

We Will Remember - Da Capo Chamber Choir

Da Capo applied for a grant to cover the costs of a community event on Sunday 11 Nov 2018 to mark the centenary of Armistice Day, tying in with Warwick Poppies in St Mary's Church, and replacing normal service of evensong.

The event was to be a performance of Duruflé's Requiem combining singers, from Da Capo, St Mary's choir and King's High School with an orchestra of professionals and children from KHS and Warwick School. There would be readings between the movements of the work and we hoped to engage a professional actor to bring them to life and attract a large audience.

It was very important to us that the event was free, in order that it was open to all who wished to commemorate the centenary with us, but there was to be a retiring collection in aid of the Warwick Poppies charities.

We hoped to keep costs down but needed a grant to pay for music hire, publicity, professional musicians and the actor's expenses.

We were delighted to be awarded a £750 Community Grant by WTC, a total matched by grants from King Henry VIII and St Mary's Hall Trusts.

After considerable efforts, we booked Michael Maloney (Truly Madly Deeply, Branagh & Zeffirelli Henry Vs) to read.

Free tickets were issued by St Mary's shop and Bridge House Theatre box office (who kindly waived any charges to us), and with a week to go all 400 tickets had gone.

On Sunday 11 Nov, the set up after morning Remembrance service was 'interesting' as hundreds of visitors flooded in to church to see the poppies whilst we were trying to do major furniture removals and set up stage for 60 singers and seating for the orchestra of 20. The afternoon rehearsal, which, as is usually the case with performances featuring several different groups, was first time the whole choir had sung together or orchestra played together, must have had largest rehearsal audience ever in St Mary's.

When Michael Maloney turned up (early) we immediately knew he was perfect. The readings we had chosen were a mixture of poetry and prose, ranging from dramatic to amusing to intensely moving, and he captured the mood of each text perfectly, surpassing our considerable expectations. He had the audience in palm of his hand, in rapt attention.

The choir and orchestra performed to peak of their considerable abilities and really brought out the emotion in the wonderful music. We are enormously grateful to the conductor, Alex Laing of King's High School, who not only devoted a great deal of time and energy to the event, but also donated his time for free.

The retiring collection raised just over £1400 for Warwick Poppies, but more important than the money was the fact that the many, many positive comments, from performers and audience alike, showed that we clearly achieved our aim of giving a moving, memorable, and appropriate performance to remember the sacrifices made for us a hundred years ago. We couldn't have achieved that without the grant.

We will remember.