**Semi-structured interview schedule**

**Date: 12/06/22**

**Signature of researcher: JL**

**Name of participant: Smev (Gr. 10 student)**

1. Briefly tell me about your choral singing experiences, which choirs have you sung in before and how long have you been a member of this choir?

I **haven’t sung in any other choirs except for this one**. In **America**, it wasn’t common to have a choir, maybe just in universities, but there weren't choirs in high and primary schools. This is my **first time singing in one** and I only started **two months ago**, so I am very new to the choir. I **have no musical background**. A matric told me I should just try out because he mentioned that I have a pretty good voice and could really come and culture the choir. I gave it a shot and went to the **conductor, and he was like: “yea, you’re in the choir”, since then I've been loving it**. Something that is completely new to me, and I am a little disappointed that I didn’t try it sooner because it is one of those things that when you get it, you get it, and it **feels like you belong**. The **negative bonds between juniors and seniors are completely broken** and the feeling you get from **singing is overwhelming**, especially if the **audience applause** for you because you know you have put **countless hours** into the **work**, and to the **songs you have just performed**, you know it has finally **paid off**.

1. How many years have you been at Kearsney before joining the choir?

I came in Grade Eight, so I have been here for two and a half years.

1. Explain your initial reasons for wanting to join the Kearsney College Choir.

The **reputation** was kind of cool. It is one of the only kinds of **groups that get to go on overseas tours constantly**, which gave me a reason to join. It is one of those benefits; you get to see the entire world. I always **liked Pitch Perfect** and always thought to myself that is so cool and that I want to do that, and I was like **“this is an opportunity to do that”.** I wouldn’t be losing anything if I joined.

1. What are some of the highlights, if any, of being a member of this choir?

The **audience**, the applause, **learning new songs**, we’re learning a German song and we tried to learn an Estonian song but that kind of flopped it’s just **new experiences.** I have never learned a song in German, and I have never spoken in German. **It's just something new at almost every single practice**. When you learn a new part or new choreography, it feels like you’re **constantly improving**. **The conductor pushes you with any chance he gets, and it really benefits me**. You can see progress; from the moment we pick up a new song till when we put the song on stage. Even though you mess up, only you will really know, it’s just almost like **self-accomplishment**. When you're **performing,** besides the nervousness, before and sometimes during the performance, it's just amazing. It is something you don’t get from any sports field or writing tests, you know what you worked for made someone else happy. It is exactly like **carrying a message over to the audience members**.

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

**My best friend is in the choir**. **He’s been trying to get me to join the choir since Grade Eight** and I was always like: “no, I don’t want to join”. **I was scared and I had never sung before**, and I didn’t know if it was for me. He (my friend) is an amazing singer, so I was almost like: “there's no way if everyone is like that, I couldn’t be in the choir, and I would never get in”. I never really went for it (audition), **I was just too nervous** and now disappointed that I couldn’t join sooner. **Now that I have been working on it for two months, I improved significantly**. Since he is my best friend, **I am not scared of singing in front of anyone anymore**. I was at his house just now, we were just jamming and singing. **It is just so comfortable and feels like second nature because it's just someone that you can trust** and that he won't judge because you know that he’s someone that has been doing it (singing) his whole life.

1. Do the members of the choir share a unique brotherhood?

Definitely se**eing each other just as performers and singers** or matric and grade eight or seniors and juniors, our head of the choir group that I am in, the tenor twos, he is in matric and **to everyone else he is quite strict and firm**, but as we were in the rehearsal just now, he is **suddenly relaxed and it is like we see each other as friends** and that’s something that you wouldn’t find around the school like the sports field where you have to greet him or something, but now he asks “how are you” and greets you, and that’s something matrics won't do to grade tens. It's just **nice to see how people learn from person to person**.

