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NEW AU CHOIR RECEIVES APPLAUSE AS IT DEBUTS WITH ITS RENDITION OF THE AU ANTHEM



The newly formed AU choir received a long, enthusiastic and encouraging applause from delegates attending the 3rd Pan African Cultural Congress (PACC 3) on 28th August at the AU Conference Center, when it made its public debut with a performance of the AU anthem. Such was the response that after the opening session of the congress, the choir was invited back to the stage to sing the anthem again.

The choir members put up a spirited, well balanced and beautifully controlled performance. Their joy at having launched so successfully was evident, as they

received many congratulatory messages from the delegates. It was a great musical treat for all who attended.

The AU choir was formed to promote Pan-Africanism as well as the African Cultural Renaissance while serving as a collective musical voice of the AU, according to its coordinator Dr Janet Byaruhanga of the Social Affairs Department who also sings. Other choir members include Amb. Manuel Lubisse; Angela Martins; Beatrice Njenga; Chipiliro Chonzi; Christine Mfula; Eddy Donkeng; Emmanuel Shimbidi; Laurent Kotannou; Lefhoko Kesamang; Linus Chata; Anna Abebe; Elisabeth Tafesse; Selam Ammi Tadesse; Patrick Gonzague Dominic Obiaja. The members are drawn from various AUC departments and autonomous units including Social Affairs; Political Affairs: Human Resources, Science & Technology; Directorate of AHRD; and Conference Management and Publications. There are also two non AUC staff members.

The choir is trained by three talented members who have been taking the training in turns. However, once their constitution is adopted, the choir members plan on engaging a full time music director. The choir practices from 5:15 pm to 7:00pm every Tuesday in office number 405 on the 4th floor of the new AU complex. Membership is free.

The road to establishing the choir has been long, starting 2 years ago. However, after much preparatory work, a small group of six started rehearsing earlier this year. Soon after, a concept note for the official establishment of the choir was drafted and shared with the director of AHRD who also requested DCI to support this noble initiative. The director also called upon interested staff and embassies to join the group. From that moment on, there was no turning back.

To date, the choir has been putting emphasis on professionally learning and singing the AU anthem, although it has occasionally rehearsed other simpler common songs. It envisages composing both traditional folk songs and modern music that is related to specific themes or events.

Despite their increasing numbers, the choir still needs more singers and the message from the coordinator is “Come and enjoy your passion. Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind and life to everything... Without music, life would be an error”.

Looking to the future, the choir will, in the medium term, adopt its constitution, formation document, and its rules and regulations. In the longer term, it aims to attain its vision of becoming the AU’s musical voice. The members hope to perform at the 50th anniversary of the OAU later this year and at the next AU Summit. They are also available to perform at any other ministerial conference, if called upon.

As a newly formed programme, the choir is still in its nascent stages and requires a lot of assistance to grow. Top of the list is the acquisition of equipment and uniforms.

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