most of the songs on the CD are sung in either English, Zulu or Sotho.

Some of the highlights on *African Spirit* include "Avulekile Amasango (The Doors of Heaven are Wide Open)/One Love." The song, which is a classic township jive with a rollicking band, segue's into Bob Marley's "One Love" and has generated tremendous response at the Choir's live concerts. Soweto Gospel Choir's Executive Producer/Show Director, Beverly Bryer, shares, "'One Love' has been sung and popularized by several African groups. The song is a perfect match for the choir as it contains a special spiritual message that is relevant to the choir and the music we enjoy singing about." Another standout is "Izwi Lahlab'Inhlziyo Yami" (The World of God Touched My Heart) which features five powerful lead vocalists who also do the harmonizing heard in the song. Of special note is Soweto Gospel Choir's soulful and moving version of Bob Dylan's "I'll Remember You" and their joyous version of "By The Rivers Of Babylon," which was first popularized by legendary reggae group The Melodians in *The Harder They Come* film soundtrack. The Choir also performs Jimmy Cliff's "Sitting In Limbo," from the same soundtrack, in conjunction with the inspirational hymn "This Little Light Of Mine," which functions as an answer to the pensive questions posed in "Sitting In Limbo." The choir was actually inspired to record "Sitting In Limbo" after hearing the Neville Brothers sing it on their recording *Fiyo On The Bayou*.

Music and social mission come together on *African Spirit* with the song "One," performed by U2's Bono to benefit AIDS-Awareness campaigns. Included here is a version recorded at the star-studded 46664 concert in South Africa which was part of Nelson Mandela's Aids Awareness Campaign. The Choir serves as an Ambassador for 46664, which campaigns for those affected by the Aids pandemic in South Africa. On Bono's hit "One," he delivers a typically strong lead vocal as the Choir backs him with their thundering African chorus. Throughout *African Spirit*, the choir showcases why they have emerged as one of the most promising, uplifting and exciting new voices on the global music scene. It is no wonder why The Boston Globe called Soweto Gospel Choir's music "soulful profoundly moving music" and The Atlanta Journal Constitution declared, "Hearing the full choir harmonize sounds less like a couple of dozen people singing together and more like a pipe organ roaring to life."

Formed to celebrate the unique, inspirational and powerful tradition of African gospel music, the riveting 26-member choir won over audiences with the January 2005 release of their American and Shanachie Entertainment debut *Voices From Heaven*, which hit #1 on the Billboard World Music charts and landed in the top five of CMJ's World Music charts. They further enchanted music fans with a 35-city tour that was sold out in virtually every market including Carnegie Hall where they made their debut in front of an enthusiastic New York crowd that was sold out six months in advance! Music Director of Soweto Gospel Choir, David Mulovhedzi shares, "The success of the choir is through its wonderful talent, self determination and the commitment of all the choir members. South African traditional music, being so unique, is one of the best forms of entertainment that the world has seen and enjoyed. Performing in great venues around the world has been the highlight of the choir's journey in gospel music"

Although fellow South African performers Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Black Umfolosi have introduced many to South African song, the experience of hearing and seeing Soweto Gospel Choir live is like none other. Their emotionally rich vocal performances, athletic dance numbers and spectacularly colored traditional garb engage all the senses. "Soweto Gospel Choir has become a South African phenomenon over the past few years," states Beverly Bryer. "When we first auditioned the choir members, we knew we had something special, but they've far exceeded our expectations with the wonderful success they have achieved, both nationally and internationally. I believe this can be attributed to, firstly, the wonderful talent we have in our country and; secondly, to the amazing joy of singing and performing that shines through in whatever this choir does, be it African gospel, backing rock superstars such as Queen and Bono, or singing "Happy Birthday" to Archbishop Desmond Tutu when he recently celebrated his 75th Birthday here in South Africa. Soweto Gospel Choir will continue to grow from strength to strength, expanding their repertoire to include a wide range of music, and performing many more sell-out concerts throughout their world tours. They are a true reflection of what South African entertainers have to offer their audiences, and they make us all extremely proud of what they've achieved in such a short period of time."

