

Entertainment / Music

## UK appoints Zimbabwean songbird Anna Mudeka to lead African choir online to help ease isolation

by Agencies

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Zimbabwean UK-based singer, songwriter, dancer, musician and artistic director, Anna Mudeka, has been commissioned by the Hostry Festival in Norwich to lead The African Choir of Norfolk. Anna is inviting people of African heritage from across the UK to lend their vocal talents to the choir, which will showcase the rich cultural heritage of Africa's nations through a diverse repertoire.

The African Choir of Norfolk's inaugural performance has been scheduled for this year's Hostry Festival in October 2020. Not to be defeated by lockdown in the UK, Arts Council England has funded Arts La'Olam to enable rehearsals to be transferred online, empowering members to unleash their full choral force in perfect harmonisation in time for the festival launch, and a follow up performance at the Norfolk Arts Awards.

Anna Mudeka said: "Music is a great way to bring people together, and by going online we're able to reach a larger group of people, which is essential during these uncertain and stressful times. When the choir was formed before lockdown women, both young and old, were developing a sisterhood, and being able to transfer the rehearsals online - thanks to Arts La'Olam and the Arts Council - is wonderful. These rehearsals are a lifeline to some women and the future development of the choir."

Stash Kirkbride, artistic director of the Hostry Festival, added: "Hostry Festival is really pleased that the Arts Council England is supporting this new online African Choir, enabling them to reach more people at this challenging time. We're grateful for the support and partnership with Arts La'Olam; the support network for the choir has expanded, enabling the choir to become even more vibrant and exciting!"

"I'm very pleased Anna Mudeka is heading up this project – her boundless energy will certainly come across on the Zoom choir rehearsals, which is great for the choir members. Being able to go online has been one of the positive aspects of lockdown, when we've had to think more creatively than usual. The new initiative in partnership with Hostry means we can support a worthwhile and exciting project."

The choir is part of [#betweenspaces](#), a new virtual programme of events, commissions and participatory online workshops from Arts La'Olam that address social isolation, bring families and people of all ages together in a spirit of creative celebration, and create legacy artworks that commemorate these curious and crucial times.

The Arts La'Olam mission to bring global arts and music to communities is repositioning to the digital environment.

A total of eight dedicated projects with artists working in new and innovative ways, brings the life-enhancing energy of the arts into homes. [#betweenspaces](#) seeks to close the gaps and inequalities we may be feeling acutely right now and honour our potential creativity in reduced surroundings.