

30 April 2019

Following a meeting between me and Ken Wakia in Brussels last year during a meeting of ACJ International, Sing for Pleasure proposed its first ever Conducting course in Africa, in Nairobi, Kenya, from 18 to 29 March 2019, thanks to the generosity of Thierry Thiébaud and the programme Conductors without Borders of the IFCM.

The course was structured as follows;

- Eight Participants attended the Foundation level course in week one. It is the most important because all key conducting skills are put in place at this level. Simple repertoire was used so as not to get in the way of learning such as rounds then two and three voice part songs, all taken from the Sing for Pleasure Junior Songbook pack which contains around 180 very highly regarded a cappella songs for young singers and community choirs and each Conductor received free of charge as part of the course, worth £55. Each day began with a warm up followed by a technical session during which skills were cumulatively added to their theoretical knowledge, followed by workshops in which every participant received generous podium time to put what they had learned into practice.
- The following week, eight participants attended the Intermediate course which lasted three days. This built upon the achievements of the Foundation course using more challenging three and four part repertoire with increasing technical demands. All the repertoire here was a cappella as well and the reading skills of the participants were very much tested.
- 15 participants attended a two day Introduction to Orchestral Conducting course. Here we learnt about the key conducting skills needed for effectively directing and orchestra, using repertoire that wasn't too complicated; H Purcell - Suite from Abdelazar and E Grieg - Holberg Suite. In the UK, this is a popular course for choral conductors who wish to better know what to do when they work with an orchestra. On day one, we prepared the repertoire with a pianist and on day two, a Chamber Orchestra of string players arrived with whom we could put into practice what we learned. They played well.

Observations

- I spent a very agreeable fortnight in Nairobi, the participants were great and worked hard. It is the city of my birth and I was able to stay with family which made the process relatively easy.
- The courses were very well received and it became clear that there was a real need for this sort of training in East Africa. It also became evident that Sing for Pleasure's progression system where everyone starts at foundation level regardless of previous experience really does have its benefits because without it, participants often have to

fix at a more advanced levels those skills shortages that should have been dealt with at an earlier level.

- Attendance was a touch erratic and this held back progression for some participants, none of whom had paid for the course. It may be worth considering a nominal contribution for any future such events to try and assure their buy in.

Hello, you will find some of the feedback we received after the course.

Your name	Which course did you attend?	To what extent did the course meet your expectations?	How would you rate the standard of tuition?	Please add any further comments here.
May Ombara	Orchestral	Completely	Excellent	It was a very educative experience for me. I got to move forward by learning my mistakes and how to correct them and I intend to work on them. I hope we have another one soon.
Ken Mulwa	Orchestral	Completely	Excellent	The course got us (or at least me) out of our comfort zones and caused us to work on aspects that we hitherto took for granted. I'm a much better musician after just two days of the workshop. Immense gratitude to Manvinder, who was an incredible instructor, and best wishes to the entire SfP fraternity.
Joseph Njoroge Kamau	Foundation	Completely	Excellent	It was so much fun, having an eye opener to the vast amount of conducting areas that I need to cover. I truly hope to make the summer classes in August
Erick Ochieng okello	Orchestral	Mainly	Excellent	The course was completely an eye opener. It is through the course that I realized I have been doing wrong techniques in my orchestral conducting. I am now working to implement what I have learnt from the course in conducting my orchestra. Am really delighted to have attended this course and hope for more this courses to happen here in Kenya.



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				Lastly the tutor was awesome.
LOICE A MAINA	Foundation	Completely	Excellent	It's an experience worth having for any musician
Keziah	Orchestral	Completely	Excellent	I am truly grateful for the opportunity to learn from Manvinder. The short course was packed with specifically tailored feedback that I found useful, especially for the practical sessions. The critique & prep notes were most valuable. I am already applying what I learnt. I would love to get a chance to participate in future courses, intermediate and advanced, whenever the opportunity arises. Thank you very much.
Anthony Mwangi	Intermediate	Mainly	Excellent	Greetings, Manvinder, from 'Sing for Pleasure' , was of great help. I conduct choirs in my local cathedral & I have already started to implement the teaching I got. Many in the choir have already started to comment on the way the teaching is of great help and makes things easier. I look forward to more teaching from 'Sing for Pleasure' & hopefully, God willing, attend the Summer Course in the United Kingdom. Thank you so much.
Dr. Atoh Fred	Intermediate, Orchestral	Completely	Excellent	I've never met a tutor so dedicated and focused as Manvinder was. Greatly inspired to study choral and orchestral conducting even more.



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Wycliffe Muganda	Foundation	Completely	Excellent	Mr. Manvinder Rattan, was so accommodating, interactive and he understood my weakness from day one allowing me a conducive environment of learning. I liked his spirit of ensuring that his students understood his lectures. I gained a lot from him especially on the dynamics of conducting and I encourage him to come back again another time. The only sincere reword I can offer Sfp is to say 'THANK YOU VERY MUCH'
Faith Kariru	Foundation, Intermediate	Completely	Excellent	For me it was a great experience. I would most definitely attend another course.

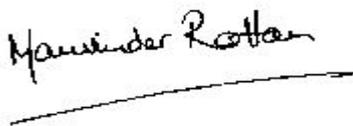
There are two short videos which appear on Sing for Pleasure's Facebook page in which participants expressed their feelings about the course;

<https://www.facebook.com/sfpuk/videos/356771331606293/>

<https://www.facebook.com/sfpuk/videos/2117866334965157/>

I would like to thank the IFCM for its moral and financial support for this course and Ken Wakia, Levi Wataka et Geoffrey Mukoto for all that they did to help make this course happen.

With all good wishes,



Manvinder Rattan
Chief Executive & Head of Conductor Training



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