

Music at Helderberg College

Today's Helderberg College began in 1893 as Claremont Union College in Cape Town, South Africa. In 1918 the school was relocated to a more rural location near Spion Kop and initially renamed South African Training School, then Spion Kkop College. In 1928, it moved to its present location, where it was supposed to be known as African Missionary College but actually opened as Helderberg College, named for its site on the slopes of Helderberg Mountain.

Claremont Union College, founded in 1893 and forerunner of today's Helderberg College, was the first Seventh-day Adventist school established outside of North America. It initially offered all levels of schooling, from elementary through college. Its college offerings were patterned after the four-year classical curriculum offered at other schools of higher education at that time, which included languages, mathematics, sciences, logic, and moral science.

In order to fulfill its goals of character development from a Christian perspective, it also offered practical classes in physical education, health, and vocational training. This mix of classical and practical subjects led to tensions and eventually a resolution in which practical subjects and shorter programs prevailed.

In the beginning, the faculty was required to live on campus and eat with the students. In 1894, one of the professors notified the board that he was no longer going to live on campus, given the food being served. Although members of the board were upset with his complaint, the principal asserted he also found the food totally inadequate. The board then set up a committee that would dictate a menu, one that the cook "must abide by."¹

Music instruction was available for an extra fee. There were a number of music teachers who taught for brief periods, mostly women identified by last name only and as Miss or Mrs., as was the custom of that time. From 1910 to 1912, Barrow Dowling from nearby Cape Town taught voice lessons and directed a

chorus that presented programs periodically and a cantata in 1911. During that time Miss Schonken, piano teacher, was thanked by action of the board for her work² and Lyda Eaton Patchett, a graduate of South Lancaster Academy, later Atlantic Union College, also taught music in the last year at this location.³

In 1914, Fred Stuckey, a nurse and trombonist, organized a band of ten members that increased in size as it continued into the next year.⁴ Beginning in the middle of the 1915 school year, William E. Straw was hired as headmaster. Although he was a talented cornet player who usually organized bands wherever he went, it is doubtful he had time for that given the financial challenges he faced during his time of leadership.

The school was ahead of its time in Africa, since there were no stated restrictions in admission about race and religion and it was a coed college. Half of its small student body of fifty to one hundred students annually was non-Adventist, and in its 24 years near Cape Town only 31 students graduated, most of them becoming teachers.

Although the school had been originally located in a rural area near Cape Town, the city's growth and other challenges at the school led to its closure in 1918 and the building of a new school in a remote rural area near Spion Kop. A year after the college closed, it reopened in 1919 as South African Training College. Patchett, who had taught for one year at CUC continued as music teacher at the new school.

Three years later it became known as Spion Kop College and a year later claimed status as a junior college offering four two-year programs. During its nine years of existence at this location, the majority of its thirty graduates were from religion programs.

In 1922, the year it had become a junior college, Coralie Willmore, a singer, was appointed head of the music department. Two new German-made pianos were also purchased at the beginning of that year, and Mrs. Philip Venter, a pianist and wife of the language teacher at the school, assisted in teaching piano and sight singing. Between the two music teachers they had 32 pupils: five in voice, one in organ, and the balance in piano.⁵

Fees beyond regular tuition were charged for music lessons and use of the pianos. Although no diploma in music was offered, teachers assisted serious music students in preparing for the University of South Africa music examinations.⁶

In the short time the school was located here, there were other teachers in both voice and piano. At the graduation service in the school's last year, a "Choral Society" under the direction of Mr. Hanson and accompanied by Ruth Lindup, presented a highly praised program that also featured a "Ladies Glee Club," "Mixed College Quartette," cello solos by Lindup, and readings by Win Shankel.⁷

Because its isolation limited the school's potential for growth, it was closed at the end of 1927. A new school, African Missionary

College, was scheduled to reopen a year later at Somerset West in a thriving farming area on the slopes of Helderberg Mountain. By the time the school opened in 1928, however, it had been named Helderberg College.⁸ The move proved to be a wise one and the first year's enrollment was 100, the hoped for number of students. Within two years it increased to 154.

