

THE HINDU

At the Olympics again

EVENT - The MMA will be the only choir from Asia to perform at the London pre-Olympic celebrations on July 7

READY FOR THE OLYMPICS - The MMA choir members



Under the leadership of Dr. Ravi Santosham, 22 members of the Madras Musical Association are packing their bags to be part of the pre-Olympic celebrations in London on July 7 at the Royal Festival Hall at the South Bank Centre on the Thames. This will be the second outing for the MMA at an Olympics. Twelve years ago, Dr. Santosham took them (the mixed choir)

to Australia to perform at the Newcastle torch relay ceremony with a 1000-voice mass choir and a cameo performance at the Sydney Opera House in connection with the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

In London, the MMA will be the only choir from Asia. The London Welsh Choir of the World will have 1000 voices, including those of the Chennai men.

The mass choir will perform the commissioned piece, 'The Hero's Journey' by Karl Jenkins (OBE). The 56-page rousing composition consists of parts — Europe, Asia, Australasia, and Africa and the Americas.

The choir will also render old-time favourites such as 'When the saints go marchin' in', 'Stout-hearted men', 'Shall we gather', 'Speed your journey', 'Who wants to live forever' by Brian May (of "Queen") from the rock musical "We will Rock You" and the Welsh Anthem. The Cory Band will accompany the massed choir to be conducted by M.D. Paul Bateman (of

the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra) and the compere will be Huw Edwards (presenter of BBC's flagship programme 'News at Ten').

Earlier in the concert, the MMA choir will take centre stage when they sing three pieces — the humorous 'The Goslings' by J. Frederick Bridge, the spiritual 'Run to my Lord', the Tamil keerthanai 'Deva Pitha' based on Psalm 23, arranged by the choir conductor Augustine Paul. The accompanist of the MMA, Edwin Roy, will be at the piano.



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London Welsh Male Voice Choir

Côr Meibion Cymry Llundain



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Saturday 7th July 2012

**Wales Choir Of The World
Royal Festival Hall, South Bank, London**



The 7 July, 2012, saw the London Welsh MVC achieve one of its greatest ever successes.

Conceived by Patrick Hodges over five years ago after the 2012 Olympic Games were awarded to London, the Wales Choir of the World took place at the Royal Festival Hall on London's South Bank. Although Patrick did most of the early work, a domestic accident a year ago has confined him to a wheelchair, but he was able to be present.

Credit for its ultimate success are due to three choristers – Paul Bunford who drove all aspects of organising and promoting the concert; Keith Warren, Choir chairman, who consulted, informed and meticulously detailed the concert plans; and Harry Planche who had to keep everyone to a tight Budget. The Choir is deeply indebted for the tremendous support received, especially in the last six months, from Choir president, Huw Edwards, and vice-presidents, Paul Bateman, Lyn Feldon, David Goldstone, Haydn James and Roger Lewis. Their support and encouragement of Paul, Keith and Harry in the dark days following the withdrawal from staging the event at Alexandra Palace last Christmas, demands high praise.

The concert featured groups of male choirs from five continents in the first half with all choristers (over 500) combining in the second half.

The LWMVC wishes to acknowledge the support of participating choristers from the following choirs and their musical directors in staging this event:

- Metropolitan Choir of South Australia – Evan Patton
- Choristers from The The Ku-rin-gai Male Choir
- Choristers from The Orange Male Voice Choir
- Choristers from The Wagga City Rugby Male Choir
- The National Male Choir of New Zealand – Robert Aburn *
- Victoria Welsh Male Choir – Faleiry Koczkar
- Cape Town Male Voice Choir – Margaret Barlow *
- Cenestra Male Choir – Themba Madlopha
- Choristers from The Hong Kong Welsh Male Voice Choir
- Madras Musical Association – Augustine Paul *
- Choristers from The Burlington Welsh Male Choir
- Canadian Orpheus Male Choir – Janice Moro *
- Vancouver Welsh Men’s Choir – Jonathan Quick *
- Bela Bartok Male Voice Choir - Tamas Lakner
- Glasgow Philharmonic Male Voice Choir – William Barr
- Prvo Slovensko Pevsko Drustvo LIRA – Andrej Misson
- London Welsh Male Voice Choir – Edward-Rhys Harry
- * Conductor of Continental choirs

The massed choir, conducted by Paul Bateman, performed the premiere of Karl Jenkins’ A Hero’s Journey, commissioned by the LWMVC. The tremendous standing ovation by the audience at the end of the performance really was the icing on the cake for all the effort incurred. The pianist was Annabel Thwaite, with the Cory Band also accompanying the massed choir. Paul Bateman’s association with the LWMVC goes back to the late 1970’s when he arranged songs for the Choir and deputised for Marilyn Phillips when she was the choir’s accompanist.

There was wild support for the combined choirs from each continent of Australasia, America Asia and particularly Africa – each focusing on the music of its own region. The European Choir, which included choirs from Hungary, Scotland and Slovenia as well as the LWMVC, sang Bandits Chorus, Do You Hear The People Sing, and Finlandia to the words “O God of Nations”, which were very appropriate for Olympics. The European Choir was conducted by Haydn James.

The concert was sponsored by the Welsh Government and incorporated into the South Bank’s 2012 Bryn Fest. Bryn Terfel was the concert soloist, and his singing of I’se Weary Of Waiting with the backing of the 500 plus choir, gained a huge applause from the audience.

The LWMVC wishes to thank all the participating choirs, their musical directors, accompanists and management for their support in staging this concert. Producing the event was a mammoth task but its success, the tremendous capacity audience standing ovation, and the plaudits received by the LWMVC following the concert, is something to remember and be proud of, and, as Max Boyce would say “I was there”.



The Bryn Fest concluded after the concert, on the sunny terrace of the Royal Festival Hall, with Bryn Terfel, supported by the choirs from around the world, leading the gathered crowd in singing favourite songs – particularly Welsh ones such as Ar Hyd Y Nos, Cwm Rhondda, Men of Harlech, and so on! A fitting climax to the 4-day Bryn Fest.

Report by Gethin Williams
photos courtesy of John Downing and Roy Saunders

Rhan o Gymry Llundain
A part of the London Welsh



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