



# Harris Center

*Three Stages at Folsom Lake College*

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## **SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR HONORS THE CENTENARY OF NELSON MANDELA AT THE HARRIS CENTER**

*The five-time Grammy winners perform Songs of the Free*

(August 14, 2018, Folsom, CA) “Nothing can really prepare you for the riot of exuberance and depth of the emotion of the Soweto Gospel Choir” (*The Scotsman*). In this special program, South Africa’s five-time Grammy Award-winning gospel choir celebrates the Nelson Mandela centenary. Drawing upon the best talent from churches in and around Soweto, the internationally acclaimed choir shares the unique and inspirational power of African Gospel music. “Spirited and spectacular” (*New York Times*), the concert is entitled *Songs of the Free*; it includes South African classics as well as freedom songs and gospel music much loved by Mandela, for whom the choir had the privilege of performing on multiple occasions.

**Soweto Gospel Choir performs *Songs of the Free*** on Tuesday, October 9, 2018, at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$28-\$48; Premium \$52. Students with ID & Children: \$14-\$26. Tickets are available online at [www.harriscenter.net](http://www.harriscenter.net) or from the Harris Center Ticket Office at 916-608-6888 from 12 noon to 6 pm, Monday through Saturday, and two hours before show time. Parking is included in the price of the ticket. The Harris Center is located on the west side of Folsom Lake College campus in Folsom, CA, facing East Bidwell Street.

Praise for the Soweto Gospel Choir — especially for their live performances — is legion: “this Choir has the spirit of gospel deep in its blood and it shows” (*Washington Post*); “this performance is joyful exhilaration” (*Adelaide Advertiser*); “occasionally, a diamond of such brilliance is unearthed that you find yourself compelled to develop a near-fanatical enthusiasm for it” (*Manchester News*).

But the good news about the Soweto Gospel Choir began early in their career and hasn't stopped. They were founded in November 2002; by the following year the ensemble had won American Gospel Music Awards for "Best Choir" and "Best International Choir."

By 2006, the Choir performed as invited guests for Archbishop Desmond Tutu's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration, in front of an illustrious audience which included former President Nelson Mandela, Mrs. Zanele Mbeki, Tokyo Sexwale, Samuel L Jackson, Alfre Woodard and Carlos Santana. They performed NBC's *Today Show*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, and on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* that same year.

Since then, they've collaborated with Red Hot Chili Peppers, Celine Dion, Pharrell Williams, Queen, Bono, Eurythmics, Amy Winehouse, Jimmy Cliff, Josh Groban, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, Alicia Keyes, Queen Latifa, Eddie Grant, Wyclef Jean, Robert Plant, Salif Keita and too many others to list here.

Their collaboration with Peter Gabriel on the song "Down To Earth" (*Wall-E*) won a Grammy in the Best Movie Song category. In February 2009 the Choir became the first South African artist to perform at the Academy Awards, sharing the stage with John Legend.

The Choir collaborated with U2 on the songs "Streets Have No Name," "Magnificent" and "Boots" for ESPN's promotional campaign for the 2010 Football World Cup.

In 2014, Soweto Gospel Choir was invited to perform at the Memorial Service for Nelson Mandela at Westminster Abbey. An historic occasion, the service was attended by such prominent people as Archbishop Tutu, Prime Minister David Cameron, Prince Harry, The Lord Mayor of London, the Mandela family and many more. In 2018, Soweto Gospel Choir was honored to sing at the Memorial service for Winnie Madikizela-Mandela at the FNB Stadium.

As testimony to the sheer power of their artistry — as well as their versatility — the Choir collaborated with three-time Grammy Award-winner Chance The Rapper at his 15,000 sell-out concert at the Dome in April 2018.

It is their songs about the struggles of South Africa that the Soweto Gospel Choir will bring to the stage at the Harris Center. Of these songs, Cyril Ramaphosa, the President of the Republic of South Africa noted:

*"The name Soweto Gospel Choir has become synonymous with excellence, here in South Africa and beyond... To mark the centenary of our country's founding father, President Nelson Mandela, the Soweto Gospel Choir has released a collection of South Africa's most famous*

*struggle songs; bringing to these well-known melodies their own unique sound. One cannot but be moved by these soul-stirring melodies that tell our story as a country and as a nation. I congratulate these great ambassadors for South Africa on this achievement; and am confident this offering will be in the pantheon of legendary South African music in the years to come.”*

## **Great Shows. Up Close. In Folsom!**

The Harris Center for the Arts at Folsom Lake College brings the community together to share in cultural experiences featuring the work of artists from throughout the region and around the world. Built and operated by the Los Rios Community College District, the \$50 million, state-of-the-art regional performing arts center boasts three intimate venues with outstanding acoustics, an art gallery, a recording studio, elegant teaching spaces, plenty of safe parking and all the other amenities of a world-class performing arts venue. Each year the Center hosts over 400 events attracting more than 150,000 annually.

### **Event Summary**

What: **Soweto Gospel Choir performs *Songs of the Free***  
When: Tuesday, October 9, 2018, at 7:30 pm  
Where: Harris Center for the Arts at Folsom Lake College  
10 College Parkway  
Folsom, CA 95630  
Ticket Price: \$28-\$48; Premium \$52. Students with ID & Children: \$14-\$26  
Tickets: [www.HarrisCenter.net](http://www.HarrisCenter.net)

Tickets are available online at [www.HarrisCenter.net](http://www.HarrisCenter.net) or from the Harris Center Ticket Office at 916-608-6888 from noon to 6 pm, Monday through Saturday, and two hours before show time.

For interview requests, contact Paul Dorn at [paul.dorn@harriscenter.net](mailto:paul.dorn@harriscenter.net).

High resolution images available at <http://bit.ly/2iacUNX> (This link to the Press Room at [www.HarrisCenter.net](http://www.HarrisCenter.net) has been updated).