



Career advice: Matt Lucas, left, with students and staff at the Archer Academy

TV star Matt inspires next generation of performers

Great British Bake Off star Matt Lucas visited the Archer Academy in East Finchley to inspire a group of year 10 and 11 students. The actor and comedian is patron of the secondary school's Raise the Roof campaign to build a performing arts studio.

Matt answered questions from the students about his own school days and how much being involved with drama meant to him. He spoke of how he got involved with the National Youth Theatre where he met his friend and *Little Britain* collaborator David Walliams.

He also talked about the determination needed to be a successful actor, noting that although there is a glamorous side to the job, it involves hard work and early morning starts on set, and that no matter who you are in the business, you still have to audition for roles.

Matt also advised students that it's either feast or famine for an actor and that they should have a secondary career to pursue alongside acting. He recounted many funny stories from the set of *Doctor Who* as well as his new film *Wonka*, in which he stars with Timothée Chalamet.

When asked why he has decided to support Archer Academy to build its new drama and dance studio, Matt's message was that it was about inspiring the next generation of actors and industry professionals. As he told the students: "Who knows, one of you might be a

future BBC Commissioning Editor and I might be coming to you to pitch one of my ideas for a show."

Fundraising advice sought

The school is over halfway to its £300,000 fundraising target and would like to start work this summer in order to have the new performance space ready for the next academic year. It would welcome information about trusts and foundations that might be able to help. Anyone with advice can contact Jessica Scott at jscott@thearcheracademy.org.uk

Welwyn winners for the fourth time

Archer Academy students once again took gold at this year's Welwyn Garden City Youth Drama Festival. The competition, now in its 78th year, took place between in March at the Barn Theatre there and this is the fourth time the school has won the coveted trophy. Drama teacher Mr Carter won Director's Award for most creative and imaginative director and the actors were also recognised for technical skill and exceptional team work.



Champions: The Academy's winning drama students

Choir chooses favourite for church return

North London Chorus is returning to St James Church in Muswell Hill this month with a performance of one of the choir's favourite works, the *German Requiem* by Johannes Brahms. Last performed by the choir in 2014 with orchestra, this time the work will be accompanied by two pianos in the composer's own highly effective arrangement which dates from a performance given in London in 1871.

The choir will be joined by soprano Verity Wingate for the first time and by familiar Muswell Hill face and baritone voice James Cleverton. The programme will also feature a group of songs by Richard Strauss. The two-piano accompaniment will be provided by the choir's regular rehearsal accompanist Catherine Borner and English National Opera conductor and pianist Chris Hopkins. Tickets for the concert on Saturday 9 April at 7.30pm can be booked at northlondonchorus.org/tickets.

Hunt is on for a vintage venue

By Hannah Duncan and Kamila Radziszewski

Meeting Chloe Holdsworth over a frothy cappuccino at Coffee Bank in the High Road was as thrilling as it was insightful. A true pioneer, Chloe's on a mission to launch a fabulous vintage market right here where she lives in glorious East Finchley... and she needs our help!

Chloe hopes her market will provide a sparkling new revenue stream for local businesses. Globally, the vintage scene is already exploding.

This year nearly a quarter of Gen-Zs will turn to second-hand sites for their latest looks. And by 2024, the market is expected to blossom a further 18%. Deep within the crinkling chiffon and beaded delights, vintage is full of promise.

But Chloe's not just in it for the profit. She's about the purpose. "I don't care if I don't make money, I just want to make a difference," she says. After the turmoil of lockdown, when one in five people experienced depression, many have been left isolated or anxious. "We need to get organic, deeper conversations going again," Chloe advocates. And a thriving new vintage market, she suspects, is just the ticket.

What's more, Chloe believes the market can help us embrace and appreciate different cultures

in our neighbourhood too. "Sharing vintage is sharing history," she says. Partly inspired by her time in Japan, she's keen to incorporate many different



Location, location: Chloe Holdsworth wants to bring a vintage market to East Finchley.

collections from around the world.

Do you know a venue?

Chloe is searching high and low for a suitable venue. Like a fairy godmother, she has all the props and passion needed to transform it into a magical vintageland. It could be a Brick Lane-style series of edgy lofts and basements, woven together by a love of vintage. Or it could be a giant school facility, office complex or church hall. Can you help? Email Chloe at: Chloes-Retro@outlook.com

New choir director takes up the baton

Alison Smart Fisher, professional singer, choral director and music teacher, has taken up the baton to conduct Alyth Choral Society, which is celebrating its 40th year. Alison studied at Cambridge University, the Royal Northern College of Music and Trinity College of Music. She has enjoyed a most successful career both as a solo performer and conducting choirs. Until recently, she sang with the BBC Singers.

The choir's main repertoire comprises choral works with Old Testament themes, as well as non-religious music. Their next concert, on Sunday 10 April, will include songs from the four home nations of the United Kingdom, in celebration of the Queen's 70th jubilee year.



Choir director: Alison Smart Fisher

Alyth Choral Society performs at the North Western Reform Synagogue in Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune. The choir welcomes new members of any denomination (or none) who enjoy choral singing. Further information and booking details can be found at <https://alychoralsociety.wordpress.com/>

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