**MEDIA STATEMENT FOR RELEASE WITHOUT EMBARGO**

**ISSUED BY THE DRAKENSBERG BOYS CHOIR PARENT ASSOCIATION**

**GRAMMY AWARD WINNER PAYS HOMAGE TO HIS MUSICAL ROOTS IN THE DRAKENSBERG**

**CATHKIN VALLEY – Ndumiso Manana, South Africa’s Grammy award-winning singer-songwriter this week visited his alma mater, Drakensberg Boys Choir School, and paid homage to his musical roots nurtured at the school during his five-year attendance at the school and as a member of its world-renowned boys choir.**

South African musician Manana’s musical journey started when he was a choir boy at Drakensberg Boys Choir School, also known as Drakies. Eswatini-born Ndumiso Manana joined Drakies, in Grade 4 and attended until grade 9 in 2008.

Manana won a Grammy for his writing work on Burna Boy's song Time Flies, which featured on the 2020 record Twice as Tall. Manana was also part of the project's Global Music Album Grammy win in 2021. In 2021, the talented singer and songwriter also released a song, I Can't Believe I Get to Call You Mine as a wedding gift to his wife, Vuyi Manana.

In a recent media interview, Manana said of his time at Drakies: "Joining Drakensberg Boys Choir School was probably the most influential moment that took me on this path in music because my parents and family aren't really musical." However, Manana holds music education and Drakies and thereafter in very high regard because it has significantly impacted his musical art and balanced approach to life. He was quoted in the media saying: "I always tell people that I give all credit to the education and learning that I received over my life, especially in music."

DBCS Executive Head Dave Cato states: “It was an enormous privilege for the school (DBCS) to welcome home the Grammy award-winning singer-songwriter and Drakie Old Boy from the class of 2008. It is fantastic to see how our alumni go from strength to strength, applying the principles that are at the heart of Drakie-life including the high work ethic, education focus and pursuing musical excellence.”

In his humble, self-effacing manner, Manna portrayed the essence of the Drakie core values while interacting with staff and boys during his visit. The school’s Academic Head, Erika Linde, remembers him as a polite, well-liked Drakie boy who earned the respect of his peers. Manana was a standout chorister with a stellar profile as a soloist during his tenure in the choir.

“Manna’s inspirational visit will remain a distinct highlight for our staff and boys,” concluded Vaughan van Zyl, DBCS Artistic Director. He noted that the school is very proud of how anchored Manana pursues his clear artistic vision. “Diversity in one’s repertoire is always important. Manana strives for a unique style that transcends genres in his repertoire, using the best of various styles to bring world-class music to his audiences,” concludes Van Zyl.

**FIN**

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**EDITORS' NOTES**

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

**For media enquiries, interview requests or in-studio or recorded media appearances, contact:**

Willem Eksteen

Drakensberg Boys Choir School Parent Association

Email: willem@dbchoir.team / media@stone.consulting

Phone: +27 83 272 6304 / +27 11 447 0168

**Alternative media contact for further media information:**

Amanda Cunningham

Drakensberg Boys Choir School Parent Association

Email: amanda@dbchoir.team

Phone: +27 83 255 6546

**Book the Choir for a performance:**

Elanza Joubert

Drakensberg Boys Choir School

Email: admin@dbchoir.com

Phone: (036) 468 1012

**Enquire about enrolling a boy at DBCS:**

Helga Cato

Drakensberg Boys Choir School

Email: hcato@dbchoir.com

Phone: +27 36 468 1012 / +27 83 232 1229

**Contribute to the DBCS bursary fund:**

The Accountant

Drakensberg Boys Choir School

Email: accountant@dbchoir.com

Phone: +27 36 468 1012

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

* Please visit the Facebook page for views of sold-out performances and Drakie life activity at this special boys middle school in the majestic Drakensberg mountains – <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/>