

The Educational, Social and Cultural Significance of Boys Choirs

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Abstract : Worldwide, there are many boys choirs, but the Drakensberg Boys Choir is one of only a few of its kind: selected from a residential boys choir school using choral music as a significant vehicle for holistic education. With ongoing debates as to whether single-gender education is advantageous for boys, and research on the missing males in choirs problem, this presentation's purpose is to explore the perceived benefits and values for boys singing in the world-renowned Drakensberg Boys Choir, and to establish educational grounds for the existence of boys choirs. Semi-structured questionnaires were given to choristers, known as Drakies, to ascertain their perceptions of their choir membership. Their experiences are noted in terms of musical, social and behavioral skills gained. The main emerging themes in each category are discussed in order to lay claim to the assumption that boys choirs exist not only to entertain, and nor are their goals purely musical or pedagogical, but that they can be regarded as unique, cultural artifacts that aid boys' development into well-equipped and well-rounded young men.

Keywords : boys, choirs, choral, education, skills, values

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