At the end of the first year, Lindup left and was replaced by Maggie Theunissen, a pianist. Maude Allan, a well-known South African singer, was hired to teach voice, and Shankel was hired to accompany the choir. In the following year, Eileen de Beer was the only music teacher listed in the official faculty roster, even though Win Shankel was still involved in the program.⁹

The George Shankel family had come to South Africa near the end of Spion Kop College. While at first he taught English and history, he became increasingly important in the operation of the school after it moved and was renamed Helderberg College, first serving as registrar and then principal, starting with the 1934 school year. Like his wife, Win, he was also a musician and at one point taught a conducting class after he had become principal.¹⁰

By 1934, the school, which had been built to accommodate 100 students, had more than 150. All of the facilities were inadequate, particularly in the music department, which, in addition to its choirs and orchestra, had thirty students, seven in violin, and the rest in piano. Because the music program was regularly being moved from one place to another on campus, it was referred to as the "wandering department,"¹¹ and there was talk about constructing a music building. It was during this period that a college song and hymn, *Hail, Helderberg*, was adopted.¹²

In 1941, even while Europe was engaged in a devastating war, over 200 students, the highest enrollment

yet, arrived on campus. During that year, construction of a music building was started that included two teachers' studios, seven practice rooms, and a small recital hall. Music examination results for that year listed eleven students who had successfully passed various applied levels and four who had passed the preliminary theory test.¹³

Also, during the past decade Shankels' daughter, Virginia-Gene, had gained attention as a child prodigy in violin and soloed with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra before the family returned to the United States at the end of the 1941 school year. She would later gain widespread recognition for her work as founder and director of the New England Youth Ensemble.



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In 1942, enrollment increased again and spirits were high on campus as the school celebrated its 50th anniversary. Music, now in its new facility, was having one of its best years yet, with one out three students in school taking piano, voice, or violin lessons. The three teachers, Mrs. Davy, Miss Kotze, and Nellie McClure, wife of the new principal Warner E. McClure, had full schedules, and the sounds of students' practicing and music groups rehearsing could be heard across campus. In addition to the music associated with the anniversary on alumni weekend in September, the Choral Society, directed by Mrs. McClure, ended the year with a

performance of the "Hallelujah" chorus from the *Messiah* at that year's graduation exercises.¹⁴

Midway through the 1940s, Elsie Watt was added to the music faculty. In 1948, Gwendoline (Gwen) Smith and Frances L. Brown, both singers and pianists, were hired, joining McClure, a pianist who had been teaching since 1942. Muriel Stockil (later Pike), a violinist, was hired in 1949.

Brown, who had been teaching at La Sierra College, now University, was appointed head of the department. She organized an oratorio chorus as she arrived and by the end of the school year presented the oratorio the *Holy City* at graduation, with a choir of over 100 voices.¹⁵

In that year, 160 students along with fifteen faculty members had been engaged in some form of music making. Membership in the music groups, which now included men's and women's glee clubs as well as an orchestra, totaled over 250, including students who were in multiple groups.

Four new pianos were purchased the next school year and, in 1949, the music building was modified to accommodate the increased interest in music. Because of the dramatic increase in ensemble sizes, the auditorium stage became the rehearsal area for choir and other groups.

At the end of that year, the *Messiah* was performed for the first time at HBC during graduation weekend. This presentation by the choral groups of the college and other assisting students and faculty, directed by Brown, included guest soloists from the region. In that same year she organized an A Cappella choir, a select ensemble.¹⁶

In 1950, Brown took an extended tour in South Africa with the A Cappella Choir which created a sensation wherever it sang. In one stroke, the college and its choir emerged from relative obscurity to become nationally known.

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For three weeks the 60-member choir traveled by rail in two coaches to major cities, where they were given extensive press coverage, welcomed warmly by local dignitaries and received enthusiastically by large and, in some instances, overflow audiences.

In Johannesburg, they were featured in a twenty-minute broadcast on South African Broadcasting Corporation. This led to an invitation for them to give a ninety-minute program from SABC's Cape Town studio.

The tour program included singing by women's and men's choirs and a male quartet, all drawn from within the A Cappella choir, the primary performing ensemble. The quartet, the Helderberg Harmonists, sang arrangements of spirituals that proved to be very popular with audiences. Teacher Elsie Watt was also featured in the concerts, playing hymn arrangements on the marimba, an instrument of African origin.

Five large packing cases containing choir robes, music, and the marimba, were used that could double as choir risers if auditoriums did not have the needed equipment.

Students studied each evening after supper during an hour-long class in history and geography. Late parties were forbidden, sweets were kept to a minimum, and opportunities for napping and sleeping helped minimize the stress of the 3,800-mile tour and overnight travel by train.

At the time of this tour, HBC was the only co-educational institution of its type in the region. Regardless of their financial status, students were expected to do manual labor and contribute to the actual maintenance of the college.

An article by Pieter H. Coetzee about the trip was published in the Adventist church's primary publication for the young, *The Youth's Instructor*. The tour was regarded as one the most successful outreach programs ever conducted in South Africa.¹⁷

Brown's leadership of the department and success of the choir in that 1950 choir tour, repeated again two years later, would come to be regarded

as the beginning of the present-day music program at HBC.

