

12 March 2008

CHORUS

A Celebration of Singing at Southbank Centre, from Beethoven to Beatboxing Southbank Centre, 11 – 18 May 2008

From 11 to 18 May, Southbank Centre devotes a week to the many facets of choral singing and celebrates the human voice – from Beethoven to gospel; Vaughan Williams to jazz; and Welsh male voice choirs to beatboxing. **Chorus** is for those who love to either participate in or listen to choral music, with some of the finest **professional** and **non-professional choirs** from around the UK performing in Southbank Centre's concert halls and public spaces. Everyone is invited to join in, with **nightly choral clubs** designed to catch the commuter, several **karaoke** sessions, and the opportunity to be part of the **world's largest Beatbox Choir**.

Choirs to look out for include Southbank Centre Associate Artists **The Sixteen, The Bach Choir, The English Philharmonia** and **Chorus, City of London Choir, Chantage, Coro Cervantes, Libera, Swingle Singers, Shlomo** and **The Vocal Orchestra, London Adventist Chorale, the Fron Male Voice Choir, Highgate Choral Society**, a showcase of some of the past winners and finalists from **BBC Choir of the Year** and Southbank Centre's own **Voicelab** choirs.

Gillian Moore, Head of Contemporary Culture at Southbank Centre said: 'Southbank Centre has always been a favourite venue for choirs to perform. With this in mind, Chorus is a new week-long festival curated to celebrate singing. In *Chorus*, professional choirs sit alongside amateur groups, and everyone can participate in a wide-variety of free events. I hope as many people as possible will come and join us – whether by taking part in the opening spectacular across the spaces of the Royal Festival Hall, by learning some jazz ballads or by listening to music from Fauré and Monteverdi to world premieres.'

EVENTS TO GET INVOLVED IN

Opening Voices, Choral Club, Karaoke and a chance to be in the world's largest Beatbox choir

Chorus opens on 11 May with *Opening Voices* when hundreds of singers will fill the public spaces of the Royal Festival Hall. Featuring choirs from Southbank Centre's Voicelab programme, along with many other singers from a range of backgrounds, this culminates with a massed sing in The Clore Ballroom. Choirs and individual singers can be involved by either attending an open rehearsal on the day, or applying to perform some prepared repertoire in one of the Hall's public spaces (see details in listings below).

Running every weekday evening across the festival, *Choral Club* takes up residence in The Front Room at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. Each evening, everyone will have the chance to stop by and join in with an hour-long singing session – perfect for commuters. Participants will be taken through a selection of pieces across different styles. These free sessions include musical theatre, pop classics, world voices, gospel and jazz, with a different guest director each night – Mary King, Tony Castro, Chris Rowbury, Ken Burton, Tina Brooks and Anita Wardell. All participants will be invited to return on Sunday 18 May for a massed performance in The Clore Ballroom as the climax of the festival.

In addition to the commuter hour events, Thursday 15 – Saturday 17 May from 9.30pm, The Front Room stage will host free Karaoke sessions for all to come along and take part.

A massed beatboxing class on The Clore Ballroom, led by Resident Artist Shlomo will take place on 17 May at 11am. Those with a ticket to the evening concert by Shlomo and The Vocal Orchestra, will be able to learn how to beatbox during the day and then be part of the finale to the concert. With the entire audience beatboxing, participants will be adding their voice to the world's largest beatbox choir.

CONCERTS

The opening concerts of *Chorus* begin on the evening of 11 May with The Bach Choir in the Royal Festival Hall joined by the Philharmonia Orchestra and conducted by David Hill. The programme encompasses many different styles of choral music from Mahler's 16-part unaccompanied setting of Rückert's *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*, to the full orchestral version of Fauré's Requiem. On the same evening the Queen Elizabeth Hall plays host to *Libera*, the internationally renowned choir of boys aged 7 to 14, which has topped the mainstream and classical charts with its recent recordings. The boys attend many different local schools in South London.

