



PRESS RELEASE

5 MAY 2017

Singing leads to The Savoy for Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus member

Shomi Adekunle wins place as Wakeham Chorister

A young singer from Thurrock has been accepted as a pupil at St Olaves Grammar School in Orpington and as a Wakeham Chorister at The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy as a result of his membership of the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus.

Thameside Primary school pupil **Shomi Adekunle**, aged 10, from Grays will begin singing with the Choir at The Queen's Chapel in September this year and will join St Olaves as a pupil in September 2018. Each year up to 4 places are available for boys to join St Olave's as Wakeham Choristers. Shomi had to pass a written exam in English and Maths before taking a voice test at the school with its Director of Music and the Master of the Music at the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy.

Speaking of Shomi's success, his mother **Abi Agidee-Adekunle** said 'I never knew he liked singing. One day last September, he asked if he could come with me to a Community Chorus rehearsal. Once there, he asked if he could be allowed to take a voice assessment and the rest is history. We found out about the choristership a week before the deadline and decided to apply. That didn't give us enough time to prepare him specifically for any music specialism so we went through the process with our ROH Thurrock Community Chorus knowledge and experience. For his voice test at the St Olaves' assessment, he chose *Avert*

These Omens, despite my attempts to persuade him to sing a simple Christmas carol. *Avert These Omens* has been his favourite piece so far. They were impressed with his singing and his folder.'

Jeremy Haneman is the **Chorus Director** for the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus and he is delighted for Shomi: 'The first time I heard Shomi sing I knew that he had a special voice; he displayed not just a wide vocal range and excellent intonation, he also really sang from the heart and used his whole body to sing, it was a joy to hear him. I'm so proud of his achievements and I know this is only the beginning!'

END

Press Office contact:

Jules Easlea
Julie.easlea@roh.org.uk
Tel: 07941 502577

Notes for Editors

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock has been offering innovative and creative projects and programmes in schools, colleges and across communities in the Thames Gateway since 2006.

Since then, more than 60,000 people have participated in activities ranging from schools' projects to teacher training, from work-based learning to fully-staged community operas. People in Thurrock have both been able to watch special performances at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden and gain a very special insight into the behind-the-scenes process.

The Learning and Participation team runs the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus which currently has over 140 members of all ages and regularly performs across Thurrock and at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. For further information, please go to:

www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/community-chorus. Details of future performances and taster session for the Community Chorus can be obtained by emailing getinvolved@roh.org.uk or calling 01708 891200.

Regular public tours of the state-of-the-art Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop where the sets and scenery for the Royal Opera House stage in Covent Garden are built, and the Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre, which opened in October 2015, are now available. Please go to www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours for further details.

In April 2012, the Royal Opera House agreed to become a [Bridge](#) organisation, working to connect children and young people to great art and culture across Essex, North Kent, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

The Learning and Participation team is based at the High House Production Park in Purfleet which is supported by a unique partnership including Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills, the Royal Opera House and Thurrock Council: www.hhpp.org.uk