

SINGING SATURDAYS

Young people from eight to eighteen years old can have fun finding their voices, making new friends and learning songs from around the world in a new workshop project taking place across Devon this summer.

In May, June and July, the folk arts charity Wren Music will be running Singing Saturdays in Newton Abbot, Exeter, Honiton, Okehampton and Barnstaple. Singers from the county-wide youth vocal group Roots A Capella and professional folk singers Paul Wilson, Sarah Owen and Claire Anstee will lead the workshops.

The Singing Saturdays will cover harmony songs from English folk and from world music sources, specialising in traditional songs from Eastern Europe, Africa, America and beyond. With harmonies drawn from centuries-old oral traditions - from gospel to work songs and from haunting chants to rousing celebration - there will be something here for everyone. All voices are welcome, and no sight-reading is required - just the desire to enjoy creating sounds together.

Thanks to generous funding from Youth Music, taking part in each Singing Saturday is only £10 - or just £5 for children of full time students or people receiving income-related benefit. The Singing Saturdays will all be held from 10.30am to 3.30pm. Participants should bring a packed lunch, and drinks will be provided. Places can be booked in advance by calling Wren Music on 01837 53754 or emailing admin@wrenmusic.co.uk or people wishing to take part can just come along up on the day.

The Singing Saturdays are:

2nd May, at the Courtenay Centre, Kingsteignton Road, Newton Abbot, TQ12 2QA

6th June, at the Barnfield Theatre, Barnfield Road, Exeter EX1 1SN

20th June, at Honiton Young Peoples Centre, School Lane, Honiton, EX14 8QW

27th June, at Fairplace Church, Fairplace, Okehampton, EX20 1DN

4th July, at Newport Community School, Landkey Road, Barnstaple, EX32 9BW

Multi-instrumentalist, singer, composer and songwriter Paul Wilson first came to national prominence in the 1970s. In over thirty years of professional experience, he has performed at a staggering number and variety of venues, from Ewan MacColl's 70th Birthday at London's Festival Hall, to a small-hall concert for a fishing co-op on the shores of Newfoundland, always finding the

right songs for each occasion. Alongside his performing work, Paul has an illustrious career as a folk music educator. He and Marilyn Tucker established the educational charity Wren Music in 1983, which they run to this day. Wren Music has grown to become a highly respected organisation with a ceaseless programme of folk development activities in schools and communities throughout Devon and beyond, involving over 30,000 participants of all ages each year.

Sarah Owen is a composer, singer and workshop leader with experience in a wide range of music making, including traditional music, combining voice with electronics, and making music for dance and theatre. She has worked with Spitalfields Festival in London, collaborating on singing, song writing and multi-media projects with children and young people in the Festival's Education and Community Programme. Having completed a Masters Degree in studio composition at Goldsmiths College, Sarah has returned to her native Devon, and leads several vocal ensembles for Wren Music.

Claire Anstee has a distinctive singing style, which she developed at folk sessions in Norfolk in her twenties. Since then, she has gone on to perform in many genres, from folk to medieval music to dub reggae, as well as composing and writing songs. She has been running harmony singing workshops and leading choirs in Devon for the last ten years and is passionate about singing. She particularly enjoys helping those who lack confidence to feel more at ease with their voice. She currently leads two adult World Music choirs, as well as running workshops in schools.

Further information on the Singing Saturdays and Wren Music's community choirs and orchestras for adults and for young people, as well as Wren CDs and songbooks, can be found at www.wrenmusic.co.uk

Information is also available from Wren Music, 1 St James Street, Okehampton, Devon EX20 1DW, telephone 01827 53754.