A concert by The English Philharmonia and Chorus on 12 May presents the world premiere of *Songs of the Coromandel Coast* by India-based composer Chris Williams. This new work for tenor, children's choir, chorus and orchestra celebrates recovery after the aftermath of the 2004 Asian tsunami and is the sequel to Williams' earlier *Tsunami Requiem*. The programme also includes Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* with soloists James Gilchrist and Richard Watkins.

The City of London Choir, joined by the London Mozart Players and conducted by Hilary Davan Wetton, brings a concert of quintessentially British music to the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 13 May, with a programme to mark the 50th anniversary of the death of Vaughan Williams. The programme includes Vaughan Williams' *An Oxford Elegy* and *The Lark Ascending* alongside works by Holst and Bliss. The same evening Chantage, the *BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year*, with its conductor James Davey, will take their audience through popular music from the time of Henry VIII to Britney Spears. Renowned beatboxers **Jestar** and **MC Zani** make a special guest appearance.

Associate Artists at Southbank Centre, The Sixteen, bring an evening of poetry and music, all emanating from Orpheus, the father of song, on 15 May in the Queen Elizabeth Hall. For this programme, conductor Harry Christophers has chosen three of Monteverdi's *Madrigals of War and Love* to frame Henze's *Orpheus behind the wire* in which he sets highly charged political poems by Edward Bond. Working in conjunction with acclaimed writer, theatre director and filmmaker Jonathan Holmes, The Sixteen will maximise the sonic and visual impact of these powerful works with actors Alan Howard and Virginia McKenna reading poems by Petrarch and Denise Levertov.

Friday 16 May brings a complete change in styles with concerts by Coro Cervantes with Cardiff Polyphonic Choir, and the Swingle Singers. Coro Cervantes, the UK's only professional choir dedicated solely to the Hispanic classical repertoire, performs several UK premieres and the European revival of *Cant de les Estrelles (Song of the Stars)* by Granados. Through its performances the choir aims to bring the music of Iberian and Latin American countries to audiences who might not have a chance to enjoy this particular repertoire. For something completely different, the eight-voice *a cappella* Swingle Singers showcase their vocal virtuosity and arrangements in a concert in the Purcell Room.

Every member of the audience is called to take part in a concert on Saturday 17 May when Southbank Centre Resident Artist, Shlomo, returns to the Queen Elizabeth Hall with his 14-piece beatboxing ensemble, The Vocal Orchestra. Audience members will be invited to perform as the climax of the concert and be part of the world's largest beatbox choir. The concert will also

include a specially-created Beatbox Chorus of children from the local area. Earlier in the day the award-winning London Adventist Chorale with its conductor Ken Burton bring a programme of African-American choral music to the Queen Elizabeth Hall. The programme will include famous spirituals inspired by water such as *Deep River*, *Down by the Riverside* and *I Stood on the River of Jordan*.

The final day of *Chorus* starts with a *BBC Choir of the Year* showcase in The Clore Ballroom, with free performances by some of the past winners and finalists from *The Choir of the Year*. These performances will help give a hint of what's in store when the final of this year's competition takes place in the Royal Festival Hall in December. The Royal Festival Hall will resound with the music of the Fron Male Voice Choir, as this choir, with members ranging from teenagers to octogenarians, brings a programme spanning opera to West End. It is joined by Fine Arts Brass. The Highgate Choral Society with its conductor Ronald Corp complete the week with a concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall of Beethoven's *Missa solennis* alongside the world premiere of Julian Knight's *A hundred spirits whisper* (written for Highgate Choral Society), and Ronald Corp's *Missa San Marco*.

