

SONGS TO KEEP CALM BY

Special Correspondent

LISBON, Saturday.

AS a DC-8 jetliner screamed to an emergency stop just before take-off from Lisbon Airport yesterday, a team of 15 South African folk singers burst into song to calm the other passengers on the New York-bound aircraft.

The big airliner, fully laden with passengers and fuel for the seven-hour Atlantic crossing, was racing along the runway when the commander suddenly slammed on brakes and reversed the jets when one engine failed.

Four tyres immediately burst and the aircraft came to a halt within a few yards of the ocean at the distant end of the runway.

The South African "stampede" singers, on their way to the international "sing-out" festival in New York burst into song to calm the other passengers.

Encouraged by the cabin crew, the Springbok singers continued singing the songs they will be singing in New York, and passengers cheered the courageous spirit of the singers who encouraged them not to yield to panic.

The passengers resumed their journey several hours later, and are expected to have reached New York this morning.