**Semi-structured interview schedule**

**Date: 12/06/22**

**Signature of researcher: JL**

**Name of participant: Diego (Gr. 11 Student)**

1. Briefly tell me about your choral singing experience. **Which choirs have you sung in** and **how long have you been a member in the Kearsney College Choir**?

So, I started singing when **I was around in grade 3**. For me, it was something to try out that was different because I'll go a little bit deeper at school. At my previous school, I had a bad teacher, and **she broke my confidence down a lot**, so my parents and I were looking for ways to try to get ways for me to build all that confidence up again. I started stuff like I did some cooking, I made my own blog that went well, and another thing I went down to was **singing and the choir**. I joined the **Clifton Durban choir**, and I started off as a hobby, and then soon it became something **I loved and I had a passion for**, and that's where I found a place where I could **express myself** and a place that I could show what I could do and **obviously be valued** in the space. I wasn't a sportsman so I wasn't good at sports even though I loved to play sports, I **loved being in team activities,** so that gave me a place where I could also do something that I joined and loved. From there I went to that choir from **grade three all the way to grade 7** and then I became **head of the choir** in Clifton in grade 7, and then obviously I came here and that was another **one of the main pulling factors for me was the choir here**. The first time I came here it really shocked me how different the two choirs were because my choir didn't really **have other movements** it was just a fun activity on a Monday morning, Wednesday morning, and Friday afternoon. You come here and you see what **they can perform on a world-class stage and a world-class** level and the energy they bring to the stage, that for me really told me I want to be here, and this was the place that I want to be. **I joined the choir in grade 8,** auditioned, and thankfully obviously in grade 8, it was a privilege for you to be in the choir. I think now it's not open but yeah it was a privilege for you as a **grade 8 to be in the choir and I was really grateful that I had this opportunity to be part of this choir** and that's really where **I found my space** because also in the school it's a very big difference between Clifton and Kearsney and I only had two other peers from Clifton that came with me and **I didn't really know where I fit into the whole school environment** during then. **The school with all the hierarchy, belittles you, so once you come into the choir it's like a family you part of this unit now**, and there's no hierarchy there's no difference between you and the guy standing next to you, **you are part of the family** that performs and loves what they do every Monday night, Thursday night, and Friday afternoon, and I think that's another place where I found the love for the choir to see like some guys there are training for Saturday afternoon and they were playing first team rugby and then come Monday, they were in the choir and they were like friends and that's where I **began to find my footing in the school** and cited that I want to be and what I need to do to improve to be part of the choir. I'm **now in grade 11 and next year is my senior year** and I've never regretted it's been the best opportunity I have had, and I've **loved every moment of the choir it's opened so many doors for me** so now like for example, my brother is coming to Kearsney next year and obviously with the looting and riots and stuff that happens in South Africa, my parents didn't have enough money to fund me to go overseas and then obviously my brother is coming here next year so they couldn't send me overseas so I decided that it’s fine, I'll step away and allow space for my brother to come in and make sure he enjoys the same experiences that I've experienced at the school. Thankfully, the conductor opened the door for me to say I can apply for financial assistance and make my way overseas with them. I applied for that route, and now I've been accepted to take this, and ever since **I've been so grateful for what the conductor has provided for me and what the school has provided for me**. When I look back at it whenever I'm out of school I wanted the same thing for the boys here so that's what the choir is about. **It’s a family unit**.