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

Definitely. When I joined, **I couldn’t pronounce or speak any Zulu, like none**. I was there, with my heavy American accent and it would sound bad. **When I joined the choir two months ago, the first piece happened to be a Zulu song.** I was like “goodness, how am I going to do this?”. Every night I would ask a friend, how would you pronounce this? **It allowed me to see a whole different language, like the German song we’re doing.** Since we must sing in different languages, **it provides so much diversity**. Our conductor constantly asks how certain words are pronounced. **It provides knowledge for the whole choir, and especially to those who don’t speak Zulu or any other language besides English and it provides insight into everyone else’s culture.** We’re doing this song called “Awakening the ancestors”, a Zulu song where it is a mythological creature called “Thokolosh” and basically it just provides insight on a whole thing that many people wouldn’t really understand and know when they first heard it, and they wouldn’t know the back story like how to get rid of it or praise ancestors from a Sangoma, **it’s just incredible to learn so much from another culture’s music**.

1. How do you experience the cultural integration in the Kearsney College Choir?

**Most of the boys are boarders, so we see each other the whole time, and we are comfortable with each other**. Some would bring their own experiences from their cultures, and we all accept it as it is, and we are like let us find out more. It really comes in easy. **There is no tension or conflict, or no questioning and it is almost as if this person is correcting what he is saying, and we trust each other and their knowledge of their own culture.** Boarding schools are nice like that. **We mingle with each other; the boys know each other well.**

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

It is tough waking up and realizing you have a nine-hour rehearsal, especially on a weekend. I guess the thing that makes me constantly go **is the feeling I get when singing**. I know that I could do it for hours if I'm in the right mood. Even if I'm not in the right mood it is one of those things that you adjust to. If you study for the first five minutes, it will be tough but then once you get into it, it starts going nicely, and then you start to enjoy it even. **After choir, you just carry on that ‘after feeling’ throughout the night** because we have normally night practices but before choir starts, I always wonder: “do I have to go?”, and when you get there it's “I'm glad I came”.

1. Have you ever experienced personal negativity because of singing in a choir? It could be Kearsney or any other choir.

Yeah actually. It happens to everybody, they go through that phase where you just like **“I don't want to be in this choir anymore”, just because of how straining it is**, because it happens almost four times a week, and for hours at a time, and **it almost takes a chunk out of your life and you almost just start to really wonder what you would have done with that free time**. **I think the reason why the boys stay is that they realize that they would rather be doing choir than what they would in their free time** because they realize that **choir is something that you just kind of love and grow into**. Recently, with these nine-hour practices, it is just like “I really don't want to go”, because of other reasons, I'm not going on the choir tour, which is a really big bummer for me obviously but it is almost feels like all this work that I'm putting into the choir isn't enough, but it won't pay off as much as I wanted to, I won't get to perform in front of thousands of people. **It feels like I'm just putting in all the work with no gain and when stuff like that happens you feel a lot of negativity towards the choir**, it's like I really don't want to go to this practice and it's like what am I going to get from it? It's almost like resilience till I just bounce back and be like: “OK I'm going to go; I'm going to learn something new; I'm going to try my best even if I don't get to almost reaping the benefits.

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

Time. As I said, **it takes a lot of your time**, especially **during exams which we just had that were quite tough** but other than that, **I can only see positives and it improves your vocals and getting ladies and other benefits like that**. **It helps you feel good about yourself, you know that you are good at something with a whole bunch of friends and it's almost one the strengths,** you can easily say choir and feel **confident about that just because of the amount of work that you put in because of that time** so it's kind of a negative plus side so, for every negative you have maybe two positives from it.

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

From a nonmusical family or just everything we did not a single person is musical in this family or in my family. It's just I learn something new and I love music but because my family is not musical or is never kind of pushed for me to learn about music, it feels like there's so much more to be learned, and from something that I love I know so little about, so I really **just want to kind of expand my horizons and I'm learning tons of new things like what a semitone is, semitone up and down, you are flat, all the different phrases like tutti.** You really **learn something new every day and it's something that you can take into life and something that you can just generally enjoy because music you can play when you're old, you can sing well into your fifties**. It's just from a nonmusical side everything like literally everything about this **choir is new to me and it's just something that you couldn't get enough and I enjoy learning things**.