

CITD Grant Money for International Projects  
Julie Dana-Fresno City College Music Department-May 10-31, 2010  
South Africa Tour Follow-up Report

Before I begin with my report I would like to, again, thank you for assisting me with this project. It was everything that I had hoped and much more. When pondering 10 things that I learned/accomplished it is overwhelming as the many facets of learning that took place on this trip: musical, historical, social, and cultural were vast. I am so very grateful to have had the opportunity to experience it all.

1. **Music is infused in EVERY single pore of the South African lifestyle.** This is something that I knew, but until you are there, experiencing it that knowledge is incomplete. Seeing the joy and the importance the music plays in the every day life. We were taken to many different venues for our meals and it was not uncommon to have a group of singers just “show up” to perform for us. (Yes, usually for a handout, but none-the-less there to share their music with us). Always singing acappella, or accompanied by the drum, with rich harmonies and movement all indicative of their musical culture.
2. **Movement is very much a natural part of their musical experience.** I have been incorporating music of the world in my classes for years. Often, some choreographed movement is referenced in the octavos and my students will learn and perform it with the movement. Often, it is just that, choreographed singing. But when they would sing with the movement, it wasn't two activities joined, it was one experience complete. It is hard for me to explain, and I'm not sure I'm doing it well, but singing & movement co-exist when south African singers are performing. Even when they are practicing, they are always moving. It is natural, not choreographed.
3. **There are 11 languages spoken in South Africa.** Although I only learned a few words: thank you, please, good morning in a few of them. I have taught my students many songs in a variety of African languages, not realizing that many of them are found right in one country! Our driver said he could communicate in 9 of the 11! Imagine that! But, as is common around the world, everyone we encountered also speaks English.
4. **The Soweto Gospel Choir is one of the “flagship” south African ambassadors to the world.** Having watched their performance in Carmel this past April, I was excited to have the opportunity to “sit in” on one of their rehearsals. Not only did I watch them work on music they were preparing for their upcoming tour to Spain, England and Scotland. I was able to watch them learn a piece from, beginning to end, that they were preparing for the World Cup Opening Concert. A process that took no longer than 25 minutes from first hearing the piece to standing and performing with choreography and harmonies. It was AMAZING!
5. **Workshop in Kwa Thema.** One of the busiest experiences we had was with Michael Dinghaan who taught us four songs, in four different languages, all by rote in a 3 hour workshop. The FCC choirs will be singing at least one of these in their Spring multi-cultural concert: REACH! March 29, 2011. Each piece he taught us with motion.

6. **We performed joint concerts at the University of Pretoria and the University of Stellenbosch.** These were wonderful experiences as we heard these choirs sing literature that we know in the U.S., but also experienced a number of new pieces. Each concert featured some traditional south African music as well. Always rich in harmony and movement. An interesting observation was the fact that most of their members were “white” south Africans. Much of the teaching is done in the language of “Afrikaans”, which is not a language that most “black” south Africans speak. This seems to be still an affect of the apartheid influence which took place in their recent history.
7. **Nelson Mandela’s influence is everywhere.** Although he is now 92 and quite feeble and they are under the guidance of their 2<sup>nd</sup> president after Nelson Mandela, the reverence with which they speak of him is awesome! Traveling to Robben Island where he spent much of his life as a prisoner during apartheid, the struggles that I have spoken of with my students when we sing music from that time became much more “real” for me. I feel so much more “aware” of this period of history now.
8. **This is a country of “handiwork”.** We experienced several markets during our stay there. Everything handmade, beaded work, carvings, paintings and beautiful dresses, shirts and bracelets. I purchased 3 handmade outfits to be worn for our world music concert in the spring. These people at the markets are earning their daily living as the unemployment levels in south Africa and very high. We were told that for many of them, this was their sole income for their family.
9. **Although not “music” related, the game drives and river cruises were an amazing experience.** Our guides took us by boat and by vehicle to experience the animal world of south Africa. As we watched them in their natural habitat, our guides shared a great deal of information about the indigenous south African animals. How they eat, how their species travels, etc. We rode elephants through the bush, rode next to them swimming in the river, saw many of the wonderful animals of Africa.
10. **I suppose one of the striking things I came home with was a better understanding of the struggles of a country under the apartheid rule.** We visited Soweto, where students, CHILDREN, were shot because they wished to protest an injustice in their educational plans. Still there are 3 million people living in Soweto...some in corrugated tin shacks, some in small brick homes. One the weekend the township is filled with canopies at homes where death is a regular visitor, either by crime but often because of AIDS. The struggles of this young democracy in such an old country is apparent still.

I’m looking forward to sharing with my students these experiences as we study the music of south Africa in the spring. Thank you for helping me with this wonderful journey.