



May 2016

# NEWSLETTER

[www.mpuma-music.org.za](http://www.mpuma-music.org.za)

## Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter and as always we have much to share with you, in particular news of the many activities we have been busy with this year.

The year has been so busy we can't believe it is mid May already! The CMDA is now an extensive programme in Mpumalanga and we are working flat out to provide our services to the community. Our staff has grown and everyone plays an active part in providing music lessons, as well as access to 2Enable, to our members. We now have hubs in Masoyi, Zwelisha, kaNyamazane, Mashishing and Hazyview as well as our administrative base at the Casterbridge Theatre in White River. We are touching the lives of many young people across our province, as well as providing employment for over 25 people.

We are grateful to our sponsors for making this all possible; your assistance is invaluable. We hope you will enjoy reading about our work in this publication. Your constructive feedback is always welcome, and we'd love to hear from you.

## The CMDA Team



## ELVIS BLUE



### Songwriting workshop at the CMDA

The unbelievably talented and incredibly generous Elvis Blue took time out of his busy schedule when he was performing in the Lowveld a couple of months ago. He came to the CMDA and presented a short but dynamic workshop on song-writing for our students. One comment received afterwards was that his lecture was incredibly helpful with many practical tips for immediate application by anyone with a desire to write their own songs.

The kids enjoyed his visit and he took time to chat with them and posed for the obligatory photos of course!



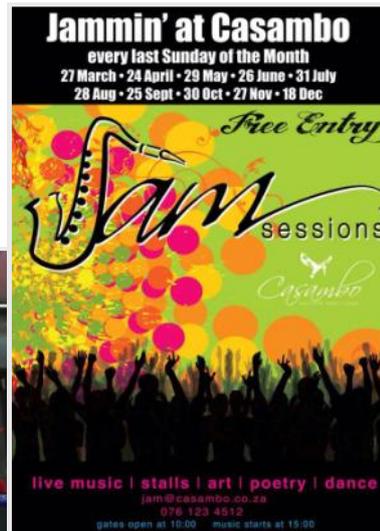
In addition Elvis took it upon himself to raise funds for our Masoyi hub Marimba appeal. At his concert in Nelspruit, and then at further concerts, his 'cookie jar' program raised R15 000 for our project which was such a fantastic boost, and also raised awareness of the CMDA all over the country.

Thanks a million Elvis!

### Jam Sessions at Casambo Lodge

Local venue Casambo Lodge hosts a fantastic Jam Session once a month. The CMDA has been participating in these 'sessions' for several months now and this is excellent practice and exposure for our members. Our Nelspruit band Xpresso in particular has featured in these events. There's a lot to learn about the music industry, and our students have learnt a lot from rubbing shoulders with some really good musicians and with seeing just what is involved in performing in a 'line-up' of different musicians.

To keep up with the Jam Sessions at Casambo here's a link to their Facebook page.



Nelspruit Hub band Xpresso on stage at Casambo



### Rocking the Uplands Festival 2016

We're excited to be once again be invited to perform at the Uplands Festival at the end of May. Our bands have been a part of the Festival for several years now.

This year the Festival is bringing Johnny Clegg to White River, and our bands will be performing for audiences in the various entertainment tents. The band 'Ozone' which is made up of former CMDA students will be a star attraction this year.





## An awesome day with Camp Quality

The CMDA was asked to participate once again with Rotary of White River's annual 'Camp Quality'. 'Camp Quality' is a special camp for children who have cancer or who are in remission, and they come to White River for a week of fun, of learning and of new adventures. We were asked to do something musical with the children and our coaches Trevor, Danmore, Tendayi and Jeffrey from our

Masoyi Hub decided it would be great fun to teach them a song or two on the marimbas.

It was pretty chaotic with 29 excited children to teach in only a few hours but at the end of the day the Masoyi team and the Camp Quality kids sang, danced and had a fabulous time all round! We always feel honoured to be involved in this initiative.

Thank you Rotary for inviting us!



The initiator of Rotary Club of White River's 'Camp Quality' Brian Hyson enjoys the activities as much as the children do!



## New Hub opening in kaNyamazane!

We've made the decision to close our Nelspruit Hub and move it to an area where there is greater demand amongst the community. So we have found a great venue at the AME Church in kaNyamazane and we will officially open on 21st May. Our professional music coach Trevor Sejamoholo will be in charge of this hub. Youngsters aged 12 to 25 years from the area are invited to come along and register for FREE music lessons. KaNyamazane is a large, bustling community and we anticipate a great response.

