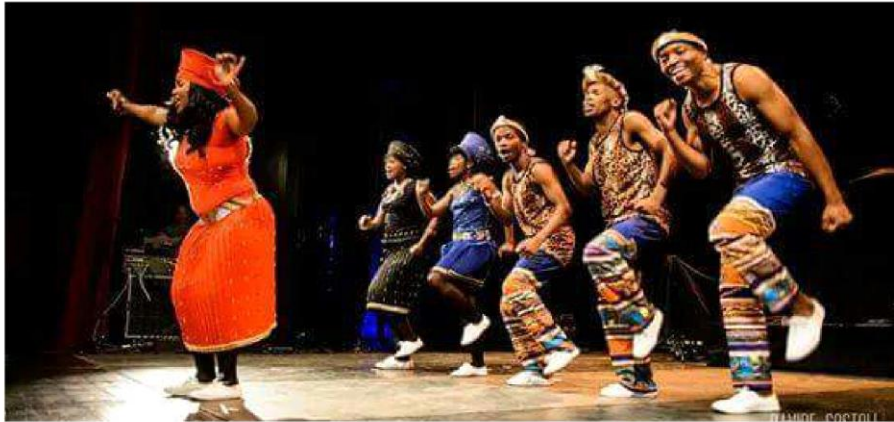


VOICES OF AFRICA



NAME OF GROUP : Voices Of Africa

LOCATION : Nelson Mandela Bay also called Port Elizabeth

COUNTRY : South Africa

STATUS : Active

GROUP MEMBERS : Six

INSTRUMENTS : African Djembe, DjunDjun

GENRE : South African Gospel Acapella Hymns, Traditional Music and Dance

COUNTRIES TOURED: Switzerland (2012 - 2016)

Belgium (2015)

Uzbekistan (2015)

SOCIAL PLATFORM : Facebook -VoicesofafricaSouthAfrica

YouTube - Plateau Libre Channel

ABOUT: "Voices of Africa" was established in 2009 by Nomandla Hallam whom also has a strong and huge musical background not only in the Nelson Mandela Bay but also around the Eastern Cape and beyond. The band has six members who are all excellent and vibrant vocal singers, all are from the townships of Port Elizabeth coming from different religious background and churches.

During the Cape frontier conflicts foreign influence introduced Christianity into the Xhosa Culture and a peculiar mixture of Christian and traditional beliefs emerged. At this time the Xhosa nation was torn in the middle with those who believed in the teachings of the missionaries nicknamed the 'school' people and those who upheld their traditions were nicknamed the 'red' people. This started the resurgence of churches that still exist till today and some of the hymns still sung today were composed during this era. Most praises in these songs are directed to God or 'Qamatha' (Xhosa name for God) and in traditionally, the dead (ancestors) are messengers and mediate on behalf of the living. Most of the gospel songs sung by Voices of Africa come from these churches. These churches are the Apostolic church where we use a lot of rhythmical clapping and body movement when singing and also the Zion church dance movements and the use of the drum in the songs.

"Voices of Africa" is a world class and pioneers of South African acappella protest songs, gospel music group. Blending and combining both South African gospel praise songs with South African traditional music and drum beats, incorporated into one incredible perfect sound and style. A cappella music consisting of dynamic vocal hymns and harmony, South African rhythm and power which entertains and feeds your soul.

Due to their cultural background, each member of "Voices of Africa" as child, learnt to sing in their religious and traditional community. They sing gospel and traditional songs. But the spirituality extends beyond this frame to include traditional Xhosa and Zulu hymns and dances, and also struggle songs which helped to knock down the apartheid. They not only use music to express the values attached to their tradition but to communicate with the ancestors. Our music reaches beyond the earthly realm and connects us to the ancestral spirits who cast a protective eye over us the living. Our religious practices revolve around music and the dialogue between the living and the dead is facilitated through songs.

The group regularly performs around the world; they had 5 European tours, performed in Asia, give school shows, acts in festival and venues. Some of the group's best highlights were in Geneva 2013 at the Tambour Battant Festival where they performed alongside the legendary Cameroonian saxophonist Manu Dibango. In 2015 they were invited to participate in the Sharq Taronalari International Music Festival 10th Edition in Uzbekistan and they walked away with a special prize of the jury at the awards ceremony.

"Voices of Africa" has a diversified collection of songs and hymns rich in culture and history ranging from a unique style called "Isicathamiya" a style formed in the 1920s and 1930s during the rural exodus and was used as a way of keeping the native South African's sense of identity. They also perform Xhosa music and dance called "umxhentso". This dance is also known as the diviner's dance and consists of stamping movements for the lower body and the shaking movement (ukutyityimba) characteristic of many Xhosa dances for the upper body. The diviners (amagqirha) are reputed to be excellent musicians having a large musical repertoire since they travel widely acquiring new songs and absorbing foreign influences into their music making. They continually compose music to enhance their work. When an individual is called by the ancestors as a diviner they become ill and one of the main remedies is music and dance. The ancestors have a great love for divination music and dance.

The Xhosa also known as the Red Blanket people occupy the Eastern and the western parts of South Africa and are famously known for giving birth to some of South Africa's greatest political sons namely Steve Biko, Oliver Tambo and not forgetting the Father of the Nation Nelson Mandela. Among the hymns sung by Voices of Africa some of them touch on these individuals and the work they did to free the country from apartheid. Voices of Africa members are from the Xhosa clan.

"Voices of Africa" also dishes out some Zulu songs and traditional dance including the historic Zulu traditional battle cries. Around the world the Zulu clan is famously known for its great leader, king Shaka who made them a great and fearful empire and they occupy the east coast of South Africa. Shaka fought many battles with foreign invaders of native South Africa to keep it a free country. During these wars the Zulu army used battle cries called "Izaga" to encourage and motivate each other and during big gatherings they used to do a traditional Zulu dance called "Indlamu" as a form of initiation and entertainment. In its performances of Zulu songs "Voices of Africa" uses these battle cries and they also do the Zulu traditional dance.

This is a group you do not want to miss out when they perform. The high energy and soulful voices will keep you wanting more and captivated...