



## Free State Choirmaster of Note Passes On:

Undoubtedly, we have as a country entered a period of great sadness. The rate at which messages of condolences have recently been extended to bereaved families, friends and acquaintances of our artists and sport personalities in the Free State and in the country speaks volumes in terms of the dark period that we have entered as a society.

It is with great sorrow that the Department yet again announces the untimely death of one of local artists who was involved in the choral music genre. The late Mr Kehilwe "City" Ketlhoilwe of Mangaung (Bloemfontein) passed-on on the morning of the 31 July 2020. Mr Ketlhoilwe was a fervent and passionate lover of choral music. He was one of the greatest choral music conductors and conducted one of the famous school choirs in Mangaung, Sehunelo Senior Secondary School choir. He later established a well-known local community choir, Bloemfontein Serenade Choir, one of the greatest choirs that the Free State has ever produced. He represented the Free State in numerous national choral Eisteddfod and national competitions. He was indeed amongst the giants in the choral music fraternity. He will be dearly missed.

The Bloemfontein Serenade was funded by the Free State Government to tour African countries such as Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland where they flew the South African flag high. Under the baton of Mr Ketlhoilwe,

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the choir competed in choral competitions like Frecma, Lecma, Unico, Old Mutual national choir festival, SACMA and others.

He led the choir in a huge choral project called “Mpolelle” which was directed by the legend actor, Dr Jerry Mofokeng, and which also featured the music and film maestros like Mr Tshepo Tshola and Tina Mnumzana.

Mr Ketlhoilwe departs from this world a happy man, probably having caught wind of the commitments made towards advancing choral music in the Province. Just two days before his departure, on 29 July 2020, the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Sport, Arts Culture and Recreation , Mrs Limakatso Mahasa, presented the Department Budget Vote Speech in which she stated as follows: “Choral Music Programme assists us to respond to government priority number 5 of Social Cohesion and Safe Communities. In a quest to fully and meaningfully implement this programme, the Provincial Gospel Clap and Tap structure was established in September 2019. The Department will host the Provincial Gospel Clap and Tap Competition in the last quarter 2020/2021”.

During this Budget Vote MEC Limakatso Mahasa further noted the need for and made a commitment to incorporate Choral music into the COVID-19 Relief Fund for Artists and Athletes because of the nature of this sector. She does pointed out that “we have also noted that the sectors on Choral Music and Clap and Tap requires a special intervention in relation to COVID 19 as they have also been negatively affected. In response to this, we have set aside an amount of R400 000 from the COVID-19 Relief Fund which will be used for Choral Music and Clap and Tap”

The Department has and will continue to prioritise Choral music in the Province and work closely with its partners in this sector in the form of the Lengau Choral Music Association which Mr Ketlhoilwe was a patron and legend of. "This partnership and advancement of Choral music in the Province should continue to be entrenched and escalated in honour of the choral music legends such as Mr Ketlhoilwe. Our planned Creative Sector Awards will also be incomplete should they not embrace and recognize such cultural stalwarts such as Mr Ketlhoilwe", MEC Mahase emphasized.

May the spirit of Mr Ketlhoilwe and that of other cultural activists and sport personalities in our province and country find eternal peace. We are indeed going through a dark period as we continue to lose our patriots against the backdrop of Coronavirus pandemic.

END

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