The official launch of this hub takes place on Saturday 21st May, and these events are always exciting and well attended. Bands from the other hubs will perform and give the audience a taste of what they (or their children) could be doing by involvement with our programme. As always thank you to the NLDTF and the DAC for making this possible; and thanks to the AME Church for hosting this new hub.



### Hub Happenings



## Visit to the American International School in Mozambique

The CMDA was invited by the American International School to perform on stage as part of their community event, the May Fair, in Maputo. Preparation for the trip was extensive as travelling across a border with young people and a load of music equipment is not a simple procedure. Hours of rehearsals went into the performances and our bands had a fabulous time on stage; they were well received by the audience.

Aggi, our Head of Band Development did a great job preparing the musicians, but was sadly unable to accompany them. Two CMDA staff members chaperoned the students, and the AISM were wonderful hosts, taking good care of us. The CMDA bands did so well that the AISM have invited us back again; this is wonderful exposure for us and great practice for our young musicians.



## The CMDA offers students UNISA exam opportunities

We're proud of our professional music coaches who have been teaching our students Music Theory, which of course is a valuable grounding for any musical development. Our students will write official UNISA Music Theory exams in June in Grade 1 and Pre-Grade 1.

Recently we hosted an exam rehearsal, kindly assisted and guided by well known local music teacher Lorraine Kirk. Lorraine marked the mock-papers and then presented a mini-workshop to our students in preparation for the real exam in June. We're grateful to Lorraine for her enthusiastic involvement in our project, and very happy that we are able to offer our students this opportunity.



## Showcase Performance at Casterbridge

It's important that our young music students have the opportunity to perform in front of an audience, and also that they are exposed to the activities of other hub members. We have found that when they perform for each other a great deal of learning takes place, and everyone benefits from the mutual encouragement.

This month on a Saturday about 140 CMDA students were brought to Casterbridge for a special 'Showcase' concert. A great day was enjoyed by all and it was evident that our project is providing something of great value to local young people. Bands were impressive, and the Mashishing bands particularly so as they have some brass instruments in their ensembles. Members of the public including donors were able to attend for free, and provide that extra bit of encouragement.



## Coming soon - 'Polyphony Marimba' from the US!

Polyphony Marimba is a marimba ensemble based in Santa Fe, New Mexico in the States and they are coming to visit the CMDA in July. Peter Swing and his wife Karyna will be building us a marimba and we'll film the process! They will also have a chance to visit our hubs where marimbas are popular.

Peter is enthusiastic to put together a concert with some of our youngsters and our marimba coaches, and this will probably take place in the Casterbridge Theatre. This promises to be an awesome event, so please watch social media and your emails for news of this - it's going to be great. We are thrilled to have musicians from far afield taking an interest in our project; particularly when they are prepared to make the long journey to visit us, to participating in what we do and to play music with our students!



Peter Swing of  
Polyphony Marimba  
from Santa Fe  
[Click here](#) for more  
details



## Introducing our Professional Music Coaches

In 2014 the DAC issued us with a substantial grant on the proviso that we employ 4 full time professional music coaches as part of getting our programme out into the wider community. We successfully filled the positions and we now have a wonderful team working together. Our professional music coaches oversee our 6 hubs and work alongside an array of hub managers and music coaches. These 4 coaches work part time at our administrative hub at Casterbridge, and then in the afternoons can be found at their respective hubs.

### Mpho Masina

Mpho is not only a talented musician but also qualified and completed his diploma in Jazz and Popular Music with Tshwane University of Technology in 2013. He has worked as a session musician with many bands, artists and choirs that are well known today in the South African music industry.

Mpho believes that "music is one of the biggest tools that God uses to touch and refresh people's lives" and he is passionate about his work with our students, in particular the importance of their study of music theory as a solid base for all musical learning. Mpho is in charge of our Zwelisha and kaBokweni hubs.



### Phindile Nqana

Phindile's task is to develop Music Theory content, and the Hazyview hub is under her guidance, as well as helping the other hubs with guitar classes. Phindile is a Pretoria born singer/songwriter and guitarist. She spent 5 years studying Classical Guitar and Music Theory with Dr Lynnette Pruneu, Phindile Mpetshwa and Natalie Roue, followed by Jazz Studies at the Tshwane University of Technology. Her compositions have received prizes at music festivals around Tshwane. She opened for Vusi Mahlasela and Yonela Mnana at the Pretoria State Theatre, and was a guitarist for the stage play Sarafina. She is also an advocate for the advancement of Music Education in previously disadvantaged communities, and has 7 years' music teaching experience. She hopes that through this passion, she will be able to impact the space she finds herself in, and eventually the world.

