

THE UK'S FIRST EVER MAINSTREAM GOSPEL FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES LINE UP AND A GOSPEL SINGING MASTERCLASS WITH AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR OF THE KINGDOM CHOIR WHO PERFORMED FOR PRINCE HARRY AND MEGHAN MARKLE'S WEDDING AND THE CORONATION CONCERT

9th September 2023 at Stanley Park, Liverpool

**** Anu Omideyi, Liverpool Gospel Music Festival Director, Music Director at Liverpool Lighthouse is available for interview****

- **The first mainstream gospel music festival to be held in the UK will take place on 9th September 2023 at Stanley Park in Liverpool**
- **The event will feature internationally known artists, including headliners The Kingdom Choir, CalledOut Music, Love & Joy Gospel Choir, Sarah Teibo, Sense of Sound, Lighthouse Choir, Volney Morgan & New Ye, DavidB, Wavertree Gospel Choir and NaffymaR**
- **A singing Masterclass with Karen Gibson award winning director of the Kingdom Choir who performed for Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's wedding in 2018 and at the Coronation Concert will take place on Friday 8th September 7pm-9pm at Liverpool Town Hall, High St, Liverpool, L2 3SW**
- **A Panel Discussion on Growing your audience as a gospel artist will take place on Friday 8th September 7pm-9pm at Liverpool Town Hall**
- **The festival will coincide with a drive to make September Gospel Music Heritage Month**
- **The Liverpool Gospel Music Festival, whilst acknowledging and valuing the roots of the genre in Christianity, black culture and spirituality, welcomes people of all faiths, ethnicities and identities**

The UK's first ever mainstream Gospel Music Festival will take place on 9th September 2023 in Stanley Park, Liverpool. The event will feature internationally known artists, including headliners The Kingdom Choir, CalledOut Music, Love & Joy Gospel Choir, Sarah Teibo, Sense of Sound, Lighthouse Choir, Volney Morgan & New Ye, DavidB, Wavertree Gospel Choir and NaffymaR.

The festival organised by Liverpool Lighthouse; a charity based in Anfield working to create thriving communities of people living more fulfilled lives, is the only National Portfolio Organisation covering gospel music funded by the Arts Council. The festival is sponsored by VistaPrint, Arts Council England, Liverpool City Council, PRS for Music, Love & Joy Ministries, the Gospel Music Industry Alliance and is supported by Liverpool Football Club.

A singing Masterclass with Karen Gibson award winning director of the Kingdom Choir who performed for Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's wedding in 2018 and at the Coronation Concert will take place on Friday 8th September 7pm-9pm at Town Hall, High St, Liverpool, L2 3SW, tickets are £20 and everyone is welcome, from complete beginners to professional singers and choir directors. Tickets can be booked on: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats->

[on/liverpool/town-hall/gospel-harmonies-gospel-singing-masterclass-with-karen-gibson/e-kqdgok](#)

Karen Gibson is an award-winning, internationally recognised choir conductor and workshop leader. She is a powerhouse of inspiration and energy with over 30 years' experience in conducting gospel workshops all over the UK and Europe.

A Panel Discussion on Growing your audience as a gospel artist will take place on Friday 8th September 7pm-9pm at Liverpool Town Hall. The panellists for the event are Anthonia Edwards, Winner of the Voice UK 2022, Muiyiwa Olarewaju, Station Director & Head of Music at Premier Gospel Radio, Musician and Broadcaster, Roger Moore, Co-Chair of Gospel Music Industry Alliance, Director of Affinity Xtra Radio and GL360 Media, Wizdom Layne, Head of MOBO Unsung and Deputy Director of Sound Connection and Ayo Edwards, African Theatre Performer, Actor, VO artist. Tickets are £10 per person with a 50% discount for students and can be booked <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/liverpool/liverpool-town-hall/liverpool-gospel-music-festival-panel-workshop-growing-your-audience/e-gqxjkg>

