

High note for film on Gugs choirmaster

'Fezeka's Voice' showing on screens nationwide

FRANCIS HWESHE
Special Correspondent

A DOCUMENTARY about a dedicated choirmaster who has inspired pupils in Gugulethu to soar to success has hit the big screen around the country.

Fezeka's Voice premieres at this year's TriContinental Film Festival, running from today until October 12 at Ster-Kinekor and Cinema Nouveau theatres at the V&A Waterfront.

The film, which features Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, will also be part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of Gugulethu next month.

Doubling as teacher and choirmaster, Phumi Tsewu said yesterday he was proud of the prominence given in the film to the Fezeka High School Choir.

Last year the choir performed at the Salisbury International Arts Festival in the UK, where nearly R400 000 was raised for a scholarship fund.

The money will put seven pupils through university.

The film-makers have also dedicated half the profits from the film to the fund.

A further 20 percent will be



PROUD: Fezeka High School choirmaster Phumi Tsewu is proud of the school's prominence in the film PICTURE: AYANDA NDMANE

put towards outreach and community engagement initiatives in the country.

For nearly 15 years, Tsewu said, he had tailor-made choral

music to become a tool to inspire meaning in the lives of his pupils.

Most lived in squatter camps where families had

disintegrated, and were being raised by grandmothers, he said.

Apart from being a source of employment, Tsewu believes that music engenders discipline in the pupils too, allowing them to avoid a life of drugs and crime.

"I want to broaden their horizons. I want them to achieve the best on the world stage.

"They should not be measured on where they come from," said Tsewu.

Asked about the secret behind the choir's dazzling success, he said they practised every day after school.

Any pupil from Grade 8 to 12, including those who lacked discipline, was allowed to join the choir. His vision was for the choir to "achieve its best", and for his pupils to succeed in all spheres of life.

Film director Holly Lubbock described Tsewu as an inspiration to the children, saying the film would be shown in schools across the Western Cape. She said she was delighted and honoured to have worked on the project.

francis.hweshe@inl.co.za