



ON THE RECHORD

Cream of British Barbershop joins West London's Capital Chorus for a special Valentine's night concert in Ealing

St Valentine's Day should always be special, and with that in mind Capital Chorus is bringing together some of the UK's finest a cappella groups for what promises to be an evening of superb songs and stunning harmonies. Tagline, Britain's champion men's barbershop quartet in 2015 will join Vocal Dimension, a gold medal-winning women's chorus who are rated as among the best barbershop groups in the world. They'll be performing with us at an event we've called Valentine Showtime at one of Ealing's most beautiful concert venues.



For both groups the performance will form part of their preparations ahead of world championship singing competitions in the United States later this year. As Britain's best quartet, Tagline will represent the UK in the international men's barbershop quartet competition in Nashville in July, while Vocal Dimension will be jetting to Las Vegas in October to fly the Union Jack in a worldwide women's chorus contest at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, a venue which plays regular host to international stars like Barbra Streisand and Tom Jones.

Vocal Dimension recently appeared on the Christmas charity single, *One Voice – A Path to Peace*. Recorded at RAF Northolt, the song also featured a Fijian vocal group, the RAF Band and the voices of the Military Wives choir.

Capital Chorus is itself a past winner of the prize for Britain's best small Barbershop chorus.

The concert takes place on February 14th at St Barnabas Church, Pitshanger Lane W5 1QG, starting at 7pm. Tickets cost £15 (£12 concessions). They're available in advance by emailing capitalchoruslondon@gmail.com or calling 07963 595930, or at the door subject to availability.

Christmas Jumpers add warmth to festive performances



Capital Chorus with local MP Rupa Huq

Musically speaking, we like to think we're known for our matching chords, but the Chorus uniform was distinctively different for our three festive gigs this year. Our MD Pippa Goodall encouraged chorus members to add to the atmosphere by bringing out their favourite Christmas jumpers, and we were more than happy to rise to the sartorial challenge.

Our thanks go out to the many people who stopped to greet us and spent a moment enjoying our mix of popular songs and well-loved Christmas tunes. There was a surprise at our first event, the West Ealing Fair, when the local MP Rupa Huq joined us on stage for a rendition of White Christmas.

At our second appearance in the W12 shopping centre, over £130 was raised from generous shoppers for the WellFound charity, which helps provide reliable and clean water for communities in developing countries (see main news picture at the top).

And we had a most enjoyable evening entertaining students and staff at the School of Business, Economics and Informatics, Birkbeck, University of London. Afterwards the organiser, Rose Devaney said:

"We thought Capital Chorus were just terrific - your sound, your professional attitude and all the good humour."

Flying elephants and drunken sailors – welcome to our world of song

Every couple of years our chorus runs a course which we call Learn To Sing in Harmony. It's an opportunity for people who've sung with other choirs, and those who've never sung as part of a group, to experience for themselves the thrill and excitement of singing close-harmony in the distinctive barbershop style. But which songs should we learn? The choice is one of the most difficult questions to face any chorus director.

For her initial course, our MD Pippa Goodall chose firstly a classic Disney movie song, "Baby Mine". It's sung to the infant Dumbo by his mum, to comfort the baby elephant when the other circus animals have mocked the giant ears which will eventually help him to fly. Pippa herself admits it's something of a "marmite song". The harmony parts are beautiful and simple to learn, but to some tastes it can seem excessively sugary and sentimental. For those of that opinion the antidote was to hand, in the form of our second song, a rollicking sea shanty specially arranged in four parts. Most people will already have been introduced to the tune "What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor". Our version definitely required the new singers to develop their "sea-legs", especially when the swelling tune was combined with the swaying choreography. Demanding but fun.

Learn To Sing 2015

Altogether sixteen people enrolled for the course last September. We're very pleased to say that since then three of the new singers, Andy Clyde, Nazir Khan and Stephen Fidler, have passed an audition and joined Capital Chorus. Several more people have expressed an interest in staying with us, and we hope that others will have gained the confidence to continue their singing with other vocal groups in West London.



Quartets rise to challenge

Two of our quartets competed in the preliminary round of the National Championships in Manchester last October. The two quartets, Apocappella and Routemasters, were closely matched, taking between 60 and 61 per cent of the available marks from the judges. They were, respectively, six and seven places away from qualifying for the semi-final, but on the plus side they each finished seven or eight places higher than last year. You can view the performances of both quartets on our website at www.capitalchorus.co.uk.

The website also includes a couple of audio podcasts. One is about Harmony College, the annual summer school organised by the British Association of Barbershop Singers. The other, Harmony UK, is a half-hour of news and views on the latest developments in the exciting world of British barbershop harmony singing. Do have a listen. They're free.

Chorus diary

Capital Chorus has a busy few months on the way. We would love to see you at any of the following gigs:

- February 14th. 7pm. Valentine Showtime. St Barnabas Church, Pitshanger Lane W5 1QG.
- April 24th. London Marathon – We'll be singing to urge on the competitors. If you're a runner then watch out for us as you power past, and good luck!
- May 14th. Sangerstevne. Capital Chorus will again participate in this international choral festival. This year the main venue is the St Sepulchre-without-Newgate Church near St Pauls in the heart of the city, renowned as an official musicians church for prominent conductors, singers, composers and musicians. There are four concerts between noon and 9.30pm. Please check on the website nearer the day for the precise time of our performance.

Keep in touch

Finally, we would love you to keep in touch with us throughout the year. Our page on Facebook is updated regularly, or you can follow us on twitter @capitalchorus. We're always happy to meet men who'd like to come and sing with us, and we extend a warm welcome to anyone, male or female, who'd like to drop in at our Monday night rehearsals to find out more about barbershop and the opportunities to sing. You'll find us from 7.45pm at Kingsdown Methodist Church, Northfields Avenue, W13 9PR.

Best wishes from us all for a happy and harmonious 2016, and we hope to see you soon.