By the end of the 1930s, several three-year normal programs in theology, domestic science, and commercial had been developed at the college, and by the mid-1940s, three three-year courses in these areas and a two-year Bible instructor's program were available.

All of these changes, along with an increasingly better educated faculty, set the stage for the school to gain senior college status in 1951 and a working relationship with the University of South Africa (UNISA). This affiliation allowed HA students to earn four-year degrees through the university.

After it became a senior college, graduation services became more formal and, for the first time, beginning in 1955, students wore traditional academic regalia at graduation services.

When Brown returned to the U.S. at the end of the 1952 school year for a furlough, Timothy Ferrell assumed leadership of the choir on an interim and part-time basis. When she was unable to return, he directed the choir through 1956. In those four years, even though there were fewer teachers, one third of the student body was taking music, creating teaching overloads and very little performing off campus.¹⁸

Male quartets had become very popular in the late 1940s, inspired by the King's Heralds, a male quartet associated with the Voice of Prophecy, a radio broadcast based in the U.S. When Brown had toured in 1950 and 1952, the male quartets had been an important part of the touring program. One of the groups at HBC, the Good News Quartet, became a favorite, and when H. M. S. Richards, speaker for the VOP, visited South Africa in 1953, he chose them to tour with him in the absence of the King's Heralds.

In 1957, Robert McManaman and his wife June, a pianist, both of whom had been teaching at

Southwestern Junior College, in Texas for the last three years, began teaching at Helderberg. For the next nine years, McManaman served as head of the department and annually took national tours with the A Cappella Choir, performing extensively throughout that country in important venues in major cities.

They also sang on the SABC radio network and were widely acclaimed for their high-quality performances, with many reviewers comparing them favorably with nationally known choirs. And, in 1959, the A Cappella Choir recorded and released a 12" LP record titled *O Magnify the Lord*.

McManaman also revived the band program. Only three instruments survived from earlier purchases by the school, and an appeal was made near the end of his first year for unused instruments. An article by him in the union paper two years later reported HBC now had a band of 38. This would facilitate the school's hosting accomplished groups such as Salvation Army brass bands and similar groups from nearby Stellenbosch University.

In addition to talking about the growth of the band, he wrote that 70% of the 295 students at the school were participating in music. He described programs that were being offered to prepare students to take licentiate examinations at the Royal School of Music, London, or at the University of South Africa:

It is now possible to complete this work in the departments of piano, voice, and organ. The course is spread over a three-year period with applied and technical music as the major field and certain basic courses such as language, Bible, education, and some practical subject. Upon completion, the student will be awarded the L.R.S.M. and a Helderberg diploma, which will qualify him as a teacher of music.¹⁹

The department flourished under McManaman's leadership. Gwen Smith and Leila van der Molen taught piano and his wife assisted in both piano and organ. In a

report about the college in February 1963, the principal wrote, "Of particular interest in the field of music are the A Cappella Choir tours, the creation of a college band, and the strong department with its four full-time teachers."²⁰

Wilhemina (Wil) Müller Dunbar assumed leadership of the department and choir in 1966, when the McManamans returned to the U.S. Dunbar, who had been a member of the choirs led by Frances Brown and had traveled on the 1952 tour, would conduct the A Cappella Choir, apart from periodic leaves, for almost thirty years, until her retirement in 1995.

Although she had worked as a secretary for two years following graduation from high school, after marrying, she started studying music and after completing qualifying licentiate, taught music for two years at the elementary level before going to HBC.

By the end of her third year at HBC, she had completed four teaching and performance licentiate in voice and piano from Trinity College, London, and the Royal Schools of Music in London. She subsequently earned two BA's in music at the University of South Africa in 1973 and 1975 and an M.Mus. at Andrews University in 1987, all with distinction.

In the 29 years Dunbar was at the college, she served as director of the music program, gave voice and piano lessons, and taught highly praised classes in church music and the fine arts.

Dunbar continued the tradition in touring with the A Cappella Choir that had started with Brown in the 1950s, touring annually starting in 1969; a record, *From the Heart of Youth*, was made of the 1972 tour. Additionally, the choir gave two performances of both the *Messiah* and *Elijah*, the latter with the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra. The choir and many of Dunbar's students regularly achieved highest honors in Cape Town and at Stellenbosch Eisteddfods.

Some of her students have become professional musicians. One of these,

Manuel Escorcio, is now a nationally known tenor and recording artist.

She has composed many sacred songs, some of which have been recorded by Escorcio. She wrote all of the songs on his popular CD titled *God Loves Kids*, also translated into Afrikaans as *God Het Kinders Lief*. He also included her compositions on two other records he has released. She has also composed camp meeting theme songs for many years.