### Trevor Sejamoholo

Trevor Sejamoholo is the manager of our Masoyi and kaNyamazane hubs. Trevor managed our Nelspruit hub and this has now moved to kaNyamazane. Trevor's passion is percussion – all drums, whether western or African. Trevor studied Jazz and African Music and Dance at the University of Kwazulu Natal. He plays trombone and is an active participant of a local church brass band.

Much of his inspiration in music comes from the church, having been involved in church bands and music since a young age. He enjoys giving back to the community and sharing his knowledge and skills. The Masoyi hub keeps Trevor busy as it is an extremely well attended hub.



### Themba Netshifira

Themba Netshifira is the newest CMDA coach and he is situated in Mashishing; his task is to develop that hub to its full potential. With his National Diploma in Jazz and Popular Music, partnered with his enthusiasm we feel he is a perfect fit for this venue.

Themba has the challenge of operating in a small town without the presence of an administrative team; that said he manages his hub with aplomb and his enthusiasm in teaching his students is infectious. Themba visits local schools in the mornings and implements an open class 2Enable program. Every afternoon Themba is found at the hub, guiding and coaching the staff and the large number of members. The Mashishing hub is fast becoming a favoured gathering point for children of this community.



## New Website!

2Enable is pleased to announce the launch of its new HTML5 website as illustrated below. It is responsive and replaces much of the functionality that existed in the 2Enable Enterprise application including Instant Messaging, Revision, Event Calendar and Attendance at events. A simple to use analytical [Classroom Management tool](#) has been developed for teachers to manage their classrooms, analyse their learner results and allows teachers to perform a host of other functions.



## New iOS App

In May, 2Enable published its iOS application for Apple Devices including iPhones, iPads and other Apple mobile devices. It is available for free download from the Apple Store. This application can connect to a [2Enable Digital Library](#) which allows users to access many of the available resources offline. Without a 2Enable Digital Library, the app will access all available content online.

## Who's Using 2Enable?

The CMDA uses 2Enable on a daily basis to manage its programme including to provide music theory coaching, event management, attendance and is used for in-house communication. The Mpumalanga Department of Education has now procured the devices for the 2Enable Pilot Project in 9 Mpumalanga schools and this project will be implemented in 2016. 2Enable has been adopted by a major local foundation in 36 of its schools', country-wide.



**The Lowveld Community Orchestra is generously supported by the MacKenzie Foundation and HCI**

Praise in Nelspruit once again in September, and the orchestra will be part of a special Christmas concert at the end of November as well. Our orchestra continues to be an absolute gem of the Lowveld, and we are very grateful to our sponsors for their continued support.

This year the Lowveld Community Orchestra has been rehearsing regularly every month, and has welcomed several new members, both young and old.

The orchestra director Anneke Coetzer is delighted to have a soprano sax and a tenor sax joining the woodwind section. Several senior members of the orchestra will be taking part in Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music exams at the end of May. We wish these orchestra members all the best with their exams!

The LCO can be seen performing again this year at the **Uplands Festival**; they will be part of the opening ceremony for the Art Exhibition. Preparations are under way for participation in Songs of



## A Canadian Making Music in Mpumalanga



Visiting intern Alison demonstrates her talents to Danmore at our Masoyi Hub

In January this year we were once again honoured to host an 'intern' from Performing Arts Abroad. Alison Feuerwerker visited us for 3 weeks; here are her reflections on her volunteering experience at the CMDA, which gives a wonderful description of so much of what we do!

“On a January morning I am singing along with Toto's song "Africa" while I do dishes. My heart sings too, and my feet dance at the kitchen sink. This afternoon I fly out, and tomorrow night I will land on my beloved continent, Africa. Though I have lived in Tanzania and spent time in Rwanda and Ghana, my destination this time is South Africa – a brand new country for me. I am going to volunteer for three weeks with the Casterbridge Music Development Academy, based in White River, Mpumalanga, South Africa. This opportunity has been arranged through [Performing Arts Abroad](#).

A violinist and music teacher by profession, an African music enthusiast who also plays djembe, ukulele, and Reggae keyboards, I am looking forward to connecting with musicians and music students, sharing what I know through teaching, learning from everyone with whom I come in contact, and experiencing life in a new country. I do not really know what I'll be doing, and I have no specific attachment or expectations. I am eager to plunge in.

Two days later, after an enjoyable overnight stay in Pretoria with friends of friends, I disembark from a small commuter plane in Mpumalanga, a province in north-eastern South Africa. I am met at the airport by Mike, director of the CMDA. During my time in White River I will experience the wonderful hospitality of Mike and Andrea in their peaceful home – peaceful despite (or perhaps because of) the three dogs and three cats who are part of their family. I have the weekend to settle in and catch up on sleep. Mike and Andrea take me for a drive in the country on one of the days and I am awed by the beauty of my surroundings. Monday begins my first week of work.

