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Scratch choir hits the right note for Haiti appeal

By Fran Bardsley »

MUSICIANS and students got together to make music and raise money for the victims of the Haiti earthquake.

About 100 people gathered at St Peter's College, in New Inn Hall Street, Oxford, to make a recording of the traditional Haitian folk song Fey-O.

It is planned to release the song as an online download with proceeds going towards the Disasters Emergency Committee's Haiti appeal.

The project was organised by Laura Shearing, 23, from West Oxford, who studied Haitian folk song at Oxford University for her masters degree last year.

She said: "I became really attached to the country and its music.



Dave Brogan encourages Katishe North and Danny Toop

"When the earthquake happened I wanted to do something about it, because I felt really personally involved."

The singers were recruited through friends, acquaintances, city choirs and a group on social networking website Facebook.



The choir singing at St Peter's College chapel

Miss Shearing, who now works for the university's development office, said:

"I don't have a target in mind. I just want to raise as much as possible."

Members of Oxford Gospel Choir and Oxford City Singers took part in the event, with the performance being conducted by David Crown, director of music at Somerville College.

He said: "The great thing is we've got a lot of students but a lot of other people as well.

"It's something I have never done before so it's all very exciting, learning and recording the whole thing in one day."

St Peter's College donated its chapel for the recording, New College lent some instruments and the university's music faculty provided its recording equipment and instruments.

The song will be online at justgiving.com/haitisinging

* Television pictures of children emerging from the rubble after the Haiti earthquake prompted personal trainer Dave Brogan to stage a 24-hour rowing marathon to raise money.

"I saw a baby being dragged from the rubble by some aid workers and I thought he looked a bit like my youngest," said Mr Brogan, from Tackley, who works at the Vida gym, at Oxford Airport, in Kidlington.

"I knew then that I had to do something to help and I thought a 24-hour rowing marathon would be a good way of raising funds. I got 48 people to agree to go on the rowing machines at the gym for half-an-hour and raise at least £30 each, so we should raise more than £2,500."

Mr Brogan added: "I did my half-hour at about 2.30am on Saturday.

"Half the people who took part were my clients, the rest were gym staff and members or friends of the family."

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