Dunbar has also written a number of articles for Adventist publications, including the *Guide*, *Youths' Instructor*,

Dunbar and John Livingston in 1988 and then Darren Postema in 1992. Jerry Joubert and Escorcio led the male chorus during tours of the full choir in the early 1970s.

Barry Anderson as well as Andrew Waugh, a student, also assisted with the choirs, and Eileen Campbell directed the band from 1980 to 1983. Those who assisted in other aspects of the music program included Smith and Adelheid Radda in piano, van der Molen in organ, and Stockil and Paul Maartens in strings.

The academic arrangements that HBC had initiated with the University of South Africa in 1951 continued until 1986. In the 35 years of that relationship, many changes occurred in the school's offerings. Affiliations were also established with Andrews University in theology and business in 1976 and in 1997 with Southern Adventist University in accounting and business management. The AU affiliation led to the offering of BA degrees in other areas and a graduate degree in religion in 1981.

Sweeping changes in South Africa at many levels in society and education occurred in the 1990s with the ending of apartheid, a segregation system that had been enforced since 1948. The first democratic election, in 1994, in which all the country's citizens participated ended 46 years of what had been a totally segregated society.

Societal changes immediately followed and led to racial diversity on the campus, which until this time had been a government mandated all-white student body and faculty. Although the transition has been at times a difficult one, the usual challenges associated with racial integration have been successfully met and today's campus more closely reflects the racial balance in South Africa.

In the area of higher education, legislation was enacted in 1995 and 1997 that allowed private colleges and universities to become accredited and grant degrees and diplomas in their own name. HBC received that accreditation in 2001, and students entering that year were able for the first time to graduate

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Seasons

SOUTH AFRICA, LOCATED IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE, HAS SEASONS THAT ARE REVERSED FROM THOSE IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE.

School Year

DUE TO THE SEASONAL DIFFERENCES, THEIR TWO-SEMESTER SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS WITH THE ONSET OF AUTUMN IN EARLY FEBRUARY, AND ENDS IN MID-NOVEMBER.

Academic Titles & Rank

THE TITLE OF PRESIDENT, USED AFTER 2000, WAS PRECEDED BY THAT OF RECTOR, 1975-2000, AND PRINCIPAL, 1893-1974.

ACADEMIC RANK BEGINS WITH JUNIOR LECTURER, AND CONTINUES THROUGH LECTURER, SENIOR LECTURER, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, AND PROFESSOR.

Little Friend, and most recently, one titled "The Invisible Piano" for the December 2010 *Adventist World*, the primary publication for the church. In 1969, she penned a series of five articles, "Music - God's Gift," for the *Trans-Africa Division Outlook*.

Several conductors assisted or filled in for Dunbar when she had leaves of absence. In 1973 and 1974, Elton and Evelyn Wallace directed choirs which were highly praised at festivals. Brian Stevenson directed in 1979, and Franklin Lusk led the department and choral program from 1984 to 1987. Leadership alternated between

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with degrees in the name of the college when they completed their study.

Degrees from HBC are now recognized when students apply for graduate study at other South African Schools. Also, since the college is accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) courses taken at the school are transferable to other SDA colleges and universities worldwide.

Jannie Kritzinger, a pianist and organist, succeeded Dunbar as head of the department in 1996. He, like Dunbar, had been born in South Africa. He had studied music in grades 8-12 in a high school in Joubertina and taken piano and theory exams through the University of South Africa Music Exam program (UNISA), completing grade seven in piano and Junior Musicianship (theory) by the time he graduated in 1977.

Kritzinger enrolled at the University of Stellenbosch in 1978, where he received a number of bursaries (scholarships) for academic excellence. He completed a Hons.B.Mus.Ed. cum laude in 1982 with piano and organ as his performance areas. He later completed with distinction grade eight in singing through the UNISA program and is currently completing an M.Mus. in education at US.

Kritzinger taught music for two years at a Junior Secondary School and two years at a high school before becoming a Music Lecturer at Tygerberg College, where he taught for eight years. He then joined the HBC faculty in 1994, where he is now a senior lecturer, choir director, and music department chair.

The three-year music teaching diploma program designed by McManaman had attracted few students and by the 1990s had been forgotten. In 1993, when Andrew Waugh fulfilled the requirements for the diploma, the first student since 1966 to do so, it was granted by special concession and then dropped.

