

LHMF Youth Choirs Day 2018

Despite the snow storm raging around outside and making travelling more difficult than usual, by eight thirty on the morning of Saturday 17th March 2018 the Dorking Halls was full of excited young singers and proud parents and supporters. LHMF volunteers had greeted everyone as they arrived and then guided them to where they needed to be in order to enjoy a morning of singing. The first six choirs consisted of children who were all aged seven and under. We were entertained with songs about dancing animals, songs from well-loved shows, new and old songs and all were sung by happy smiling children. There were soloists, actions and songs in English, Catalan and Chinese.

A further six choirs of eleven years and under filed into the Halls for the second session. Each of these had many more children in them. Again we were entertained with wonderful singing, soloists, beautiful harmonies as well as energetic African dancing and songs from a wide variety of genres. We 'bought a cat and many other animals', 'Met the Flintstones', as well as enjoying an 'Ave Maria'. Once again there was an appreciative audience of parents and supporters from all the schools.

After lunch a further three choirs of eleven years and under arrived to join in the music making. These were large choirs each of more than forty singers showing just how inclusive singing is in many of our schools. We enjoyed songs from 'Abba' and 'Queen' and one piece which had been especially written by the two teachers who work with their choir. The 'part-singing' was very strong and the concentration on the faces of the children was wonderful while they still managed to show how much they were enjoying themselves.

The final sessions of the day were for choirs in the first years of secondary school and then for mixed aged choirs. Once more we heard beautiful harmonies. Enthusiasm was clear as we heard a song from 'Adele' as well as Jonathan Dove and that real tongue twister 'Rhythm of Life'. As before all choirs sang from memory and watched their conductors who smiled, enthused energy and mouthed many of the words themselves. The two mixed age Choirs provided very different performances. We were entertained by a Stagecoach Group from Weybridge who were with us for the first time. This was the only group of the day which was not from any school. They sang energetically and one of their songs was unaccompanied. The choir from Rosebery School ended the day with well-known songs to which we could all hum along.

This year's adjudicator was Ian Assersohn a local conductor, teacher, music examiner and composer. He led a 'warm-up' for each of the classes which made us all laugh and look a little silly. This always relaxes everyone. His job of awarding prizes will have been very difficult as every choir gave something special to us all.

It is always good to welcome back choirs who come regularly but wonderful to have new choirs join in. This year we had two choirs from London as well as those from Surrey and Sussex. I am very privileged to introduce each choir on this special day. Each year the quality of the singing, the energy and enthusiasm of the children and the amazing support of the audience is overwhelming. The children have a real pride in their singing and their teachers are the ones who have instilled this. Thank goodness for music teachers in our schools.

Barbara Christopher

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