1. What are some of the highlights (if any) of being a member of the Kearsney College Choir?

So, there was one **tour** that we went down to **Sun City** for, and we stayed in one of the hotels and it was me and the whole it was like one, two, three, five of us in grade eight that were in the choir, and **we all stayed in one room**, and it gave us a **sense and independence** again. We were staying in the house all by ourselves like a hotel room for two or three nights and we braaied together, we stayed together, we went to the next door to us, the grade tens, so we sometimes stayed there, we sang songs, we did some singing on the roadside there to get some money. That whole experience was one of my highlights. Another one was a **12-hour tour to Johannesburg**, and it was like really **professional**, and it was the first time I've ever done something like that where I woke up in the morning, got on a bus, drove to the airport, got on a flight, went to Johannesburg, performed for this major concert there and next thing I know I'm back on a plane back to Durban, and the next day at school again so it's all those small experiences, and so the **seniors always kind of acknowledge you out of school** and out of the choir and it just shows that **brotherhood** in the choir so yeah it's those things that really stand out all the small things but yeah it means a lot in the school.

1. How does choral singing make you feel? **Explain in detail**.

The whole thing about singing together as a choir is **unity and brotherhood and independence** in the choir. Even though you’re a team, it still boils down to your independence and at Kearsney, you can easily compare, but you can compare the first team rugby to our choir very contrasty. We put the most amount of time into the choir than anything in the school. **When we sing together it's a happy place**, I mean you're **doing what you love together with all your mates around you**. There is no way I can explain it. I mean even afterward, we when we are doing our busking songs and we’re chanting and that whole sense of brotherhood, and **that hits you in your heart**, **you’re doing what you love** and that’s the best way I can explain it.

1. Do you have friends in the choir? If so, how important are these friendships to you?

I mean **they've changed my life** because at one point I wanted to leave school. **I hated the whole hierarchy system and the way you feel belittled**. Obviously, in grade eight I hated it but now **I've become to appreciate it**, and the choir and those friendships I've built, I mean I don't think I'll ever have that again, and even the **seniors that are out of school**, when they come back and you say hello to them and then **they still like your friends** even though they're about 5-6 years older than you and in university, those friendships are probably the most important to me **they become your family**.

1. Do the members of the Kearsney College Choir share a unique brotherhood (separate from the rest of the school)? **Elaborate**.

100%. I think it was a grade nine, the **basses had a discussion**. We were sent off for like group working and we were down in the auditorium and it was **just us as basses** and we finished all the work we needed to do, and then we just sat down and **had a chat and we spoke about how is everyone doing in the school environment, how is everybody coping like issues,** we had a prefect in our bass group at that time, and any issues we gave to him and then **he made a change for us** and basically spoke for us in school which is amazing.

1. Do you think singing in a choir can bring diverse cultures together, and if so how, and if not, why do you think that is?

100% again, I mean **this choir has ranged from me as a Hindu, we have Asian guys, we have black, and white, we’re boys of the school that love what we do**. I don't think it's a matter, **when we go there we don't see race, we just see there are my mates, we're doing what we love we singing, we’re touring all over the place and we just enjoy our space and time at the college and for us**, I don't think it really matters what race you are or where you come from or how much money you have. **It’s just we all have one thing in common and that's singing, and we love to sing.**

1. How do you experience cultural integration (if any) within the choir?

From my background, **I'm obviously Hindu**, I come from that whole temple environment, **singing at the same time and I still sing there when I'm at the temple** and when I come here I know it's strange because I still have 100% belief in my gods at the same time, **but I also can fully devote to Jesus and** all His teachings and I love what the Bible teaches you and **I feel like it all comes down to the one thing where just to love everybody I mean it's all about love and treating each person with the right amount of respect.** In the choir I mean that's what we do, **even though I might be singing a Christian song I still treat it with an equal amount of respect and love as I would for one of my beliefs or one of my Hindu teachings**, and I feel like that's what the choir teaches you as well. I wouldn't be shocked if we do sing a Hindu song, the conductor is that type of person he is. **He's always open to all the cultures and that's what I think he tries to make that pot full of cultural activities and we can be singing like today, we sang a German song, yesterday we sang a Zulu song and we will be singing an Afrikaans song,** so I wouldn't put it past him and it's the way it makes me feel is I wouldn't feel any different than I've been feeling for my past four years in this choir. Obviously, it would be quite cool because I haven't done anything like that in a choir space. **I know I would love to do something like that. It wouldn’t make me feel any different because that is what the choir does**.

