

Family Festival at the South London, UK Peace Embassy - a day for all seasons

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It may be autumn now, but this Family Festival was a day for all seasons. The event was a mosaic of both sublime issues and a medley of songs, dance and games. Most importantly, some 70 people could share in the fellowship of a South London festival.



It was totally family-oriented, as revealed by Lance and Siew Lian Gardiner as husband and wife MCs. They spoke eloquently of the three guiding organisations at the heart of the festival – the all-embracing FFWPU, the Women's Federation for World Peace and the Universal Peace Federation – the root of each being the realisation of peace through family values. The MCs emphasised marriage and family as the cornerstone of our communities, when they introduced an award ceremony for a couple who attended with their two children.

The games episodes were devised by another couple, Alex and Miho Fortune, and the stage was set with the beautiful melody "Hallelujah", hauntingly rendered by Mia Gardiner, former winner at the Sutton Music Festival, and later with Stevie Wonder's classic "Isn't She Lovely", superbly performed by Beni Vitai, accompanied on his own guitar. The entertainment also included a quiz set by Lance Gardiner, testing the mentality and memories of the audience to the limit.

The family relationship was deeply explored by Nigel Barrett and his daughter Keishin Hoshiko, in offering the differing perspectives of their special roles within the family. Trust and honesty pervaded the interview, which was inspired by the weekly feature "Relative Values" in the Sunday Times magazine.

Meanwhile, explosive energy marked the powerful performance of the WAIT team – could you ignore the purity of it all? – some of whose members had been to Ghana to set up a similar operation. Exuberant, fun-loving, even frenzied – this was a drama to savour in an afternoon full of highlights.



The climax was the Peace Blessing given by the pastor and his wife, Franklin and Cecilie Fortune, in which a special grace was offered to all members of the audience. Franklin recalled Martin Luther King's epic "I had a dream" speech by saying "God's dream was to have beautiful families. When you find someone to love and share your life with, you truly begin to live."

The evening was topped off with the serving of vegetable curry, deliciously enjoyed by all who stayed after the proceedings concluded. As MC, Siew Lian Gardiner said donations had been collected to assist relief efforts in Indonesia, following the devastating earthquake and tsunami there. She felt, as she came from Malaysia in the same part of the world, that it was especially sad to hear about the plight of those people affected by the disaster. PS. I quietly observed Simon Rosselli in top hat and tails, weaving his way among the guests, performing his magic tricks. Thank you, Simon. It was all magic on the day.

Pastor Fortune writes: We had a beautiful Family Festival in our South London Peace Embassy on Saturday 13th October. The theme was on trusting relationships, and we could learn from the interview of a father and daughter. We had some excellent musical contributions by young adults, Mia Gardiner, Beni Vitai and the WAIT team. Furthermore, fun, quiz, recognition of an exemplary couple and the blessing rededication. The pastor gave an excellent speech on God's dream and True Mother's vision for blessing the 7.5 billion people of the world. A great quote from Mother Theresa: 'What can you do for world peace? Go home and love your family'