The Casterbridge Music Development Academy is a non-profit organisation providing young people aged 12 to 25 years the opportunity to learn music. Its central office is in White River. Six "hub" centres offer music programmes in local communities, mostly in the townships. I soon find a pattern for my days. Mornings I spend at the office, assisting with proofreading and editing music theory learning materials. These music theory materials are being created by local music teachers, carefully following the school curriculum set by the South African government. They are part of an online platform called 2Enable, designed to deliver educational content at no cost to all South Africans, in particular those in rural areas.

Each afternoon I visit a hub with CMDA staff members Mpho or Trevor. The hubs are located in schools or community centres. Students arrive after school for lessons in music theory, guitar, piano, recorder, marimba, percussion, and for band practice. Every day is different and each hub has its own flavour. One day, I assist with teaching music theory to a group of high school students. Another day I get out my violin and jam with an enthusiastic and well-trained marimba ensemble. On yet another day I find myself playing djembe with a group of young percussion players. I am given opportunities to speak with students about the benefits of music education, to answer questions, and to offer encouragement. Everyone is so welcoming and I feel very much at home.



Alison tutoring young students at the Mashishing hub

.../Continued on page 8



That is the pattern of the first and third weeks of my stay. I spend the middle week in Mashishing, a mining community high in the mountains. The Mashishing hub's full time coordinator, Themba, is developing a music program to take into public schools in the area. Mornings, I visit classrooms with Themba and we teach a basic music class, mostly focusing on rhythm. We start with some simple clapping exercises, move on to more complex divisions of the beat and to counter-rhythms, and I throw in some music notation to show the students a visual representation of the music they are making. We bring marimbas and djembes with us, and the students tumble over one another and almost come to blows in their eagerness to have a turn to play. I am thankful for Themba's kind but authoritative presence and carrying voice. In some classes, the students end up singing and dancing to the beat – one class evolves into a Zulu break-dancing competition!

After school, students come to the Mashishing hub in a local community centre for music lessons: music theory, recorder, piano, marimba, and brass instruments. There is a violin at the hub, though no one to play it, and one day I ask all the kids who are interested to line up, and each gets a chance to try the violin. Everyone wants a try, but several kids are particularly interested and on another day I teach a few students and one of the teachers some basics, including the first few phrases of 'Nkosi Sikele' iAfrika', the South African national anthem. I also enjoy helping with recorder, piano, and music theory lessons. The busy days fly by, and at night I am grateful to rest and recharge at the guest house where I am staying for the week.

So many memories stand out from my three weeks in South Africa. Meeting and jamming with Danmore and Tendayi, two brothers from Zimbabwe who teach at the CMDA. Playing violin with the marimba ensemble at Masoyi Hub. Teaching a group of several hundred students outdoors early in the morning with Themba in Mashishing. Riding out to the townships with Mpho and Trevor and chatting about our lives as musicians. Jamming with Mpho and Trevor in the CMDA office building. Meeting an elephant up close at Elephant Whispers. Touring a huge cave with Mike and his daughter Samantha. Spotting wildlife from a safari vehicle in Kruger National Park. Quiet early mornings and spectacular sunsets. Knowing that I have been able to contribute at least a bit to the work of an organization that is changing the lives of young people in South Africa.

Too soon, three weeks have passed and it is time to depart. Andrea drives me to the airport, from which I will fly to Tanzania. I plan to spend a week in Tanzania visiting friends and doing some recording studio work before returning home to Canada. Goodbyes are hard. It is the other side of the world, and despite the best of intentions I do not know when I will be back. Musicians' hearts connect so easily. Even though we live in very different cultures, there is so much we share. I want to stay and perform and jam and record and teach. At the same time, my life in Canada awaits and I am eager for that too. I am grateful for the experience, grateful to Performing Arts Abroad for organizing it, and to the CMDA for welcoming me. And to all musicians: if your heart is drawing you toward an overseas experience, go. We all – the worldwide community of musicians – will become richer for it.”

- Our thanks to Alison Feuerwerker for this article

## Always a helping hand

In many organisations there is often someone behind the scenes who quietly gets on with it, and who does the things other employees don't have to think about. Howard (Tsepo) Chiloane is that man in the CMDA. He has been with us for a couple of years now and helps out wherever needed. Howard assists with computer technical issues,



installation of equipment as well as keeping the theatre in order and prepared for special events.

Howard is always available and willing to assist and is a valuable member of our team.



## Until next time..

We hope you have enjoyed this newsletter; please remember you can keep up to date with us on our Facebook page, on Twitter and on Instagram.



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