

Who will be the last choir standing at BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year Grand Final?

Seven choirs battle it out plus special appearance from **Only Men Aloud** on Sunday 7 December

BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year (www.choiroftheyear.co.uk), the UK's largest amateur singing competition and the inspiration behind **BBC1's Last Choir Standing**, is holding its prestigious Grand Final at the Royal Festival Hall, on London's South Bank on Sunday 7 December 2008. The final will feature the UK's top singing talent, with an extra special performance from winners of BBC1's Last Choir Standing – **Only Men Aloud**.

After two years of searching the length and breadth of Britain for the best choirs, listening to 200 audition tapes, seven regional selections days, a National selection stage and *finally* the hugely successful Category Finals weekend in Liverpool - the Grand Final is finally upon us.

The Category Finals weekend, part of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture celebrations, produced four category winners from Youth, Adult, Children's and Open categories, plus three wildcard winners who will all be competing for the title of BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year.

TV stars **Aled Jones** (Songs of Praise) and **Suzi Digby** (Judge, Last Choir Standing) lead the Sunday singing extravaganza, providing top quality entertainment for all the family including:

- **Pitch perfect performance:** 7 the finest amateur choirs in the country – including the four Category Winners plus three wildcard winners attempt to out perform each other as they sing to win the overall title of BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year.
- **Discovering their hidden singing talent:** Audience members can unleash their inner popstar during audience sing-alongs and workshops, or just brush up their singing skills in time for some carol singing!
- **Live judges' feedback:** Feel the tension and witness the drama as **Suzi Digby** and **Howard Goodall**, the Government's 'music tsar' and composer of famous theme

tunes including **Mr Bean**, **Blackadder** and **The Vicar of Dibley** provide live feedback on each choir's performance.

- **A building filled with song:** six children's choirs perform throughout the weekend in the foyer as part of **Sing Up's Taking the Stage** [details below]

The country is going choir crazy!

The whole country is going crazy for choirs and singing with BBC's hit talent shows **Last Choir Standing**, **I'd Do Anything**, and **Any Dream Will Do** captivating people across the country. Choral singing is the UK's most popular participatory leisure activity. There are over 25,000 choirs, with 500,000 singers across the country reaching an audience of 3m*. Regular group singing has proven health benefits, from improved breathing capacity and better posture to increased self-confidence and the feel good factor that comes from singing your heart out with a group of friends. * Figures supplied by TONSIL

Suzi Digby, BBC1 Last Choir Standing and Choir of the Year Judge said: *"I've been involved in Choir of the Year for the last five years, it is the foremost competition of its kind in the UK, the standard of singing is exceptional. I am looking forward to the Final immensely and hope as many people as possible will be able to join us in the audience and revel in some amazing performances, as well as the hugely popular workshops and sing-alongs."*

Roger Wright, Controller, BBC Radio 3, said: *"BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year brings together singers from communities across the UK and demonstrates how music is at the heart of people's lives. The Category Finals are no exception, the standard and range of singing over the weekend promises to be very high."*

Sing Up! Taking the Stage

The public spaces within the Royal Festival Hall will be alive with song, thanks to the competition teaming up with **Sing Up** on a project called Taking the Stage. Six children's choirs showcase both their performing and composing skills. Each choir has devised their own unique version of *foundscaapes and soundcapes*, composed by **Barry Russell**, which is a graphic score that uses pictures, colours and symbols to suggest sounds and rhythms.

TICKETS AND TIMINGS:

The Grand Final takes place at the Royal Festival Hall, on London's South Bank, on 7 December 2008. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased from the box office - 0871 663 2500 and are priced from £12 – £18.

The Grand Final will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on Monday 8 December from 7pm, and on BBC Four on Friday 12 December (see TV listings)

For full information about the competition, please visit www.choiroftheyear.co.uk

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Pictures

For high resolution images please contact Emma Macorison at Kallaway or visit the media centre at <http://www.choiroftheyear.co.uk/media-centre.asp>

Press passes

Press tickets to the Grand Final in London, can be secured from Kallaway on 020 7221 7883

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About BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year - www.choiroftheyear.co.uk

BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year encompasses a vast array of musical styles and types of singing from barbershop and gospel to pop, musical theatre and World music. More than 5,000 singers from communities all over the country took part in regional auditions, ensuring the competition reflects the rich diversity of music-making in the UK. Choirs receive live feedback from the expert judges as soon as they have performed.

Categories

- ❖ **Open Choirs** - a new category open to all choirs and singing groups from any musical background. There are no upper or lower age limits in this category and it's ideal for singing groups who want to do something different – maybe songs from the shows, songs from the charts or world music – and for choirs who feel they don't fit the other categories.
- ❖ **Children's Choirs** - Majority of singers 14 and under.
- ❖ **Youth Choirs** - Majority of singers 18 and under.
- ❖ **Adult Choirs** – Same or mixed voices.

Sing Up and Choir of the Year – *Taking the Stage*

Taking the Stage encourages young singers to be creative with their voices and perform with confidence. Sing Up is the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, produced by Youth Music with AMV-BBDO, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, supported by Government. It aims to raise the status of singing and increase opportunities for primary school children throughout the country to enjoy singing as part of their everyday lives.

foundscapes and soundscapes will be available to download from the online national Sing Up Song Bank, www.singup.org, from February 2009.

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