



PRESS RELEASE

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Opera Holland Park brings Christmas cheer to care homes and hospital

Patients at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and Chelsea Pensioners were among those to enjoy live festive music last Thursday, as singers from Opera Holland Park (OHP) put on a Christmas Extravaganza. Showcasing OHP's *Inspire* programme, which seeks to make opera available to all, the singers visited a number of organisations regularly involved in the projects. They finished the day at the picturesque Cecil Court near Leicester Square, performing carols for OHP Friends, supporters and passers-by – including the Poet Laureate Dame Carol Ann Duffy - and raising money for future *Inspire* projects.

It's said that music aids labour, so what better than to have your own personal choir for the experience? The OHP singers performed carols for patients in a number of wards including maternity at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, bringing a little calm to the environment. They also performed in the hospital's beautiful atrium for the many staff, patients and families coming and going.

Since January 2015 OHP has been collaborating with the charity Playlist for Life to bring the joy of personalised playlists to people with dementia in the local community, reaching more than 500 people to date. OHP practitioners have developed playlists of music that has important personal associations, performed live, and trained centre staff in using the playlists. On Thursday the OHP singers visited two of the organisations involved, Chamberlain House Day Centre - St Charles Centre for Health and Wellbeing, and the Nicholson Ward at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, to perform carols for the residents.

All the singers who took part are regulars at Opera Holland Park: Joanna Marie Skillett (soprano), Laura Monaghan (soprano), Anna Jeffers (mezzo-soprano), Katie Slater (mezzo-soprano), Oliver Brignall (tenor), Michael Bradley (tenor), Henry Grant Kerswell (bass) and Maciek O'Shea (baritone), joined by the pianist Fran Hills.

In the last month, across Giving Tuesday and the Christmas Extravaganza, OHP has raised nearly £1000 for *Inspire*. Further donations to the programme would be very gratefully received. You can find out more about *Inspire* and donate here: <http://www.operahollandpark.com/support-inspire/>

For further information about Opera Holland Park and the 2017 season please visit www.operahollandpark.com.

Contacts for further information and pictures

Alexandra Watson, Harestones Communications

alexandra@harestones.org

+44 (0)7789 656433

Chloe Bridgen, Marketing & PR Manager, Opera Holland Park

chloe.bridgen@operahollandpark.com

+44 (0)7713 326006