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**ISSUED BY THE DRAKENSBERG BOYS CHOIR SCHOOL**

**DRAKIES OLD BOY JACQUES LINDE RETURNS TO LEAD CHOIR INTO A NEW ERA OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE**

**FINAL APPROVED VERSION**

**JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, 01 APRIL 2025 – The Drakensberg Boys Choir School (DBCS) is proud to announce the appointment of Jacques Linde as the new Head of Choral Activity, effective 1 April 2025. Linde, a proud alumnus, gifted conductor, and passionate music educator, returns to the mountain home that first ignited his love for choral music – this time to lead. DBCS bids a fond farewell to Vaughan van Zyl, whose dynamic leadership over the past four years elevated the choir to new heights.**

"This leadership transition marks a significant moment in the choir's 58-year legacy," states Hendrik Bekker, Executive Head of DBCS. "Under Van Zyl, the choir experienced exceptional highlights, including (amongst others) the widely acclaimed 2024 tour to England, where standing ovations from British royalty cemented our global appeal. The Board and school community wish Van Zyl well as he relocates to Gauteng to be closer to family and extends heartfelt thanks for his invaluable contribution," he adds.

**A homecoming with purpose**

Linde's return to DBCS is both a homecoming and a moment of promise. Fondly known by the Drakie boys as "Mister J," he previously served the school as Assistant Conductor, New Boys Coordinator, and Vocal Coach. His most recent role was Choirmaster and Music Educator at Maritzburg College. With a Master's Degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Pretoria and an academic and professional résumé marked by excellence, Linde now steps into the choir's top artistic post with energy, vision, and deep reverence for the institution.

"As an Old Boy of the Drakensberg Boys Choir (2010 to 2013), it is an immense privilege to stand before this new generation of talented young choristers," says Linde. "My journey with this choir laid the foundation for my deep passion for choral music. Returning to this institution, now as a conductor, is an honour and a responsibility I cherish deeply."

Linde's appointment comes at a particularly dynamic time. His first public performance in his new role will be his **Welcoming Concert on 14 April 2025 at 15h30**, held in the Ken Mackenzie Auditorium on the Drakie campus. Shortly thereafter, he will serve as Festival Conductor for the **2025 Music in the Mountains (MiMs)**, a signature four-day festival in the DBCS calendar that draws music lovers from across the country.

"Music has the extraordinary ability to transcend boundaries, bringing people together in harmony and shared emotion," says Linde. "Each piece we perform reflects a journey – of learning, perseverance, and the sheer love of choral singing."

**Academic depth meets practical vision**

Terence Sibiya, Chairman of the DBCS Board, expressed his complete confidence in the appointment: "Jacques is the right person at the right time. His qualifications, global choral perspective, and understanding of our unique Drakie DNA make him the ideal leader for this next chapter. We are truly excited about the prospects of our Ministry of Music flourishing under his guidance."

The Board redefined the Head of Choral Activity role to reflect its responsibilities accurately. Beyond artistic direction, Linde's scope of work includes rehearsal scheduling, vocal development, performance planning, discipline, media relations, and supporting recruitment and fundraising drives. "We are not only welcoming back an alumnus, we are investing in someone who lives and breathes the values of this school," Sibiya added. "Jacques embodies continuity, innovation, and the heart of what makes the Drakies special."

Bekker echoed this sentiment: "Jacques brings an exceptional understanding of our mission. He understands that music is more than performance – it's transformation. He has the skills and character to lead our boys musically and in life."

Linde's academic research about exploring boys' motivation and identity in high school choirs reflects his long-term commitment to youth choral development. His findings revealed that tradition, reputation, and enjoyment are pivotal in motivating sustained choral participation. These insights are now part of his daily leadership.

"The Drakensberg Boys Choir is a truly unique institution. We are the only school on the African continent that incorporates choral singing into its daily curriculum. Our choristers carry forward a tradition of excellence that has defined this choir for generations," Bekker says.

**The next chapter in the choir's legacy**

The school continues to grow its reputation as a centre for excellence in music and education. Each year, the choir performs an average of sixty concerts, including its much-loved Wednesday concerts and flagship events like Music in the City and Christmas in the Berg. As singing ambassadors for South Africa, the boys regularly tour internationally, performing in over 27 countries across six continents.

Jacques Linde takes the baton with humility, purpose, and unmistakable passion as the choir gears up for its next primary season. "May the music heard at our concerts uplift, inspire, and remind all of us of the beauty that can be found in collective harmony," Linde concludes.

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**(794 words)**

**EDITORS' NOTES**

**Media release issued by Stone on behalf of Drakensberg Boys Choir**

**To purchase DBC concert tickets, visit** [**www.dbchoir.com**](http://www.dbchoir.com)

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**More helpful website links for media reference:**

* Please visit the Facebook page for views of the sold-out performances and activity during the four-day Music in the Mountains festival that took place on the Freedom Day long weekend and more information on the choir – <https://www.facebook.com/dbchoir>
* The photo page on the Facebook page gives a good view of the diversity, life and extraordinary talent of the boys at Drakensberg Boys Choir School – <https://www.facebook.com/dbchoir/photos>
* Visit these links for a glimpse of the world-renowned choir's international and local choral work, both in the classical and distinctly African genres – <https://www.youtube.com/user/DBCHOIR>, <https://youtu.be/C521O4XHO_I>, <https://www.facebook.com/dbchoir/videos/934329527988775/> and <https://dbchoir.com/web/videos/>