



Adults (parents & staff) - your school needs you (*to sing...*)!

What's this all about?

We have a really exciting, special event that we are taking part in at The Town Hall in Cheltenham during April 2022 which involves all Year 5 pupils from Naunton Park Primary School, all Year 5 pupils from Warden Hill Primary School, all Year 5 pupils from St. Johns Primary School and all Year 5 pupils from Gloucester Road Primary School. They are joining with the Year 7 choir from Pates Grammar School, plus pupils from Cheltenham College and The Prep so there will be somewhere in the region of 400+ pupils from different local schools all singing together in this amazing concert.

Why are adults needed?

The music we are performing is a variety of different items. The main piece is called 'Zimbe' by Alexander L'Estrange – a really fun, infectious collection of African music that lasts around 40mins. We will also do a number of other additional pieces, including items such as 'Fix You' (Coldplay) and 'Sing' (Gary Barlow) plus others. There are vocal parts for an adult choir to sing in all of these alongside the children (who have their own separate part to sing), so we need sopranos, altos, tenors and basses (yes, men – staff/dads – that means you too!) to form a choir to sing those parts. All of the music will be accompanied by a live band (piano, bass, drums, percussion, saxophone, etc). It doesn't matter if your own child is not taking part in the event – you are really welcome and encouraged to join the adult choir anyway!

Why should I do it?

Almost too many reasons to list (!), but the mental health and physical health benefits of singing are scientifically proven, singing is also one of the only activities where no matter what age you are everyone participates and contributes equally (whether you are 8, 28, 58 or 80!), there are far too many adults that regret not having much of a musical background from when they were younger or gave it up too soon, there is no cost implication (some choirs will charge you for membership – this is free!), the time commitment is minimal (this choir will only run between January-April 2022 in the run up to the concert) and we can't run the music or the concert without adults singing – so using a good old cliché, 'do it for the kids' as much as for yourself...!

What if I don't think I'm very good?

Don't worry! Most of the adults coming and taking part will be plucking up the courage to do it just the same as you. You'll be in a really friendly, supportive group of people all in exactly the same boat just trying to have a bit of fun and take part in something to support the children. You'll be supplied with the relevant music, and all of the music will be available to listen to on YouTube/Spotify, etc. It's all hugely catchy and fun, and you'll be surprised about how much you enjoy the whole thing.

When are the rehearsals and the concert?

The concert is on Tuesday 26th April 2022 at The Town Hall starting at 6.30pm. It will only last around an hour (without an interval). This is right at the start of the summer term and a great way for the children to kick off their final term of the academic year. The rehearsals will be on a Wednesday evening 8.00-9.00pm and held at Cheltenham College Prep School in their Assembly Hall (entrance on Thirlestaine Road). There is parking on-site and/or up at the Cheltenham College Sports Centre just up the road (also on Thirlestaine Road). If you cannot make one or two of the rehearsals, just let us know at the time and it won't be a problem. The first rehearsal will be on Wednesday 12th January, with subsequent rehearsals being on 19/1, 26/1, 2/2, 9/2, 16/2, no rehearsal on 23/2 (half-term), 2/3, 9/3, 16/3 (final rehearsal of the term due to other events in the hall after that date). There will then just be a rehearsal on the day of the concert (Tuesday 26th April 2022) at The Town Hall with all the performers (children and adults) at 3.30pm. I understand this will have an impact on those adults who are working (for which I apologise), but I hope you appreciate we have to fit with timings that work for all the schools/children and with this much notice you may be in a position to negotiate making arrangements to attend so that we can all rehearse together before the concert that evening.

What about COVID?

We will obviously abide by whatever current government rules and regulations are in place for both the rehearsals and the concert at the time. As it currently stands, we would proceed with the rehearsals in a well-ventilated, large hall with chairs slightly spread out and ask adults to take an LFT on the day of the rehearsal each week (Wednesday) so that we were as confident about mitigating potential risks as possible. People would be welcome to wear masks if they wish. The rules surrounding the concert itself may change over the coming months, but under the current rules would go ahead as planned. COVID has had such a detrimental impact on the performing arts generally, but particularly in schools and for children. We very much hope that this concert will help to celebrate the positive impact of music on the lives of us all – children and adults – despite COVID, and we will proceed with cautious optimism confirming any relevant changes to all parties as they occur.

OK. So, I'm interested (or at least persuadable...!), what do I do now?

Please drop a quick e-mail to Mrs Alex Oakes, Music Department Administrator at Cheltenham College Prep School to let her know you'd like to join the choir for next term, and – if you know – tell her your voice part (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). This will give us an idea of how many copies of the music we will need to arrange for the first rehearsal on Wednesday 12th January. Her e-mail address is a.oakes@cheltenhamcollege.org – other than that, just put the dates in your diary and we will look forward to seeing you in January.

Genuinely – please don't let this pass you by! It is a fabulous opportunity for both the children and you as adults to take part in something special together. It should be really memorable, and I hope that lots of you will sign up to come and take part. In the meantime, have a lovely and peaceful Christmas and I look forward to seeing and meeting lots of you in the New Year.

With warmest wishes,

Mr Kit Perona-Wright
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