The 1941 music facility, modified through the years, still houses the music program. It now includes a large studio for the department head that doubles as a rehearsal area for small ensembles, three other teaching studios, six practice rooms, and a kitchenette. The stage in Anderson Hall, the school auditorium, continues as the rehearsal area for larger ensembles and is also the location for a digital two manual Allen Protège organ and a Yamaha concert grand piano.

Three grand, nine upright, and two digital pianos are available for faculty and student use. Even though there is no longer a band and only a small ad hoc orchestra, the Somerset Strings, the department owns some string, wind, and percussion instruments.

Since Kritzinger is the only full-time faculty member, he has been assisted in caring for music lessons during the past fifteen years by a number of part-time faculty, including five in voice, three in piano, three in wind instruments, eight in orchestral strings, and six in guitar.

In his years at HBC, Kritzinger has taken numerous tours with the choir and produced fifteen CD's. Of particular note is a Millennium four-CD set he prepared at the turn of the century and released in 2000 that features

recordings of the choirs from the time of Frances Brown to the present.

Many of Kritzinger's students have successfully participated in the UNISA exam program, and several have appeared on the "Roll of Honour" for outstanding achievers. A composer and arranger, he composed a music drama, *God's Call to Abraham*, which was presented by the Helderberg Singers and composed the music for a short film, *Annie's Pictures*, by Mark Lietzke. His most recent composition is a new *College Song* (an anthem) for HBC that replaced the one written over seventy years earlier.

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Interview

Robert McManaman, 21 February 2011 and 13 March 2011.

Email Exchanges/Sources

Wilhelmina Dunbar and Jannie Kritzinger, February and March 2011, HBC President's Secretary, March 2011; *HBC Staff Handbook*, 2003, 44,45.

Endnotes

- ¹ From a summary of old board minutes in the 15 May 1955 *Southern Africa Division Outlook*.
- ² *South African Missionary*, March 1903, 14; July 1904, 1; August 1904, 6; 14 March 1910, 4; 27 June 1910; 14 November 1910, 2; 18 September 1911, 2; 26 June 1911, 4.
- ³ *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, 11 October 1916; *SAM*, 19 February 1917, 4.
- ⁴ *SAM*, 5 October 1914.
- ⁵ *African Division Outlook*, 15 September 1921, 2; 15 January 1922, 1; 15 September 1922, 4.
- ⁶ *ADO*, 1 January 1925, 4; 15 October 1927, 2.
- ⁷ *ADO*, 15 November 1927, 2.
- ⁸ A sub-committee of the Johannesburg Council in June 1927 proposed the Helderberg name (*ADO*, 15 June 1927, 3, 6) and subsequent references to the school used that name.
- ⁹ *ADO*, 1 August 1928, 2; 5 December 1929, 12; 27 October 1930, 6.
- ¹⁰ *Southern African Division Outlook*, 15 July 1935.
- ¹¹ *SADO*, 1 March 1934, 4; 1 April 1934, 2.
- ¹² *SADO*, 1 September 1934, 12.
- ¹³ *SADO*, 1 September 1941, 3; 1 March 1942, 2.
- ¹⁴ *SADO*, 1 April 1942, 2; 1 September 1942, 1; 15 October 3.
- ¹⁵ *SADO*, 23 July 1945, 4; 1 August 1948, 2; 15 September 1948, 3; *IAMA Biography for Frances Brown*.
- ¹⁶ *SADO*, 15 April 1949, 4; 15 November 1949, 6.
- ¹⁷ Pierre H. Coetzee, "Share your Faith in South Africa," *Youth's Instructor*, 6 March 1951, 14, 15, 19, 21; *SADO*, 1 August 1950, 1; 15 August 1950, 1; 15 June 1951, 50, 51.
- ¹⁸ A situation described by the principal in a report to the board in February 1956 when getting approval to resume national touring, *SADO*, 15 February 1956, 26.
- ¹⁹ Robert McManaman, "Music Department, *SADO*, 15 September 1958, 7,8.
- ²⁰ P. J. Van Eck, principal, "Report of Helderberg College," *SADO*, 15 February 1963, 10,23. The statement about four full-time teachers should actually have stated four teachers. Not all of them were full-time.

Teachers at Helderberg College

Biographies for the following present and former HBC music teachers can be found at: www.iamaonline.com

FRANCES L. BROWN
WILHELMINA MÜLLER DUNBAR
MANUEL ESCORCIO
JANNIE KRITZINGER

NELLIE NASH MCCLURE
ROBERT L. MCMANAMAN
MURIEL HANKINS STOCKIL PIKE
ADELHEID JENS RADDA
WIN OSBORN SHANKEL

LEILA VAN DER MOLEN
ELTON WALLACE
EVELYN KRAFT WALLACE
ELSIE LONG WATT