Anu Omideyi, Liverpool Gospel Music Festival Director and Music Director at Liverpool Lighthouse said: *"We're excited about all the festival activities and we truly believe that festival goers are in for a treat! We will celebrate the genre of gospel music, especially in the month of September which the gospel community is advocating for as Gospel Music Heritage Month. Gospel music impacts many of our lives in different ways as the soundtracks to our lives from the singers behind your favourite pop star to the inspiration for music in your favourite film. We really want to platform the music in its true form in a way that absolutely everybody – whatever your background, beliefs or non-beliefs, can enjoy."*

Sabine Leveiller, VistaPrint's Vice President of Marketing Europe, said: *"At VistaPrint we are delighted to support initiatives that are so inspiring and have such a positive impact on the local community and their small businesses."*

Alongside hub Resonate, the Music Education Hub for Liverpool, the festival organisers have completed a pilot of the Gospel Music into Schools Programme, introducing 200 students to the history of gospel music. The programme will roll out to 14 schools in the next academic year.

Anu Omideyi, Liverpool Gospel Music Festival Director and Music Director at Liverpool Lighthouse said: *"As part of the wider vision to spread the power and joy of gospel music alongside the positive impact of black culture, the festival will be accompanied by a programme taking gospel music into schools. In partnership with music education hub Resonate, the schools programme visited two secondary schools in June and will roll out to more schools in the next academic year, with the eventual aim of curriculum change that will see young people nationwide learning about the music genre."*

As evidenced by events such as The Ascension Choir's performance at the recent Coronation and The Kingdom Choir's performance at the 2018 royal wedding, gospel music has the power to move and connect with a mainstream, diverse audience. Gospel Music is an inclusive, joyful, uplifting, moving music genre that, in addition to relating to the Christian faith, celebrates the stories, histories, cultures and achievements of black communities. Much modern mainstream music, as well as many genres of music of black origin, owe their origins and inspirations to gospel music. However, these roots often go unacknowledged and unrecognised. This will be the first ever mainstream UK gospel festival.

Liverpool is a city with a fantastic music and cultural heritage, known as being the home of The Beatles, the European Capital of Culture, 2008 and recent host to The Eurovision Song Contest. It also has deep links to black history through its role as a slave trading port in the 19th century and the location of the International Museum of Slavery. Liverpool is also home

to Liverpool Lighthouse, which is currently working to develop the National Gospel Music Centre, a hub for supporting and developing gospel music and gospel music artists in the North West.

Rebecca Ross-Williams, Creative Director of Liverpool Lighthouse said: *“It is beyond exciting to be organising the first ever mainstream Gospel Music Festival. It is the right time for the festival with a drive to make September Gospel Music Heritage Month, with Liverpool as UNESCO City of Music, having such a strong music heritage and because of Liverpool’s contribution to black history. Liverpool Lighthouse is committed to supporting the protection and development of Gospel Music and we aim to provide a much need platform to Gospel Music artists, showcase some of the best internationally and bring joy to our audiences.”*

Current and ex Liverpool Football Club players, Luis Diaz and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain visited Liverpool Lighthouse to demonstrate their support for the festival along with VistaPrint which is a main festival sponsor. The players surprised the staff, beneficiaries of the charity and the combined choirs of Liverpool Lighthouse - Lighthouse Choir and Love & Joy Gospel Choir – as they were rehearsing a gospel song and all were shocked to see the football players enter the theatre in the building and join in with the choirs. Oxlade-Chamberlain was persuaded to play drums alongside the choir, much to the delight of everyone, whilst Diaz enjoyed the music.

