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## NEWS RELEASE

### UP choir TUKS Camerata to perform as headline act at choral conference in US



*Some of the members of UP's TUKS Camerata with conductor Dr Michael J Barret (centre)*

PRETORIA – The University of Pretoria's (UP) choir, [TUKS Camerata](#), recently delivered a performance to bid farewell before heading off to the US, where they will perform as the headline choir at the National Conference of the [American Choral Directors Association](#) (ACDA) in Dallas, Texas this month.

The Heritage Farewell Concert took place at UP's Musaion Theatre on Hatfield campus. For choir conductor [Dr Michael J Barret](#), being able to perform alongside the choir that he has worked with for 12 years is the opportunity of a lifetime. He has visited many countries in his capacity as conductor, lecturer and choral clinician, including the US. However, this will be the first time that he will be performing with the choir in America.

"It will have an enormous ripple effect for the choir and hopefully for me personally," Dr Barret said. "Taking the Camerata to the States will be life-changing – for me, the singers and everyone that comes to see our performance. The choir is world-class, but what makes them truly special is the integrity and honesty with which they perform."

TUKS Camerata will be performing choral pieces in some of South Africa's indigenous languages, and will

participate in an interest session at the ACDA conference, where they will offer insight into some of the country's cultural elements.

The ACDA aims to foster choral singing and promote an understanding of choral music as an important medium of contemporary artistic expression. It also seeks to foster cultural expression. TUKS Camerata's performances incorporate aspects of South African cultures, as well as musical renderings of traditional prayers in indigenous African languages. Despite singing in an indigenous language, they're still able to convey the meaning of the pieces through other elements in their performance, such as their facial expressions, body language and gestures. The choir's performance garments also feature stylistic elements from African cultures. By incorporating these features into their performance at the ACDA, the choir will encourage cross-cultural understanding and expression.

"I have been in Camerata for four years, so for me, [performing at the ACDA] is a highlight as a choral singer," says Marnus Erasmus, an MA Archaeology student. "We sing so that people can feel something. We want to share something with the audience."

TUKS Camerata does indeed succeed in sharing an experience with the audience. At one point during their farewell performance, choir members took up positions among audience members and delivered a moving performance of one of their choral pieces that will be sung at the ACDA. They received several standing ovations during the performance.

"Choral music is a powerful reminder of our shared humanity," Dr Barrett says. "It is a celebration of the beauty around us and a refuge that allows us to momentarily escape the burdens of life."

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## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the [Gordon Institute of Business Science](#) (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a [Faculty of Veterinary Science](#), which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2025 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of [Accounting and Finance](#); [Architecture](#); [Electrical and Electronic Engineering](#); Law; Sport Science; and Veterinary Science. UP's Faculty of Law has been ranked as the top law school in Africa for a remarkable eighth consecutive year.

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their [2024 World](#)

[University Rankings \(WUR\)](#). UP was the only South African university featured in the [2023 World University Rankings for Innovation \(WURI\)](#), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

For more information, please go to [www.up.ac.za](http://www.up.ac.za)