

TRIBUTE TO MISS KERN

From: Egbe Monjimbo

Sent: Thursday, March 08, 2012 3:39 AM

To: 'ExSSA_USA'

Subject: E NO GO SURELY GO EMPTY HAND OH!!! (TRIBUTE TO MISS KERN)

My Dear Sakerette Sisters!

I am positive that I am NOT the only one who finds some hymns and choruses a little difficult to sing because of their guilt-generating lyrics:

-“ALL to Jesus I Surrender”? For woosai?! Say if God cam ask me, like he asked Abraham, to sacrifice my son, ah go ‘gree?

-“ Master, Speak Thy Servant Hearth”? For where?! For me, most of the time it is “LORD, LISTEN! THY SERVANT SPEAKETH” instead oh! – Gimme dis one, Gimme da one!!

-“Follow, Follow, I Will Follow Jesus; ANYWHERE? WHEREVER? For real, Mammie?! “Bu pè, Bu pè, Ah ma bu pè YESU” true-true? Before why mah mbondo stop for chair when people were standing up and volunteering to go to The Ukraine last “Szrondi” (Sunday) at my Church?

For me, who has only learned in the last decade to progressively come out of my “Shell” or “Comfort Zone” (hence the tons of “Dis pikin wey e be quiet so for Saker?” I got used to hearing at the beginning), the most challenging of songs is Charles Luther’s “MUST I GO, AND EMPTY HANDED”! Here’s the history of the song:

Luther heard Rev. A. G. Up-ham tell the story of a young man who was about to die. He’d only been a Christian for a month, and was sad because he’d had so little time to serve the Lord. He said, “I am not afraid to die; Jesus saves me now. But must I go empty handed?” This incident prompted the writing of the song; Stebbins wrote the music when Luther gave him the words.

Here are the first verse and refrain of the hymn:

“Must I go, and empty handed,”

Thus my dear Redeemer meet?

Not one day of service give Him,

Lay no trophy at His feet?

Refrain

“Must I go, and empty handed?”

Must I meet my Savior so?

Not one soul with which to greet Him,

Must I empty handed go?

One person, My Dear Sisters, who can honestly and whole heartedly sing this song with absolutely NO guilt, is a woman who gave up starting and building a family of her own, left the comfort of her North American home in the mid sixties, headed to Victoria, and proceeded to MINISTER – Year, after Painstaking Year, to her adopted daughters, THROUGH MUSIC & THEATRE!!! None of these “daughters”, not even those who never had the privilege of meeting her, can deny the POSITIVE IMPACT those

"Dining Hall Songs" she taught us have had on their lives. Here's an excerpt from an email one of my class of '81 Sisters posted on our Class e-group just last week:

You know the song I have been singing since my brother died?

"I know who holds the future, and I know He holds my hand, with God things don't just happen, everything by Him is Planned..."

And what song did my sisters and I sing at my Dad's funeral all the way in Besongabang last August? "Day by Day and with each passing moment".

Where did we all learn these songs? IN THE DINING HALL! Under whose tutelage? MISS KERN'S!!!

I got "re-connected" with this AMAZING, now 80 year old Servant of God just before the Golden Jubilee, because of the Picture Tribute to S.B.C.'s Staff that I put together, which someone forwarded to her. I feel compelled, in fact, I think it is my DUTY and OBLIGATION, to share the correspondence I have copied and pasted below with you all, because I consider Miss Kern's response, (further below), a VITAL and INTEGRAL part of S.B.C.'s MUSICAL & THEATRE HISTORY that deserves to be DOCUMENTED, ARCHIVED and PRESERVED for Posterity!

From: Egbe Monjimbo

Sent: Thursday, March 01, 2012 1:49 AM

Subject: THANK YOU, MISS KERN!

Dear Miss Kern,

It is 2 a.m. out here in Charlotte, North Carolina, so I know you must be fast asleep, and will only see this when you wake up but I just felt like I needed to say this right now before I go back to bed.

My bedside Radio is permanently tuned to a station called BBN (Bible Broadcasting Network). They broadcast the most BEAUTIFUL TRADITIONAL hymns and songs which I know only too well from my Saker Dining Hall, Morning Devotions Days, because YOU, MISS KERN, taught them to us! Then, what I enjoyed most, was the melody; Now, what means so much more to me are those WONDERFUL lyrics. Throughout the year, my ears and soul are blessed with:

- Someday when this earth has run the course that God intended ... Jesus is Coming, though we know not when ...
- Troublesome Times are here; Filling men's hearts with fear ...
- Once my way was dark and dreary ... I can never tell how much I love Him ...

AND I CAN SING ALL 3, 4, 5 verses of these hymns and songs BY HEART! WHY? BECAUSE YOU TRAINED US THAT WAY!!!!

AMAZINGLY though, in my mind's eye, as I sing along, I still see the LONG BLUE SONG BOOK and the SHORT PINK SONG BOOK that YOU typed and compiled yourself, complete with the solfa notes, and the FALLING-TO-PIECES Hymn Book that had piano scores in it!!!

As I was drifting off to sleep, BBN began to play "THERE'S A WONDER OF SUNSET AT EVENING, THE WONDER AS SUNRISE I SEE ... OH, THE WONDER OF IT ALL"!!! I hadn't heard this particular song in AGES!!!! I sat straight back up, sang the entire song along with the broadcast, and then headed straight to this computer to just THANK YOU for your ASTOUNDING MINISTRY THROUGH MUSIC!!!! It has uplifted, consoled, admonished, reassured and just plain BLESSED me - and so many of your other SAKER DAUGHTERS, over the years!

Having said ALL that, I can now creep back into bed and get a few more hours sleep before I head out for another day's work, teaching French at Mallard Creek High School!

