



**8 June 2015**

**African Children's Choir returns with its spectacular concert and workshop performances**

Sunshine Coast residents will be treated to a unique musical experience when the African Children's Choir returns next week with its vibrant and outstanding musical and dancing performance.

The concert will be an exclusive double bill, featuring highly acclaimed dynamic looping artist Mr Percival as support act, with guest appearance by Cool Harmonies community choir.

"The purpose of the tour is to raise awareness of the orphaned and destitute children of Africa and to raise funds for the choir's program," Cool Harmonies musical director Yvonne Corstorphin said.

"We are especially excited about this tour as it offers local residents a unique cultural exchange opportunity where they will get to meet and mix with the choir on a personal level through workshops, and experience the diversity of Ugandan music through their spectacular concert performances."

The African Children's Choir is comprised of orphaned and vulnerable children from the disadvantaged Kampala and Luwero areas of Uganda.

Their vibrancy, outstanding musical and dancing abilities have captured the world's imagination since the choir started touring North America and Europe 30 years ago to raise money for children's education.

The African Children's Choir is returning to Australia following its inaugural visit in 2013, with sell out concerts and workshops across eastern Australia, including the Sunshine Coast.

Cool Harmonies community choir will again host the 18 children and eight chaperones from the Uganda-based choir who will present a fun filled evening of singing, drumming and dancing as they spread their message of hope and joy for their future.

The Sunshine Coast visit is part of a three-month tour across three States, visiting Geelong, Melbourne, Albury, Canberra, Wollongong, Sydney, Nowra, Laurieton, Port Macquarie, Taree, Bellingen, Mullumbimby, Gold Coast, and Brisbane.

One hundred percent of all money raised through the tour will go towards the Choir's latest project: a new choir training academy in Uganda.

**Under One Sky Concert**

Where: Lake Kawana Community Centre

When: Saturday, 20 June 2015

Time: 7pm - 9pm

Concert and workshop tickets: [www.kwaya.org](http://www.kwaya.org)

**Singing and dancing workshop**

Where: Coolum State School

When: Sunday, 21 June 2015

Time: 2pm - 3pm

**Zumba fundraiser**

**(with the African Children's choir members)**

Where: Coolum Civic Centre

Time: 6pm - 7pm

Tickets at the door.

### **About the African Children's Choir**

The first Choir was formed in 1984, selected from orphaned and vulnerable children in the Kampala and Luwero areas. The children travelled among the North American church communities where they impressed audiences with their vibrancy, outstanding musical talent, and dancing abilities.

They quickly became a mouthpiece for the plight of the many thousands of vulnerable children like them in Uganda. The funds they earned through donations provided for their own support and education. Proceeds from that first tour also funded the building of a choir training academy in Kampala from which a second African Children's Choir was selected.

More than 1000 vulnerable children have since been through the Choir program; the funds generated have provided the opportunity for education and hope for more than 50,000 others like them in some of the most desperate and needy areas of Africa.

### **About Cool Harmonies**

The group has been singing up a storm since April 2007 and grown into a community choir with more than 60 members. Its diverse repertoire includes sounds from Africa to the Middle East, and gospel to swing.

Cool Harmonies members are passionate about actively fundraising every year, and have contributed more than **\$41,000** over the past four years towards community projects locally, regionally and overseas.

The choir's relationship with the African Children's Choir began in September 2011 when eight choir members and their partners travelled to Uganda on a cultural exchange program founded by charity Kwaya Australia.

The Sunshine Coast travellers joined 27 other Australians who worked and sang in Kampala and Entebbe for three weeks in outreach schools in the slums, performing for the Queen at a fundraising concert, and exchanging workshops with the African Children's Choir.

That first group also brought to Uganda \$35,000 of funds they raised through local community projects as well as 350kg of donated goods for children at the school and in orphanages.

During the past four years, 165 volunteers (aged from 13-75) have travelled to Uganda with KwaYa Australia raising more than \$310,000 in funds and donating 1300kg of goods, which included jumpers, beanies, blankets, rugs and knitted toys from Peregrine Beach Knit and Crochet Group.

While in Uganda, volunteers have worked on crucial African Children's Choir Music for Life projects in the slums including: building fences and facilities at outreach schools, City Yange clean-up projects, painting classrooms and dormitories, planting crops to feed the school children, provision of daily supplies at orphanages, and running Australian art and culture workshops for school children.

As a result, lifelong bonds have blossomed between the African Children's Choir and Kwaya travellers, many of them returning to Uganda two or three times, as well as hosting the African children during their Australian visits in 2013 and 2015.

Several more Cool Harmonies members have since made the life-changing trip to Uganda over the past three years.

### **Wollongong massed choir concert – 17 May**

Seven local singers recently joined the African Children's Choir and Australian independent singer Kate Miller-Heidke on stage as part of a 1000-strong massed choir concert in Wollongong, NSW.

Believed to be the largest ever massed choir concert in Australia, the Wollongong concert attracted 26 school and community choirs, plus individual singers from across the country.

Cool Harmonies choir director Yvonne Corstorphin was also one of the musical directors for the massed choir, together with Dr Jonathon Welch AM (Choir of Hard Knocks), Lyn Williams OAM (Sydney Children's Choir), Rachel Hore OAM from Canberra and Janet Swain from Mullumbimby, NSW.