



Lorraine Lionheart - Botswana - CHOGM 2018

Lorraine Lionheart was first introduced to me in January 2018 when I was identifying and securing outstanding musicians with Commonwealth cultural backgrounds to be featured in our cultural programmes for CHOGM 2018.

Experts from Botswana highly recommended Lorraine to me, not only as an outstanding artist herself, but also as someone who had a strong loyalty and commitment to her own country, Botswana. Speaking to Lorraine, I realised that she had a strong desire to celebrate and raise awareness of her country's brilliant culture to the world. During CHOGM 2018, Lorraine proved herself to be a wonderful ambassador for Botswana.

As the Founder and Chair of Trustees of *The Commonwealth Resounds*, the most experienced accredited Commonwealth musical organisation, I decided that Lorraine Lionheart and Botswana should be featured in as many CHOGM musical events as possible.

Shortly after this, Lorraine managed to obtain sponsorship for herself and a group of Botswana drummers and dancers to come and take part in CHOGM 2018. My Trustees and musical partners in the UK were all extremely excited by this and very grateful indeed to Botswana for facilitating Lorraine and her band.

On Tuesday 17th April, my organisation *The Commonwealth Resounds* was invited by the UK Cabinet Office and the CHOGM Task Force to present a spectacular drumming performance to 2,000 delegates at the Meeting of the Forums during CHOGM 2018. We included drummers from almost every one of the 53 Commonwealth countries.

The piece began with an uplifting African song sung by Lorraine Lionheart herself as a solo - then all the others joined in and began to drum. I was

told afterwards that this performance was one of the highlights of the day. Many distinguished guests praised Lorraine and asked me about her.



These pictures show Lorraine at the Opening of the Forums, during the performance 'Rotary and the Commonwealth, Drumming for Peace'
Above - with Kevin Hathway (directing)
Below - singing the solo in the CHOGM Forums Performance



This performance was warmly praised by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and for the UN, who has just written to me personally, saying

“ We were honoured to have Commonwealth Resounds and the Rotary Club perform as part of this event. With drummers representing countries from across the Commonwealth, as well as a wide range of cultural and social backgrounds, ages and levels of experience, this performance perfectly captured the spirit of collaboration, which underpinned the whole day. I was enormously impressed by the energy and impact of the performance”

On Wednesday 18th April, Lorraine Lionheart was invited as a Guest Performer by Arif Zaman, CEO of the Commonwealth Businesswomen’s Network to perform at their Awards Ceremony in Mayfair, London. She gave a dazzling performance to a very distinguished audience of high-achieving women and other delegates.



Lorraine also introduced her music to the audience, and spoke to them eloquently about Botswana, the culture and the musical styles.

On Friday 20th April, Lorraine and her dancers from Botswana were invited to perform in a spectacular concert of Commonwealth Music and Dance at St James's Church, Piccadilly, directed by *The Commonwealth Resounds*.

This was our final musical event for CHOGM 2018 and included music from all over the world, some of the UK's finest young musicians and singers, young bagpipers from Scotland, representatives from London Rotary Club Chenda drummers, Ghanaian musician and all sorts of other fascinating performers – and of course, the performers from Botswana!



Lorraine and the Motswana dancers were actively involved throughout this event, and just before the interval, they presented their own programme to a packed audience, including representatives from High Commissions, Commonwealth delegates, members of London Rotary, schoolchildren and members of the public.

Lorraine and her dancers wore colourful, characteristic costumes and their whole performance was presented with impeccable professionalism. For many people in the audience, this was their first-ever experience of the music and dance of Botswana!

Everyone agreed that Lorraine Lionheart's performance was genuinely the highlight of the whole evening!



THANK YOU SO MUCH!



On behalf of all Trustees and Patrons from *The Commonwealth Resounds*, we should like to sincerely thank the Botswana Investment Trade Centre and the Botswana Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Culture Development for recognising the importance and significance of CHOGM 2018 and enabling these brilliant Motswana artists to present their music, dance and culture to so many Commonwealth delegates and international partners.

Major General R.J.M. Porter, MBE FCMI
Patron and Trustee, *The Commonwealth Resounds*

Alison Cox OBE, FRSA
Founder and Chair of Trustees, *The Commonwealth Resounds*

Nicholas Oliver LRAM, FRAM
Trustee, *The Commonwealth Resounds*

Sarah Oliver MA (Oxon)
Trustee, *The Commonwealth Resounds*

Dr. James Ross, Ph.D.
Musical Director and Consultant, *The Commonwealth Resounds*

Martin Wess BA (Chelsea) Dip. Arts (Slade)
Trustee, *The Commonwealth Resounds*

Martin Coakley LLB
Legal Advisor, *The Commonwealth Resounds*

COMMENTS ABOUT THE PERFORMERS REPRESENTING BOTSWANA

Arif Zaman, CEO, Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network
"It was really wonderful to have Lorraine Lionheart performing for the Commonwealth Businesswomen's Awards!"

Gayatri Nair – Semi-Finalist in UK ITV's 'The Voice'
"They are utterly amazing – I shall tell everyone about them!"

Sree Vallipuram – London Rotary
"Extraordinary performance – and what a voice that girl has!"

Kevin Hathway, Musical Director (Philharmonia)
"Lorraine Lionheart was the ideal soloist for the CHOGM Forums Opening Ceremony"



www.commonwealthresounds.com