No amount of glittering international recognition and praise has diverted Soweto Gospel Choir from the mission it holds close at heart. In 2003, the choir founded its own aids orphans foundation, Nkosi's Haven/Vukani (the word 'Vukani' means 'do something!').

The choir's charity, in conjunction with Nkosi's Haven (a Soweto-based AIDS-care project established by Gail Johnson, whose late son Nkosi, at age 11, gave a moving address to a United Nations international AIDS conference that was televised world-wide), raises funds for AIDS orphan establishments that receive no government or private funding.

As South African natives and individuals who have become world citizens through their gift of music, Soweto Gospel Choir firmly believes in their mission to support individuals who are less fortunate. Through their charity they are able to help feed and clothe individuals, pay for funerals for families who are unable to and assist numerous young children who are orphaned by AIDS, many who are responsible for heading their own households. In the past year alone, the members of Soweto Gospel Choir have fed over 3000 children, assisted with three funerals, paid for schooling for two young men and allowed Nkosi's Haven, its mothers and children, to function with minimal stress by providing funds for food, school and specialized therapies.

Soweto Gospel Choir (comprised of young musicians mostly in their 20's) was created in 2002 by South African Executive Producer Beverly Bryer and notable Musical Director of the choir David Mulovhedzi. The choir's esteemed producing team also includes show producers Andrew Kay and David Vigo. Soweto Gospel Choir's new CD, *African Spirit*, is dedicated to the memory of co-founder and Producer, the late Clifford Hocking who passed away in June 2006.

Bryer and Mulovhedzi held auditions in Soweto to form an all-star "super-choir" and were able to create a powerful aggregation made up of the best singers from Mulovhedzi's own Holy Jerusalem Choir, as well as various Soweto churches and from the general public. Africa in general (and South Africa in particular) has a long and diverse history with gospel music. When Africans came into contact with European missionaries and churches, they quickly absorbed their religious music and blended it with local traditional music to come up with unique styles and repertoires of spiritual songs. South Africa has long been noted for powerful singers and a cappella vocal traditions of great beauty.

Don't miss the unique opportunity to experience Soweto Gospel Choir as it makes its triumphant return to North America. The choir's tour has been assembled by the internationally renowned agency, IMG Artists. "We are thrilled to bring the Soweto Gospel Choir back for its third North American tour since its debut in 2005," states Vice President, IMG Artists, Nancy Gabriel. The critical and box office success that the choir enjoyed on the first two tours served it well, as the 2007 tour will bring the group to an unprecedented 47 cities across the U.S. and Canada."

Don't Miss the Glorious Sounds of Soweto Gospel Choir in a City Near You

DATE	CITY	VENUE	TIME
Thurs. 2/1 Fri. 2/2	Conway, AR	University of Central Arkansas Donald W. Reynolds Performance Hall	7:30pm 11:00am
Sat. 2/3	Tulsa, OK	Tulsa Performing Arts Center Chapman Music Hall	8:00pm
Tue. 2/6 Wed. 2/7	Meridian, MS	Mississippi State University Riley Center for Education and Performing Arts	8:00pm
Fri. 2/9	Atlanta, GA	Georgia Tech Robert Ferst Center for the Arts	8:00pm