Ticket Office: 0871 663 2500

Online booking: www.southbankcentre.co.uk

For further information please contact Jenny Wegg in Southbank Centre press office on 020 7921 0824 or via email at jenny.wegg@southbankcentre.co.uk or Kenny Morrison on 020 7921 0962 or kenny.morrison@southbankcentre.co.uk,

Notes to Editors:

With the launch of *Voicelab* in February 2007, Southbank Centre made a nationwide call to singers from any background, with a passion for any kind of singing, from classical to jazz and beatboxing. Since then, the site has been alive with the sound of singing, with singers coming together to share their music making, whether as workshops, come-and-sing events, or concerts. Voicelab Director, Mary King, has led hundreds of people to share the joy of the human voice at events at Southbank Centre. The patron of Voicelab is Sir Willard White. Paul Hamlyn Foundation supports Voicelab and Southbank Centre Artists in Residence.

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 *Festival of Britain*. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and The Hayward as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. The Royal Festival Hall reopened in June 2007 following the major refurbishment of the Hall and redevelopment of the surrounding area and facilities.

CHORUS EVENTS

Sunday 11 May

Opening Voices workshop

Join in part of the event as an individual, family or group of friends by attending an open rehearsal on the day: all confident voices welcome! If your choir would like to be involved in performing some of its own prepared repertoire and learn some new material on the day, email sing@southbankcentre.co.uk by 11 April.

The Clore Ballroom, 10am

Admission free (places may be limited)

Opening Voices

Chorus is brought to life with the sound of hundreds of voices resonating across the public spaces of Royal Festival Hall. Featuring choirs from Southbank Centre's Voicelab programme, along with many other singers from a range of backgrounds, this multi-layered, spectacular culminates with a massed sing in The Clore Ballroom. Directed by Creative Facilitators Paul Griffiths and Mary King.

Royal Festival Hall public spaces, 5.30pm

Admission free

The Bach Choir

Ferdinand Rex *treble*

Roderick Williams *baritone*

Philharmonia Orchestra

David Hill *conductor*

Copland: *Fanfare for the Common Man*; Bernstein: *Chichester Psalms*; Sousa: *The Stars and Stripes Forever*; Vaughan Williams: *Five Mystical Songs*; Mahler: *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*

Fauré: *Requiem*

Royal Festival Hall, 7.30pm

£9 - £38

Libera

A concert to celebrate the launch of their most recent album *New Dawn*.

Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.30pm

£8 - £25

Monday 12 May

English Philharmonia and Chorus: *Tsunami*

James Gilchrist *tenor*

Richard Watkins *horn*

The Choir of Eltham College

The English Brass Ensemble

Graham Wili *conductor*

Chris Williams: *Tsunami Requiem*; Britten: *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*; Mozart: *Concerto No. 3 in E-flat major*; Chris Williams: *Songs of the Coromandel Coast*

Royal Festival Hall, 7.30pm

£9 - £32

Tuesday 13 May

City of London Choir: *Notes from a Small Island*

London Mozart Players

Hilary Davan Wetton *conductor*

Timothy West *speaker*

Heather Shipp *mezzo-soprano*

So-Ock Kim *violin*

Ileana Ruhemann *flute*

Holst: Two Psalms; Bliss: Pastoral: *Lie Strewn the White Rocks*; Vaughan Williams: *The Lark Ascending*; Vaughan Williams: *An Oxford Elegy*
Benefiting Maggie's Cancer Care Centres
Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.30pm
£12 - £20

Chantage: The Beat Goes On

James Davey *conductor*

Jestar and MC Zani *beatboxers*

A journey through popular music from the time of Henry VIII to Britney Spears.

Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.45pm

£10

In association with BBC Radio 3

Thursday 15 May, Friday 16 May and Saturday 17 May

Choral Club Karaoke

Step up to one of the mics on The Front Room stage, and perform a song from Southbank Centre's own karaoke selection, specially installed for *Chorus*

The Front Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall, 9.30pm

Admission free

Thursday 15 May

The Sixteen

Harry Christophers *conductor*

Alan Howard and Virginia McKenna *actors*

Henze: *Hirtenlieder (Venus and Adonis)*; *Orpheus behind the wire*; Monteverdi: *Hor che l'ciel e la terra*; Sinfonia from *Altri canti d'amor, Vago augelletto che cantando vai*

6.15pm: Pre-concert talk. Admission free

Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.30pm

£8 - £33

Friday 16 May

Swingle Singers

A mixed programme by this eight-voice a cappella group.

Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.45pm

£20

Coro Cervantes and Cardiff Polyphonic Choir: Granados' Song of the Stars

Rediscovered

Debra Skeen *soprano*

Anthony Hawgood *tenor*

Charles Matthews *organ*

Douglas Riva *piano*

Carlos Fernández Aransay *director*

Sors: *O Crux*; Goicoechea: *Christus factus est*; Casals: *O vos omnes*; Otaño: *Adagio*; Ledesma: *Salve Regina*; Vives: *O salutaris*; Otaño: *Tota pulchra est Maria*; Albéniz: *Salmo VI*; Mompou: *Cantar del alma*; Granados: *Salve regina*; *L'herba d'amor*; *Quejas o la maja y el ruiseñor*; *El cant de les estrelles*

Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.30pm

£8 - £22 £18 £15 £11 £8

Iberian & Latin American Music Society in association with the Cultural Office of the Spanish Embassy

Saturday 17 May

London Adventist Chorale: *Down By The Riverside*

Ken Burton *conductor*

The programme includes famous spirituals inspired by water, such as *Deep River, I Stood On The River Of Jordan, Down By The Riverside, Jesus Is A Rock* and *My Soul's Been Anchored*.

Queen Elizabeth Hall, 2pm

£8 - £25

Shlomo and The Vocal Orchestra Present The World's Largest Beatbox Choir

Music Through Unconventional Means

This special concert sees the long awaited return of Shlomo's 14-piece beatboxing ensemble The Vocal Orchestra, climaxing with a performance featuring every member of the audience in Queen Elizabeth Hall, as well as a specially created 40-strong Beatbox Chorus of children from the local area.

Queen Elizabeth Hall, 8pm

£15 (price includes entry to beatbox workshop)

The Vocal Beatbox Orchestra Workshop

How to take part:

By purchasing a concert ticket in advance, you can take part in a beatboxing workshop led by Southbank Centre Artist in Residence Shlomo and perform in part of the concert itself, adding your voice to the world's largest beatbox choir.

The Clore Ballroom, 11am

Please note: this event is for ticket holders to the 8pm concert only

Sunday 18 May

The Fron Male Voice Choir plus Special Guests

With repertoire including everything from opera to West End dazzle.

Royal Festival Hall, 7.30pm

£20 - £32.50

Highgate Choral Society

Ronald Corp

Katherine Broderick *soprano*

Anna Stephany *mezzo soprano*

Thomas Walker *tenor*

Benedict Nelson *baritone*

Ronald Corp: *Missa San Marco*; Julian Knight: *A hundred spirits whisper*; Beethoven: *Missa solemnis*

Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.30pm

£13 - £28

BBC Choir of the Year Showcase

The Clore Ballroom, 3pm

Admission free

In association with BBC Radio 3

Choral Club Climax

The results of the daily choral club sessions, when all the music learned throughout the week is performed in this closing event.

The Clore Ballroom, 5.30pm

Admission free

How to take part:

Attend any of the weekly choral club sessions to take part in this final performance event. Confident singers are welcome to join rehearsals on Sunday.

The Front Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall, registration from 10am

Admission free (places are limited)

Choral Club

Monday 12 May, 6pm

Musical theatre: by Mary King

Tuesday 13 May, 6pm

Pop classics: by Tony Castro

Wednesday 14 May, 6pm

World voices: by Chris Rowbury

Thursday 15 May, 6pm

Gospel: by Ken Burton and Tina Brooks

Friday 16 May, 6pm

Jazz: by Anita Wardell

The Front Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall

Admission free (places are limited)

Choral Club Karaoke

Thursday 15 May, Friday 16 May and Saturday 17 May, 9.30pm

The Front Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall

Admission free