1. Could you explain what you value most of being a choir member of the Kearsney College Choir? **Elaborate**.

**The boys in the choir.** **I do it because I love doing it**, and I feel like when I wake up in the morning that I do not think negatively about going to rehearsals, I don't really feel that way because **I'm going to do what I enjoy**. If you feel that way, then the choir isn’t for you. You shouldn't be dreadful about having a choir. So, when I wake up even though it is a lot, I mean quieter months, which are very few, some days I feel like I have got so much work on my hands, but **never once did I ever feel like I want to give up the choir**, I will never feel like that because as soon as I feel like that, I will leave the choir. That's not how any choir member should feel. I don't feel any of them do feel like that same time because, when we get there, we all enjoy what we're doing even though it's harsh hours, everybody is there because of the team, and it is a team at the end of the day. We can't have one person that is slacking off when everyone's working hard and I think that's what everyone understands in the choir, that **when it comes down to performing, you are only as good as the weakest link just like any other team in sports.**

1. Have you ever experienced personal negativity because of singing in a choir (Kearsney or other)? **Explain**.

**The choir has lost a little bit of respect since grade eight**, I feel like that has happened and sometimes you do get told you are in the choir and you’re a choir boy. **Once they see us perform then it's all quiet**. **I've been told that I’m a choirboy not by adults but by kids my own age, that does irritate us sometimes**, but once you perform then they understand. I think people don't understand what choir is until they see a choir perform and see what we do and see how much passion it brings to the stage.

1. What are some of the benefits of singing in a choir for you?

I will tell a first-team rugby player to compare it to his first-team rugby team. I mean when you go to first-team rugby, how do you feel? What makes you want to stay? I will then tell him what the choir offers. I will tell him that it is just like rugby, **it offers you a brotherhood like none other in the school**. It offers you **a place where you can come and do what you love with nobody criticising you for who you are or what you believe in or where you come from,** it's a **safe space where we sing**, we do what we love for an hour, and we get a **chance to express that on world-class stages abroad**. It offers you **a place to also learn how to manage your time**, **how to be creative**, and c**hallenge your ideas in what you sing**. It also comes to the sense of fitness at the same time, to be in the choir, you have to **be fit in terms of doing all those dance moves while also projecting your voice** and **producing a sound that is worthy of a world-class choir**.

1. What are some of the disadvantages of singing in a choir?

I think **it's the amount of time it takes up. It's really demanding of your time and your effort**, I mean at Kearsney we are only allowed two prep sessions and obviously, during the day we are all at sports and we come back we have a shower, and we must go and eat supper and then it's choir**. The choir boys end up using one period of that session where we get the chance to do homework and then go to choir**, which kind of puts us in the backlog but at the same time, **it comes down to how well you can manage your time**. **You must know how to manage your time if you want to be in the choir**.

1. What motivates you to continuously participate in choral singing?

**What motivated me to join was that I saw a place where I might be able to flourish and enjoy my time**. I just took that on a wink because my mum said I think that you would enjoy this. I was hesitant at first, but obviously, I've never been in a choir, and I never sang before, I've never done any singing, I haven't played an instrument, and I haven't done any sort of singing. It was like a straight-head dive into this choir here at Clifton. Ever since then, that **passion has just grown and grown and grown and grown and I think that's because of all the experiences that I've had since that young age of grade 3**. Obviously, that was because of **the brotherhood**. Going on tour for a day or going on tour wherever and becoming proper, where you don't feel like that's just a friend, but it sort of becomes like a brother and that's not really your friend anymore. **I think what keeps me in the choir is my love for it.** Over the years, **I’ve gained such a love and passion for singing and the art of music and what it offers you as a person in terms of happiness, portraying the stories of people before you and what they experienced.** **To put that on stage is amazing**, and that's what keeps me going.