Sat. 2/10	Columbus, GA	RiverCenter for the Performing Arts Legacy Hall	7:30pm
Sun. 2/11	Macon, GA	Mercer University Grand Opera House	7:30pm
Tue. 2/13	Knoxville, TN	AC Entertainment Historic Tennessee Theatre	7:30 pm
Thurs. 2/15	Roanoke, VA	Jefferson Center	7:30pm
Fri. 2/16	Newport News, VA	Ferguson Center for the Arts	8:00pm
Sun. 2/18	Fairfax, VA	George Mason University Concert Hall	4:00pm
Mon. 2/19	Richmond, VA	University of Richmond Modlin Center/ Camp Concert Hall	7:30pm
Tue. 2/20	Baltimore, MD	Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall	7:30 pm
Thurs. 2/22	University Park, PA	Pennsylvania State University Eisenhower Auditorium	7:30pm
Fri. 2/23	New York, NY	Carnegie/Zankel Hall Carnegie Hall Corporation	10:00pm
Sun. 2/ 25	Philadelphia, PA	Kimmel Center Verizon Hall	7:30pm
Tue. 2/27 Wed. 2/28	Toronto, Canada	Hummingbird Centre	8:00pm
Fri. 3/2	Ottawa, ONT	Ottawa International Jazz Festival Dominion-Chalmers United Church	8:00pm
Sat. 3/3	Montréal, Canada	Montreal Highlights Festival Wilfrid-Pelletier Hall	8:00pm
Mon. 3/5 Tue. 3/6	Hanover, NH	Dartmouth College Hopkins Center	7:00pm 10:00am
Thurs. 3/8	Appleton, WI	Fox Cities Performing Arts Center Thrivent Hall	12:30pm 7:30pm
Fri. 3/9	Madison, WI	Overture Center for the Arts	8:00pm
Sun. 3/11 Mon. 3/12	Chicago, IL	Symphony Center Chicago Orchestra Hall	3:00pm 10:30am
Tue. 3/13	Goshen, IN	Goshen College Performing Arts Center Sauder Concert Hall	7:30pm

Wed. 3/14	Rockford, IL	Coronado Performing Arts Center Coronado Theatre	7:30pm
Thurs. 3/15	Decatur, IL	Kirkland Fine Arts Center Capacity 1902	7:30pm
Sat. 3/17	Cleveland, OH	Cuyahoga Community College Tri-C Presents Severance Hall	8:00pm
Tue. 3/20	Duluth, MN	College of St. Scholastica Duluth Entertainment Center	7:30pm
Thur. 3/22	Minneapolis, MN	Hennepin Theatre Trust Historic State Theatre	8:00pm
Fri. 3/23	Ames, IA	Iowa State University Stephens Auditorium Iowa State Center	7:30pm
Sat. 3/24	Lincoln, NE	Lied Center	7:30pm
Tue. 3/27	Edmonton, AB	Global Arts Concerts Winspear Centre	8:00pm
Wed. 3/28	Calgary, AB	Global Arts Concerts Jack Singer Hall	8:00pm
Thurs. 3/29	Victoria, BC	Farquhar Auditorium The University of Victoria	9:00pm
Sat. 3/31	Vancouver, BC	Caravan World Rhythms Society Queen Elizabeth Theatre of Vancouver	8:00 pm
Sun. 4/1	Seattle, WA	Seattle Theatre Group The Paramount Theatre	3:00pm
Mon. 4/2	Tacoma, WA	Seattle Theatre Group Pantages Theater	7:30pm
Tue. 4/3	Eugene, OR	Hult Center for the Performing Arts	7:30 pm
Fri. 4/6	San Rafael, CA	Marin Center Marin Veteran Memorial Auditorium	8:00pm
Sat. 4/7	Davis, CA	Mondavi Center Jackson Hall	8:00 pm
Wed. 4/11	Santa Barbara, CA	UC Santa Barbara Campbell Hall	8:00 pm
Fri. 4/13	Riverside, CA	UC Riverside Concert Hall	8:00 pm

Sat. 4/14	Irvine, CA	Barclay Theater Group Irvine Barclay Theatre	8:00 pm
Mon. 4/16	Scottsdale, AZ	Scottsdale Center for the Arts	7:30pm
Tue. 4/17	Tucson, AZ	UA Presents Centennial Hall	8:00pm
Sat. 4/21	Baton Rouge, LA	Louisiana State University Union Union Theater	8:00 pm
Sun. 4/22	Lafayette, LA	Performing Arts Society of Acadiana Heymann Center for the Performing Arts	7:30pm
Mon. 4/23	Tyler, TX	University of Texas at Tyler R. Don Cowan Fine & Performing Arts Center	7:30pm

***For more information on Soweto Gospel Choir, please contact Monifa Brown
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