

Come & Sing 2016 - A fantastic event full of fun

The 2016 Come and Sing with Jonathan Willcocks has been a resounding success. It's the 'opener' to the festival season and the third year that this event has run. Festival singers and new friends joined us for the day, as we celebrated the start of Jonathan's tenure as Festival conductor.

The choice of music, '*Faure Requiem*' and Jonathan's own arrangement of some African songs, '*Sing Africa*', were a delight to participants. Linda King, a former Festival singer said, "it is a fantastic day for me; I love the contrast between the two types of music - African and European". Another participant, Mike Winterbotham, the Baritone soloist who took part in the whole day described it as "good fun and great choice of music; also good to meet so many new people from across the singing spectrum".

Over 300 singers took part, singing the ever so endearing Faure Requiem and then tackling Jonathan's arrangement of vibrant African songs in '*Sing Africa*'; a set of three Shona and Zulu songs with African drum accompaniment. '*Sing Africa*' was the highlight of the day as it was not an everyday form of songs that many in the audience perform. But with much enthusiasm, everyone was soon singing these with relish.

Conductor Jonathan Willcocks said, "I have enjoyed the excellent spirit of today. Its delightful with 300 singers diving in with such enthusiasm especially on '*Sing Africa*'. And the Faure Requiem is surely a good piece for workshops and the motivation of everyone involved made it even more special. I have surely had a great day."

The day was also used to make a thank you presentation to our outgoing Festival Organizer, Liz May after a splendid 17 years in that voluntary position. The Festival Chair, Graham Aslet and the incoming Organizer, Mandy Begg presented gifts to Liz and thanked her for her selfless service to the Festival and its beloved community amidst a thunderous ovation by participants. Liz remains a Festival singer and will continue to support the work going forward in various capacities. Her admirable legacy will endure for a long time.

Other events of the season will include:

- Sunday 12th March: St Matthew Passion
- Saturday 18th March: Youth Choirs' Competition
- Thursday 6th April: Opening day of the Festival with Division 3 choirs
- Friday 7th April: second Day of the Festival with Division 1 choirs
- Saturday 8th April: Final day of the Festival with Division 2 choirs

The next Come & Sing event takes place on October 14th 2017.

All events take place at Dorking Halls. To take part in any of these events above either as a member of a choir or an independent for the St Matthew Passion, please visit our website www.lhmf.org.uk