

Media Release

Various Voices 09 awarded the Olympics 2012 Inspire Mark

Lesbian and gay choir festival wins honour for upholding Olympic ideals

Various Voices 09, the major lesbian and gay choral festival taking place at London's Southbank Centre over the May Day bank holiday weekend, has been awarded the prestigious Inspire Mark by the organisers of the London 2012 Olympics.

The Inspire Mark is awarded only to non-commercial organisations delivering accessible, participative and stimulating events and projects inspired by the London 2012 Games and that mirror Olympic ideals.

The award of The Inspire Mark to Various Voices recognises the event as a major part of London's cultural activity in the run-up to the 2012 Games and allows the festival's organisers to display the mark, part of the Olympics 2012 'brand family' on materials and publicity.

Various Voices 09 will be Europe's largest ever gay and lesbian musical event with more than 2000 singers from 60 choirs gathering at London's Southbank Centre from across Europe and North America for four days of concerts, workshops and public events, including World and European premieres, big name performers and a whole range of social activities. Full details can be found on www.variousvoices.com. The event is organised by volunteers in conjunction with Southbank Centre.

According to the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG), The Inspire Mark can be applied for across activities such as sport, culture, education, environment, volunteering and business skills but is only awarded to projects that are:

- Genuinely inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Well planned and managed.
- Fully funded from non-commercial sources and with no commercial association.
- Innovative and inspiring.
- Likely to achieve at least one of LOCOG's key outcomes such as participation, sustainability, learning and communication between communities.

Martin Brophy, Festival Director for Various Voices says the Inspire Mark really lives up to its name:

"Being given this prestigious honour really is inspiring for everyone involved in Various Voices. It's particularly important that an international gay and lesbian event such as ours is recognised as our choirs are all able to sing out about who they are and the lives they lead, whereas competitors from many Olympic countries cannot openly live their lives as lesbians and gay men without fear of prejudice and discrimination."

Bill Morris, Head of Culture, Ceremonies and Education at London 2012 praised the project:

"Various Voices 2009 is an excellent project and we're delighted it's part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. It's high quality and brings together the South Bank Centre, one of our great cultural venues, with choirs from both professional and non-professional origins in a festival celebrating international cultural understanding."

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