GOD BLESS YOU MA'AM!!!

Egbe

P.S. Attached is a page from the THANK YOU SAKER Magazine that should let you know that I am NOT the only one that's grateful for the work you did. It certainly was NOT in vain!

From: Eunice Kern

Sent: Friday, March 02, 2012 12:34 PM

To: Egbe Monjimbo

Subject: Re: THANK YOU, MISS KERN!

Egbe:

It is 9:30 am. I've been up for about an hour. I like to sleep in in the morning. I am what some would call "A night Owl." During the day I do what has to be done, but in the evening and into late at night, I can find all kinds of things to do, and as a result I stay up late. I think you and I would get on quite well when I see the times you write your emails.

Thank you for your words and comments in your last e-mail. You have no idea how much I enjoyed teaching the songs you girls learned. When I first arrived at Saker, I knew nothing about Solfas. I had always known only Staff notation. It was Mrs. George Henderson (her picture appears in the Staff Tributes section) who showed and taught me how to transpose notes to solfas. It was a lot of work - the most was the typing and to make sure that I hit the correct type writer key. But - I ENJOYED IT ALL, and today when I hear Saker girls sing I get goose bumps and it brings tears to my eyes - all the time and work it took is forgotten. I too remember both the blue and pink books. The Pink one came first. When everything had been typed which I did myself and the typing was done on what was called Mimeograph sheets. Then I took these sheets to the office and either Bate or Monono would run them off on the machine. I think sometimes the Principal and Miss Binder thought it was using too much paper - I did have the Principals permission to do this. Then when all the mimeographing was done, the pages had to be assembled. The pages were spread out in stacks beginning with the cover to the last page - now you remember how thick the books were - that was the thickness of each pile and if each would in the end have 50 pages that is how many piles there were. So the girls would go round and round and round the table making sure the pages were in correct order - until every page was picked up; front cover and back cover included. Now the piles were too thick to be stapled with an ordinary stapler - so they were taken to a printing press in downtown (Victoria) Limbe, and they stapled them and also put a binding on them. Quite a process. Today it would be done quite differently. Although the typing would be done on a computer keyboard - I don't think there would be a solfa (spell checker) -probably would have to be done by reading each page. Yes, it was a lot of work, but so rewarding!!!!!!! I wonder if any of those books are still around, or have they gotten new owners? By any chance did you help to assemble the blue book? Or was the book already there when you arrived at Saker?

When I read your email and you were thinking back I was also reminded of the number of trips I made to Christian Bookstores looking for suitable music that I could use. I also remembered how I searched for plays that someone else had written but that would be suitable for use at Saker. Now the Easter Play - the one done outside - I wrote that myself. Before I went to Cameroon - when I was in Bible College, I had the opportunity to assist in directing something like that but on a much smaller scale. I also had opportunity to attend a presentation of a miniature Passion Play. (Have you heard of the one that is presented in Lead, South Dakota? That is near where you find the rock monuments of the presidents. Also the Passion Play is presented in

Oberammergau, Switzerland. In any case, I had read and was somewhat familiar with this idea, BUT, one Christmas after a Missionary Conference that always took place in Bamenda, I had the opportunity to go and visit some of my fellow missionaries who were working in Mbem, if you know where that is. It's like the end of the world in Cameroon - right on the border between Cameroon and Nigeria in northeastern Cameroon (I think). In any case, while I was visiting there, the idea for doing this kind of a presentation was born. When I came back to Saker, I spoke to the Principal about it - he agreed and I went to my house - in between all my other responsibilities, and began to write. Now, if you remember, all of the spoken parts were direct Scripture passages. I used passages from all the gospels - the idea being to make the story complete.

But the beginning started with the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. (You know I haven't thought about this for a long time, and reminiscing like this is good for me too). The writing did not take that long - it was the selecting of the characters - choosing people whose personalities fit the part. Somewhere in all that has been written for the Jubilee Celebrations, someone tried to remember who characterized some of the parts, and one of those, is the part of Jesus - I will never forget who that was - it was Anna Bonde. I don't know if you were at school when she was there. But she fit it very well.

All of this thinking back is great and good. I am grateful to God to have been given the ability and talent to have had the opportunity. Yes it was work - the many hours of practice - frustrating sometimes, the sewing of all the costumes, working with Mr. Bawe - who did the preparing of the different stages and putting up the lights, etc., but I know he enjoyed it immensely. There is one thing I will never forget and that is - The girls in the play had a difficult time understanding why they were not talking, and everything was being read by a narrator. And it wasn't really until Dress Rehearsal night when they were in full costume and the choir did their part and we even had a few people making up a small audience, that it all came together for them. There is one student who did a lot of work and did a great job, and I referred to her as the stage director. She made sure that everyone was in the right place at the right time, because I was busy directing the choir - BUT I can't remember who she was.

Well enough reminiscing. I must get going. I have to go to the store. Hope you don't mind my rambling, but I think that is good sometimes and these last few weeks have caused that to happen.

Talk again soon. Love you – Eunice

Just as the Scriptures promise, God's Word does not return void. Lives were changed by this THEATRE Presentations; Souls were and still are being saved through the MUSIC. My Dear Sisters, as we continue to sing those songs of faith, we share the Gospel with others, and grow in our own faith, and that is something we will always cherish, and be grateful for!

Would like to end by dedicating this touching song to Miss KERN, and to ALL the others who, through their sacrificial service, invested in us! IT CERTAINLY WAS NOT IN VAIN!!!

<http://youtu.be/UFrdJ2V3r7Y> (THANK YOU FOR GIVING TO THE LORD by Ray Boltz)

Egbe Mbiwan Monjimbo (Class of '81)