

Who Will Be The Last Choir Standing In Liverpool?

UK's Largest Amateur Singing Competition Comes to Liverpool

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 Category Finals, featuring the UK's top singing talent at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on 8 and 9 November, as part of **Liverpool European Capital of Culture '08**. Tickets are now on sale at the Philharmonic Hall's box office: 0151 709 378

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

- **Pitch perfect performance:** 24 of the finest amateur choirs in the country – in styles from gospel and hip hop to barbershop and traditional – attempt to out perform each other as they sing to win a place at the Grand Final at London's Royal Festival Hall on Sunday 7 December. Choirs in the Category Finals have beaten over 180 others to reach this point. Only six will go through to the Grand Final.
- **Discovering their hidden singing talent:** Audience members can unleash their inner popstar during audience sing-alongs and workshops.
- **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. *Which choirs will make it through to the Grand Final?*
- **A building filled with song:** five children's choirs perform throughout the weekend in the foyer as part of **Sing Up's Taking the Stage** [details below]

Aled Jones presenter and Choir of the Year host said: *"Liverpool has amazing singing heritage from the **Beatles** and the **Zutons** through to **Liverpool** and **Everton** football fans singing their supporters' songs, and we're delighted to be coming to the City for the Category Finals. We look forward to welcoming as many people as possible over the*

weekend, from singing fans to those just discovering the variety of modern group singing – there will be something for everyone.”

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

Singing to win: The very best choirs reach the Category Finals

Over 8,000 singers from 200 singing groups entered the competition in auditions across the country. This number has been whittled down to the final 24 Choirs, with six choirs in each category – *Youth, Adults, Children and Open*. The final 24 now compete to win their Category and, along with two wildcards, go through to the Grand Finals on 8 December.

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 weekend 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 Philharmonic Hall will be alive with song, thanks to the competition teaming up with **Sing Up** on a project called Taking the Stage. Five children’s choirs showcase both their performing and composing skills. Each choir has devised their

own unique version of *foundscapes and soundscapes*, composed by **Barry Russell**, which is a graphic score that uses pictures, colours and symbols to suggest sounds and rhythms.

TICKETS AND TIMINGS:

BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year 2008 Category Finals at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, Hope Street, Liverpool, L1 9BP:

- Saturday 8 November: Youth Final 2.30 – 5.30pm, Adult Final 7 – 10 pm.
- Sunday 9 November: Children's Final 2.30 – 5.30pm. Open Final – 7 – 10pm
- Tickets £12. Each show is three hours with intervals. Box Office: 0151 709 378

Live from Liverpool

Highlights of the Liverpool Category Finals are broadcast on BBC Radio 3's *The Choir* on Sunday 16 November and Sunday 23 November at 6.30pm, presented by Aled Jones. The Grand Finals are broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 8 December and BBC Four - see TV Listings. For full information about the competition, please visit www.choiroftheyear.co.uk

END

Pictures

For high resolution images please contact Emma Macorison at Kallaway [details below]

Press passes

Press tickets for both the Category Finals and the Grand Final in London, can be secured from Kallaway on 020 7221 7883

Kallaway

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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. The timetable for Taking the Stage is as follows:

Saturday 8 November

Foxhill Primary School Choir - conducted by Sally Hey

St Mary's Junior Choir - conducted by Wendy Thompson

Sunday 9 November

Arts in Education Choir - conducted by Sophie Pascall & Gillian Ramshaw

Cotswold Children's Senior Choir - conducted by Jacki Pattenden

St Mary's Catholic Primary School - conducted by Ann Kowalska

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

END TO ALL