

Singing in the streets

BackBeat
with Cornelius Thomas

TWENTY-three streets, 5 000 people in cosmopolitan crucible, living on song. This is what I found while working on my forthcoming book, *Dust in My Coffee: Memories and Reflections of a Family Called North End*.

Every street sported a singing group. From the 1940s to the late '60s, they sang for fun and all were welcome to listen.

Lionel Boniface remembers he and his friends sang on Danes Lane. Later, as a postman, he found North End children teased in rhyming chants — "telewag, telewag ... do it in a mealie-bag" they dogged him in Clarke's Hollow.

Sonny Kops crooned *Crazy* on Mr Lee's Corner. Down St Paul's



THE BELLTONES

Road the cute Belltones — *Standing on the Corner* — kept passersby enthralled.

Khaki's Corner first held Achmat Obaray's Foreign Legion, and later the crew of Anthony Augustine, who sang into the navy of the night.

The grand old lady of North End, Khaki Naran, welcomed this.

The crooners served a social function also, keeping her shop and the street safe.

On New Street Sidney Nash and Billy Francis and later the Meintjies brothers serenaded the people.

These street singers also exported their talents.

As a boy Rhodes Fray sang on the beachfront

until it rained coins, earning his keep.

Cassie Jasson, 10, and her girl friends marched to the Esplanade, singing.

"Why are you bushies making such a noise?" the police interrupted them.

Cassie politely answered they were singing, not making a noise.

North Enders listened to themselves.

Our children today don't have to be mesmerised by the vulgarity and obscenity of hip-hop and the misogyny of Eminem.

They can look to themselves and to when the human voice was used to celebrate beauty.

We should therefore encourage our children into song, support eisteddfods and our high school vocal groups and bands.

Brilliant concert

TRIO BON ESPERANCE DU CAP, Liesl Stoltz (flute), Alison Lansdown (cello), Louis Zurnamer (piano) at the Guild Theatre

WHAT an absolute treat! We've been extremely fortunate over the last couple of years to receive visits from a number of excellent trios, and this was up there with the best of them.

Three exciting, young instrumentalists totally at one with each other, with their instruments, with their music and, as a result, with their audience. Though currently studying in Europe, all three are South African, and learnt their craft in Cape Town and Stellenbosch.

Individually outstanding on a technical level, they seem to combine with such ease and enjoyment



TRIO TREAT: Young South African musicians making up the Trio Bon Espérance du Cap perform at the Guild Theatre