

“Summer Concert” held at the St. Peter & St. Paul’s Church Chingford
Saturday 1st July 2006

Saturday 1st July 2006, will be remembered by many people for various reasons, probably because it was one of those hot sultry summer days usually enjoyed in England’s green and pleasant land, for either enjoying a day at the seaside, a day out in the country, or even staying at home to watch England lose in the quarter finals of the Football World Cup in a penalty shoot-out with Portugal, but something else was stirring in the lovely summer evening in the rural community of Chingford.

Despite all these other tempting distractions, many people had bought tickets for the evening “Summer Concert” at the St. Peter & St. Paul’s Church Chingford, with the Aveley & Newham Brass Band with a programme of music to suit everyone’s personal taste.

This concert had been arranged by the Chingford Area Masonic Social Group as part of their commitment to the principles of “Freemasonry in the Community” and to unite the members who use the Chingford Masonic Centre to raise money for good causes, and on this special occasion to raise money in aid of the St Peter & St. Paul’s Church of Chingford restoration fund

The event was certainly well thought-out and planned down to the smallest detail, even with a team of eight Provincial Grand Stewards suitably attired in their invested collars and with their wands, were on hand to escort the visitors to their seats in the church. (*W Bro’s Mick Kopko, Geoff Turpin, John Busby, Bruce Mapson, Pravin Khetiya, Steve Thurgood, John Hoeffler and Pawel Stawiarski.*)

Bro Neil Carson of Chingford Lodge No. 2859, provided his own personal P.A. Sound system and acted as the “sound engineer” for the guest soloist Lucy Rhodes.

With an introduction by W.Bro Bill Gunary *APGM*, President of the CAMSG, welcomed everyone and thanked them for supporting this very special occasion and commented that we couldn’t have a better setting than that in this wonderful church on a pleasant summers evening.

The concert then commenced promptly at 7.30 pm with everyone standing to sing the “Opening Ode” which had been specially arranged for Brass by Andy Austin of the Aveley and Newham Band. This was followed by the first half of the programme, lead by their conductor for the evening Simon Dobson, who is not the bands regular conductor.

It is not often you come across one of the hottest talents in composing and conducting as Simon, and last year conducted Harrison Birtwhistles notorious “Grimethorpe Aria” in only it second ever London performance, to great critical acclaim. Simon has recently been conducting Redbridge Brass, Aveley and Newham, and Cwmaman Institute amongst others.

Commencing with a rousing march “*The Cossack*” followed by a bit of swing “*If it don’t mean a thing*” a Duke Ellington classic, and a superb interpretation of the classic 18th *Variation (Paganini Variations)* the programme continued with the guest singer Lucy Rhodes, performing two songs, “*Papa can you hear me*” a heartfelt Michele legrand/Barbra Streisand song from the film *Yentl* (1983), followed by the familiar classic song “*Bewitched*”. The first half of the programme finished with the “*Irish Blessing*”, which for a brass band was delivered as smooth as a pint of the traditional Irish Drink, and the band concluded with “*Suite Gothique*”, a rousing toccata to make everyone tap their feet.

Everyone adjourned to the Church hall for Tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits delightfully prepared by Nicola Emerson. Everyone mingled together including members of the band and Lucy Rhodes chatting to Shirley and Bill Gunary. Lucy Rhodes won the prestigious title BBC Radio 2 “Choirgirl of the Year 2002” at the age of fourteen, and within a fortnight was recording the first of her regular appearances on BBC1’s popular “Songs of Praise Programme” Lucy has also performed on Radio 2’s “Friday Night is Music Night” and many other popular Radio and TV shows.

The second half commenced just as rousing as the end of the first half with a rendition of “*Toccata in D Minor*” then on to a jazz piece in the medium bounce of “*Opus One*” written by the legendary Jazz musician Melvin J “Cy” Oliver. Surprisingly the band then performed the “*Muppet Show Theme*” an excellent version which would have made the two aging hecklers “Statler and Waldorf” feel the need to tap their feet. Lucy Rhodes returned to delight the audience with the “*Irish Tune from County Derry*” better known to everyone as “Danny Boy”, followed by a lively version of “*Get Happy*”.

A reflective part of the programme was a lovely arrangement of the melancholy Hymn Tune, Colne and was played with a pure and solid piece of musicianship by the band, under the direction of their conductor Simon Rhodes.

Before concluding the programme, the Master of Ceremonies informed the audience that the band had recently returned from France, and has also recently won the 2006 Grand Shield of Brass Bands held in Blackpool. This contest was set up as the qualifying contest for the British Open Brass Band Championships held later in the year. Usually the top two bands at the contest gain invitations to compete in the British Open. At present it is held in the Winter Gardens in Blackpool in May each year. This was received by the audience with warm applause on their achievements.

The final piece of music was the much loved J Elgars "Pomp and Circumstance", with the Land of Hope and Glory chorus being sung by Lucy Rhodes and of course "the audience"

The evening was brought to a close by W Bro Bill Gunary giving thanks to Fr Tom Page, Rector of the SS Peter and Paul & All Saints Church for allowing us to arrange the concert, with a special thanks to the Aveley and Newham Brass Band and a bouquet of flowers was presented to Lucy Rhodes, and congratulations was extended to the conductor, Simon Dobson. W Bro Bill then went on to thank W Bro Ted Page and the members of the CAMSG for organising the evening, Nicola Emmerson for the tea and cakes during the interval, and thanked everyone for attending and wished everyone a safe journey home. The "Closing Ode" was sung followed by the National Anthem.

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