

Church Road
Wilmcote
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Head of School: Mrs C E Banyard

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Dear Parents

4 December 2015

The Stratford Rural Schools Federation have been invited to take part in an exciting project in the Spring Term. As a keen singer your child has been selected to represent the school. Details of the project are in this letter. If you do not want your child to participate please let me know by Monday 7 December then we can offer the place to someone else. Parents will need to purchase tickets as soon as possible as they are selling well.

2016 will be a great 400th anniversary year for Shakespeare. To mark this moment, Ex Cathedra, with partners the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the Shakespeare Institute has commissioned one of Britain's best-known composers, Sally Beamish to write a c.40-minute setting for a new Shakespeare Ode written by the Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy.

This new commission will be performed by Ex Cathedra for the first time in Stratford-upon-Avon, and this will be followed by performances in Birmingham, London and across the Midlands. The concert will be presented in two halves, with the new Ode in the second half.

The vision is for the new Ode to reflect our own times, or own reactions to Shakespeare and what he means for us today. It will be an inclusive, dramatic and participatory piece, written for children and adult choirs and an English 'broken consort' of instruments Shakespeare would recognise. It is the intention that the new Shakespeare Ode will ultimately bring communities of people together to perform in their schools and village halls.

Leading into the performances will be a series of visits from Ex Cathedra's Vocal Tutors to **3 primary schools in Stratford-upon-Avon**, 3 in Birmingham and 3 in the Tower Hamlets/Stratford area of London. Through singing workshops and rehearsals, pupils will learn elements of the piece in preparation for their participation in the new Ode at the concerts in **Stratford**, Birmingham and London.

This will be a wonderful opportunity for approximately 270 children to:

- Develop their singing skills and confidence, regardless of their previous musical experience, as they rehearse and sing together with Ex Cathedra's Vocal Tutors, and have the opportunity to participate in public performances in prestigious venues;
- Develop their personal and social skills as they work together towards achieving a common goal.

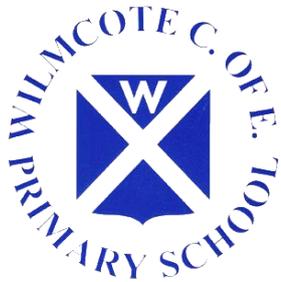
The piece will also include a new audience hymn, which will be taught to the audience during the performance using call and response, and will include elements of drama and spoken word.

Staged concerts are as follows:

1. FOR STRATFORD UPON AVON SCHOOL CHILDREN: Shakespeare's Church; Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was baptised and is buried, 22 April 2016

The project is likely to have BBC interest. A live recording may well be made of one of the performances and sold commercially.





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Schools' Programme of Activity

The three Stratford upon Avon schools will each have ten* children participating.

- 1) **January, February, and early March 2016:** Ex Cathedra Vocal Tutors visit schools to teach the music. 5 half day visits to each school. Visit dates to be agreed at mutually convenient dates for school and visiting tutors.
- 2) **March for Stratford upon Avon schools**
One rehearsal held at one school or a central venue for each of the three schools in each area to come together to rehearse.
- 3) Performance day:

For Stratford upon Avon schools: Stratford upon Avon, Holy Trinity Church, Old Town, **Friday 22 April 2016:** Rehearsal 2.30pm – 5.30pm and 7.30pm performance. If schools would prefer to stay rather than children go home and have tea we will provide the Methodist Church opposite for schools to eat a packed tea.

Additional Information

- Please ensure you have consented to photo and recording consent for your child
- School children will be required to wear school uniform

I hope your child will want to take part in this project. Please return the attached form by Monday 7 December 2015.

Name of Child.....

I give permission for my child to take part in the Shakespeare project and confirm that they will be available to attend on Friday 22 April 2015.

I consent to photo and recordings to be made featuring my child

Signed.....Date.....

