

LHMF 2016 Youth Choirs' Competition

Once again young singers from across Surrey, Sussex and London, arrived at The Dorking Halls to take part in the annual Leith Hill Musical Festival Youth Choirs' Competition. Parents and children gave up their usual Saturday activities and arrived in plenty of time for their 8.30am warm-ups and other preparation before lifting their voices and our hearts with their singing. The first session of the day was provided by three choirs all with singers of seven years and under. They sang fun songs, foreign language songs and well known tunes and used toothbrushes as props. One song was sung with no accompaniment from the piano and another was accompanied by three cellos. As ever, this class brought smiles to the faces of the audience and stewards alike because of the obvious joy the children had in their singing and performing.

The second session of the morning was for small choirs of junior age. Seven choirs each sang two contrasting songs. Now we heard harmonies, soloists and enjoyed some fun acting. All the soloists stood on that great big stage and sang with such confidence that every word was heard. The variety in this class included 'Can you hear me?' by Bob Chilcott, 'Adiemus' by Karl Jenkins and 'It don't mean a thing' by Duke Ellington. There was a song from the musical 'Annie' and at the end of 'Tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak tree' the children were encircled with a long yellow ribbon. Once again the singing was of a very high standard, all sung from memory and with a great deal of enthusiasm. One song in particular left me with a real tingle because it was sung with such feeling.

The afternoon began with junior age large choirs and six groups of forty or more children each took to the stage with confidence. Again we heard songs from a variety of sources including 'In Paradisum' by Faure, 'Kala, Kalla' by Eric Whitacre and 'Rocking all over the World' by John Fogerty.

Two further classes followed. The Under Thirteens and the Mixed Age Youth Choirs. The first choir began with a soloist which immediately got the attention of the audience. Their second song was in parts and was unaccompanied and stayed beautifully in tune. The second choir sang a medley of songs including 'Video killed the Radio Star'. As well as exciting the audience this one received comment from the Adjudicator who said it reminded him of his youth! The final class of the day had two choirs. The first, from The Ashcombe School sang songs from 'Les Miserables' and then unaccompanied and without a conductor a traditional song from Zimbabwe. It was a joy to hear the full range of voices from both young men and young women. The Rosebery Singers got our feet tapping to 'Putting on the 'Ritz' and ended the day's singing with a harmonised version of Lennon and McCartney's Blackbird.

Ben Costello, the adjudicator for the day, complimented all the singers on their enjoyment of their singing. He gave them tips for performing and

thanked the parents for the support given to their children especially on a Saturday.

This amazing day is run by volunteers and thanks must be recorded for all the planning that goes into what is always a truly musical day.

Barbara Christopher

Results

7 years and under choirs

Winner St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, KS1
Choir, Crawley

Adjudicator's Choice St. Giles' Singers, St. Giles' C of E Infant School,
Ashtead

Adjudicator's Choice Holmesdale Infant School Choir, Reigate

11 years and under small choirs

Winner Cumnor House Girls' School Chamber Choir

2nd Greenfield School Choir, Woking

3rd St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, KS2
Choir, Crawley

11 years and under large choirs

Winner Surbiton High Girls' School Prep Chamber Choir,
Purley

Adjudicator's Choice Sandcross Primary School Choir, Reigate

13 years and under choirs

Winner Pennthorpe School Rock Choir, Rudgwick

Mixed age youth choirs

Winner Rosebery Singers, Rosebery School, Epsom