

The 2011 Annual Gala Concert of the SA Army Band Cape Town

Article and photos supplied by Mrs Regine Lord.

On Friday, 2 December 2011, the annual Gala Concert of the SA Army Band Cape Town took place at the grand City Hall in Darling Street, central Cape Town. As concertgoers took their seats in the main auditorium and on the upstairs balcony, there was a mounting sense of excited anticipation in the air.

The **SA Army Band Cape Town**, first established in 1915, is the oldest Regular Force band in the country. It is based at the Army Support Base in Youngsfield, under the command of acting OC, Lt Col Owen Witbooi.

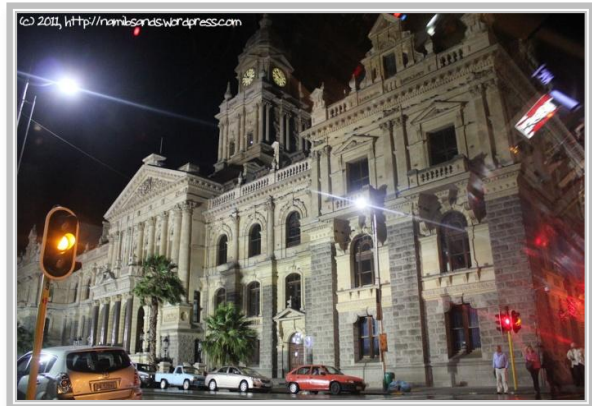


Photo 1: The recently renovated City Hall is a spectacular venue for the end-of-year Gala Concert of the SA Army Band Cape Town



Photo 2: Lance Corporal Sarah Calver plays the demanding solo of *Trombone Spagnolo*

just a military marching band.

The Band is one of the much-loved stalwarts of the Cape Town Military Tattoo and regularly performs at military parades and memorial services. In addition, their wide-ranging repertoire also includes classical pieces, traditional African rhythms, big-band styles and well-known religious hymns, all of which were executed with both passion and professionalism. Ultra Events were responsible for the colourful lighting, while Henk Steenkamp of the Army Band was in charge of the sound desk.

Warrant Officer Class 1 Lionel Ashbury of Air Force Base Ysterplaat, the Master of Ceremonies for the evening, welcomed the audience to the concert, and introduced each of the participating performers and musicians, who took to the stage together with the Army Band.

Under the baton of Assistant Director of Music, Captain Vernon Michels, with Staff Sergeant Jerome Mecloen conducting the SA Army Band Cape Town for some of the pieces, the very talented musicians proved once again that they are more than



Photo 3: The voices of Cpl G. Rahube, Rfn H.P. Malinga, and WO2 M. Swartz flowed together beautifully on the religious hymn of *Jerusalem*



Photo 4: Drummers Ssgt Mgweba, Ssgt C. Buchner, Cpl D. Classen and Ssgt B.S. Ngema in action

religious hymn of *Jerusalem: The Holy City*, sung exquisitely by Cpl Godfrey Rahube, Rfn HP Malinga and WO2 Marius Swartz.

The *Passing of the Regiments*, a march selection arranged by Aubrey Winter, was perfectly suited for showcasing the excellent drumming skills of Ssgt Mgweba, Ssgt C. Buchner, Ssgt B.S. Ngema and Cpl D. Classen.

When the lovely **Lezaan October** stepped onto the stage in her elegant black evening dress, she was greeted by delighted applause; she did not disappoint her fans, but belted out an energetic rendition of Gloria Gaynor's famous song, *I will survive*.



Photo 5: The lovely Lezaan October is definitely a favourite of the crowd

The **South African Police Choir of the Western Cape**, the ladies attired in striking orange dresses and the men wearing complementary white jackets with orange offsets, enchanted us with their powerful African harmonies as they sang several choral pieces, including *Amavolovolo*, *African Song* and *Puleng*.



Photo 6: The South African Police Choir of the Western Cape

The first half of the concert concluded with *Crown Imperial*, a magnificent orchestral march by English composer William Walton. First performed at the coronation of King George VI in 1937, it was

performed most recently as a recessional piece at the royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton on 29 April this year.

Right after the interval, the Band welcomed the audience back in the big band style of Glen Miller with a piece that was fittingly titled *In the Mood*, which indeed got everyone back into a festive concert mood.

After the Band had paid tribute to Michael Jackson with a medley of his most popular songs through the years, Lezaan October returned to the stage for *All I want for Christmas is You* by Mariah Carey. Suitably in the Christmas spirit, it was time for some audience participation with a wonderful Christmas Carol Sing-Along. With the house lights on, everyone was quickly reaching for their program notes, which contained the words of *O Come All Ye Faithful* and *Hark The Herald Angels*.



Photo 7: The Pipes and Drums of Cape Field Artillery with Pipe Major Staff Sergeant Andrew Imrie



Photo 8: The Pipes and Drums of Cape Field Artillery and the SA Army Band Cape Town join forces for *Band of Brothers* and *Highland Cathedral*

Thereafter, the **Pipes and Drums of Cape Field Artillery** in their scarlet Royal Stewart tartans, white shirts and black vests, were led onto the stage by Pipe Major Staff Sergeant Andrew Imrie to the rousing tune of *Scotland the Brave*.

They were joined by the SA Army Band Cape Town for an emotionally stirring performance of *Band of Brothers*, the soundtrack of the World War II television mini-

series of the same name.

This was followed by a surprise treat in the form of *Highland Cathedral*, before the Pipes and Drums concluded their set with the much-loved *Amazing Grace*. In a powerful finale, the SA Army Band Cape Town demonstrated the musical talents of their brass section with *Children of Sanchez*, composed by Chuck Mangione, as the soundtrack of a compelling 1979 movie about a poor family living in Mexico City.

The concert was well attended, and the appreciative applause throughout the evening showed how much everyone was enjoying these musical performances. As the concertgoers left the City Hall at the end of a long and thrilling programme, their excited chattering and their smiling faces said it all: The SA Army Band Cape Town definitely has the right to call itself **‘The Pride of South African Military Music’!**

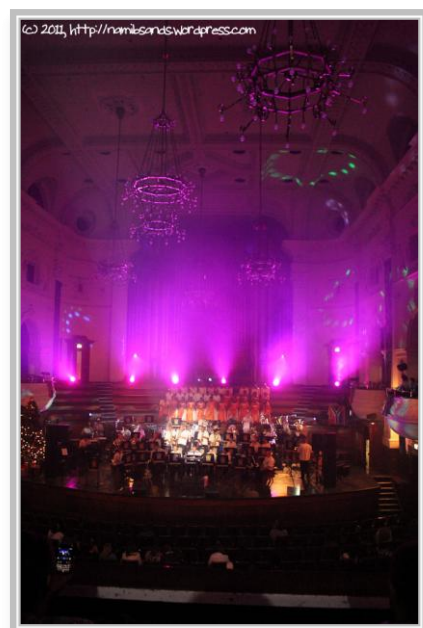


Photo 9: The dramatic finale of the 2011 Gala Concert