

# Our lives through the lens



**MODEL SUBJECTS:** Above, Shakira Williamson and left, Laura Stewart-Maia

A GROUP OF NOVICES QUICKLY WARMED TO THEIR ROLES BEHIND – AND IN FRONT OF – THE CAMERA. **CHRISTIAN McLAUGHLIN** REPORTS

**HERE'S** looking at you kid...

At the Chelsea Theatre 10 photographic portraits from the borough's brightest young talents are on display. Under the guidance of professional photographer Anthony Luvera, the pieces are the results of a 10-week workshop organised by the Chelsea Youth Centre this July.

Shakira Williamson, 15, of Strode Road, says: "It's all eyes on you. I was shy in front of the camera at first, I was embarrassed, but after a while you get used to it and want to do it loads. I don't think I'm a pretty girl, but by looking at the photos that's changed. I feel prettier and I liked acting like a model."

"My real dream is to be a social worker. I'd like to help people with their problems rather than prance around for the cameras all day. But I'm definitely going to carry on with photography."

The new-found love of working behind the camera has much to do with the determination of Luvera.

Shakira said: "Anthony is a good teacher. I don't usually get involved with courses but my brother Chicco kept talking about it, about how cool it was learning how to taking pictures properly and so I thought I'd try. I'm pretty slow with new things but Anthony showed me properly and made it easy."

Anthony explained: "I spent almost three months with the kids. It surprised me how comfortable, interested, engaged, open and generous with their stories they were."

"The group's members are between 14 and 19, and at that age I certainly didn't find it easy to relax in front of the camera."

David Williams, who runs Chelsea Youth Club, said: "It's been a definite success,

the kids loved running around taking photos of each other and on the opening day of the exhibition they invited friends and family to come down and you could see how chuffed they were."

● **Chelsea Youth.** Portraits by Tyrone Barton, Skye Cartridge, Ishaq Elasri, Jamain Hambrier, Laura Stewart-Maia, Chad Solomon, Marlon Williams, Peter Williams, Chicco Williamson and Shakira Williamson. Monday-Friday, 9.30am-5.30pm. Free. Until October 22. At Chelsea Theatre, World's End Place, Kings Road. Call: 0207 349 7815. See: [www.chelseatheatre.org.uk](http://www.chelseatheatre.org.uk) and [www.photoworks.org.uk](http://www.photoworks.org.uk)



# Singers with so much to shout about

HOODIES and hijabs running riot in the prestigious Royal Opera House?

Yes, and much more now that vocal troupe The Shout are ready to break all the boundaries with their latest show, *Fingerprint*.

Greg Wain, 44, from Chiswick has been with the group since 2000.

He said: "It's like nothing you've ever seen before. It's not an opera, not the theatre and not a musical."

"We are in full costume and words are spoken, but all you really need to understand is to listen the sounds of our voices."

Begun in 1998, The Shout was a vision of composers Orlando Gough and Richard Chew, who wanted to bring together the greatest vocal talents they had met into one a cappella group. Today, the 15 permanent singers have dazzled thousands and are about to begin another UK tour.

"It's fantastic," says Greg, "We are all professionals in our fields, but rather than blend our individual voices into one like in a traditional choir, we have retained our original style and mix them to form unique sounds."

Vocal training from classical, jazz, opera, Sri Lankan classical to West End musical will all intermingle in *Fingerprint*, an exploration of the



**UNIQUE:** It's not opera, it's not theatre, it's The Shout

daily struggle of pupils trying to remain individuals while being collective members of a class at school.

"It's a complex show with a lot of

humour as well as serious undertones. Only a group like ours could pull it off. We know what it's like to come from different cultures and create a

beautiful mix while staying true to our roots," says Greg, who began his singing career as a toddler in New Zealand.

He said: "I come from a very musical family. My mother Betty sang in choirs and my father Louis was a brilliant piano player, tap dancer, singer, and all-round performer."

"I began singing at about three or four to try to be a part of it when my four older brothers were all playing their instruments."

It was not long before Greg had caught up however, mastering the guitar by 18 and going on to complete postgraduate studies in jazz and opera at Trinity College, London.

The Greg Wain Quartet even had jazz legend Humphrey Lyttelton play *That's Life*, a track from his yet-to-be released album, *Mr Blue*, on his BBC2 show.

Joined by 15 other singers with very different yet equally rich histories, and 60 more that form the backing choir, *Fingerprint* will definitely be worth shouting about.

● **Fingerprint**, by The Shout. From Thursday September 27-Saturday 29. £18 (£9 concessions). 7.30pm. At the Royal Opera House, Bow Street, Covent Garden. Call: 020 7240 1200. See: [www.theshout.org](http://www.theshout.org) and [www.roh.org.uk](http://www.roh.org.uk) for tickets and more information.

**Christian McLaughlin**