Ex Liverpool Football Club player Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain said at the time: *“It was really, really good! Alisson plays it (Hallelujah) non-stop in the changing room, so Hallelujah is what I hear most days. It’s where a lot of soulful music comes from.”*

Anu Omideyi, Liverpool Gospel Music Festival Director and Music Director at Liverpool Lighthouse added: *“It has been wonderful to see how gospel music has featured on a national scale recently, for example, during the Coronation ceremonies and celebrations and as highlighted through Lighthouse Choirs during the Eurovision programming in Eurovision Welcomes the World. But gospel music and musicians have significantly supported mainstream popular artists for decades and now we’re excited to build a mainstream platform that celebrates and platforms the genre itself. We welcome gospel music lovers from all over the world as well as those who want to get to know more!”*

The Gospel Music Industry Alliance identifies UK Gospel Music as derived from the African, American and Caribbean musical experience relating to the Christian faith. It had a profound impact on the development of popular music throughout the 20th century. The Liverpool Gospel Music Festival, whilst acknowledging and valuing the roots of the genre in Christianity, black culture and spirituality, welcomes people of all faiths, ethnicities and identities.

-Ends-

**For more information, media interviews, press tickets or images please contact:
Siobhan Connor at Connor PR | (0)7966 177025: siobhan@connorpr.com**

Notes to editors:

Date: 9 September, 1-9pm

Tickets for main festival: £5 per ticket, £15 for group ticket of 5.

Location: Stanley Park, Walton Ln, Anfield, Liverpool L4 2SL

Ticket information: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/liverpool/stanley-park/liverpool-gospel-music-festival/e-dgpaae>
<https://www.liverpoolighthouse.com/lqmf>

Liverpool Gospel Music Festival socials

<https://www.facebook.com/LivGMF>

www.twitter.com/livgmf

www.instagram.com/livgmf

Liverpool Lighthouse Socials

www.liverpoolighthouse.com

www.instagram.com/liverpoolighthouse

www.facebook.com/liverpoolighthousecommunity

www.twitter.com/livlighthouse

ANU OMIDEYI

Anu is the Liverpool Gospel Music Festival Director and is the Music Director at Liverpool Lighthouse, an Arts and Community Centre that has experience bringing diverse, family-friendly, fun arts and cultural experiences to large audiences across North Liverpool. She is a multi-award-winning choir director as well as a producer, musician, singer-songwriter and public speaker. Under her leadership, her choirs have performed on UK national TV and at events across the world. This year she took up the role of Co-Chair of the Gospel Music Industry Alliance UK, having previously sat as a director from 2016-18 and 2020-22.

LIVERPOOL LIGHTHOUSE

Liverpool Lighthouse is a Black-led Arts and Community Centre in North Liverpool. They are a Creative Sanctuary for the most vulnerable and the city's artists. Their mission is to improve wellbeing through the arts, to bring arts and cultural experiences to North Liverpool communities and to support artists from backgrounds underrepresented in the arts.

Established in 1998, Liverpool Lighthouse has a long history of bringing diverse, vibrant community events to North Liverpool and providing platforms and opportunities for artists from diverse backgrounds underrepresented in the arts to perform. This includes City Sings Gospel – a series of events to celebrate the Liverpool City of Culture in 2008 and more recently, musical street theatre performances for the Jubilee that reached over 5000 local residents.

LIVERPOOL GOSPEL MUSIC FESTIVAL

Liverpool is a thriving, diverse city with an incredible cultural heritage and an amazing sense of community. With its historic connection with Black history through the slave trade, it is the ideal place to recognise and celebrate the cultural contributions of Black communities and artists. This makes it the perfect location for Liverpool Lighthouse to develop the National Gospel Music Centre and Liverpool Gospel Music Festival, which they are launching as the UK's first mainstream gospel music festival in September. With the performances at the Coronation, the Coronation Concert and the Royal Wedding, Gospel Music is having a moment in the UK. Anecdotally, around 60-70% of people supporting mainstream music touring in the UK – from musicians to technicians and producers, have a background in gospel music and there is a huge, diverse audience that values gospel music as part of their cultural history and identity, across the UK. The Liverpool Gospel Music Festival will be an outdoor festival on September 9th in North Liverpool, bringing gospel to the mainstream. It will bring together internationally acclaimed artists like The Kingdom Choir and CalledOut Music with local talent from Liverpool and the North West in a family-friendly, fun day out, attracting local communities and gospel music fans from across the country.