Big Big Sing Celebrates Big Big Success

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Big Big Sing enjoyed a **hugely successful** first year in 2014, inspiring **hundreds of thousands** of people the length and breadth of the UK to unite in celebration of singing.

Inspired by the proposal that singing is the most universal, inclusive and accessible way to make music, **Big Big Sing** has attracted participants across the country since its launch in January 2014, and organisers **Glasgow UNESCO City of Music** have today revealed plans to develop the project further after a successful first year demonstrated phenomenal appetite for singing in communities across the UK.

In its first year alone, Big Big Sing attracted **62,840 people** to sing at **173 live events** across the country, with Big Big Sing Days held from Shetland to Devon. Big Big Sing's online singing portal – which featured a wealth of materials and information for those looking to take up singing - attracted **111,697 visits**, andthere were **30,442 downloads** of free songs from **The Big Big Songbook**. Big Big Sing's YouTube and Vimeo channels – which hosted resources including vocal workouts – received **46,209 views.**

Big Big Sing is funded by Glasgow 2014, Creative Scotland, Glasgow UNESCO City of Music and Spirit of 2012 (set up by an endowment from the Big Lottery Fund). This is part of Spirit's £4.5m commitment to sustaining and extending the Commonwealth Games legacy in Scotland and across the UK.

SOME BIG BIG HIGHLIGHTS
Big Big Sing was hailed as a major highlight of the **Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme**, creating some of the most memorable moments of the cultural celebrations surrounding the **Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games**andputting community singing at the heart of a global event. As well as hosting**Song Stages** across Glasgow during Games Time, Big Big Sing supported Hands Up for Trad to deliver **The Big Song Relay,** which saw the song *Here's to All Our Common Wealth*passed from choir to choir along the route of the Queen's Baton Relay, resulting in 72 unique performances.

The hugely successful **BIG Big Big Sing Day** brought **40,000 singers** together at Glasgow Green on 27th July as part of Festival 2014. Tens of thousands of singers descended upon Glasgow Green to enjoy a day-long celebration of singing, including beatboxing, Gaelic singing, Indian song, family singing sessions and mass singalongs of everything from Pharrell Williams' *Happy* to songs from the Big Big Songbook.

Big Big Sing alsobrought Mzansi Youth Choir – made up of teenagers and young adults from some of South Africa's toughest communities – to the UK during Games Time to give two gala concerts and work with school children in London and Glasgow as part of the International Mandela Day celebrations.

Other highlights in the first year of Big Big Sing have included flashmob choirs, a surprise wedding proposal, a School's Songwriting Competition, singing workshops for community groups, choir performances during Refugee Week Scotland, and the creation of signed song resources for deaf singers, including signing workshops.

BIG BIG SING GETS EVEN BIGGER
Following the success of its first year, organisers Glasgow UNESCO City of Music are developing plans to expand Big Big Sing, including an **extensive community singing pilot and research project**. The project, which could make Glasgow a world leader, aims to take the growing body of evidence attesting to the well-being benefits of singing and examinethe benefits of a citywide community singing network in Glasgow, considering how this could improve life individuals and for society generally.

This Spring will see the return of the **Big Big Sing Days**, with events taking place in London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen, and the launch of "Choir Doctor" training sessions across the UK, delivered by Big Big Sing for community choirs. There have been **five new additions** to the Big Big Songbook, inspired by the theme of women singers and songwriters.

Director of Big Big Sing, Svend Brown said:
"In a very short time Big Big Sing has made a very big difference to thousands of people through the power of song. I am immensely gratified and proud of that – I want to congratulate everyone who contributed to its success and to thank everyone who through their funding, personal effort, support or sheer passion for singing helped to make it so special. I hope it makes you want to sing!"

Big Big Sing participant, Marylou Murray, said: *"Within 30 minutes a hall full of strangers came together*

to sing in harmony raising the roof. Together we produced something of beauty...and we knew it. Everyone beaming big smiles, surprised at our achievement. We sang, clapped, laughed and danced together. We were in the flow carried on waves of joy.

The Big Big Sing gave me the confidence to finally do something I have always wanted to do, join a choir. Through their website I found Lisburn Community Choir where I got a warm and enthusiastic welcome. The secret of happiness must include singing!"

Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop said, *"When I joined the crowds on Glasgow Green for the Big Big Sing during the Commonwealth Games I saw for myself how successful the programme could be. The joy and inclusivity of community singing was evident to everyone there. I congratulate Glasgow UNESCO City of Music on a project that continues to deliver and build the legacy of the Commonwealth Games and its cultural programme. The publication of this report shows vividly the scale of its impact but also the capacity of community singing to change lives."*

Chief Executive of Creative Scotland, Janet Archer, said: *"Big Big Sing opened up the world of singing to people of all abilities across Scotland and beyond. For many of those taking part it was a welcoming introduction to the enjoyment, the sense of achievement and being part of a wider community that singing brings. In homes, village halls, town squares and stages of all sizes, a series of wonderful performances took place thanks to this brilliant project. Creative Scotland was delighted to support Big Big Sing as part of the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme through National Lottery funding, and which continues to go from strength to strength."*

Head of the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme, Jill Miller, said: *"Big Big Sing was one of the most inspiring of all the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme projects culminating in an absolutely unforgettable celebration at Glasgow Green during the Commonwealth Games. It's an idea which took hold across the whole country, allowing people wherever they were to discover the joys and health benefits of singing, to meet new people and in many cases make a positive difference to their lives. It is a project which is already creating a genuine, UK-wide legacy from the Commonwealth and Olympic Games."*

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS
Big Big Sing is an initiative of Glasgow UNESCO City of Music, and was one of the highlights of the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme. The project is funded by Glasgow 2014, Creative Scotland, Glasgow UNESCO City of Music and Spirit of 2012 (set up by an endowment from the Big Lottery Fund).

BIG BIG SING – HOW TO GET INVOLVED
The Big Big Sing's online singing portal – www.bigbigsing.org – provides a wealth of materials and information for those looking to take up singing. The site includes a searchable database of choirs, the Big Big Songbook with lots of learning and teaching resources, a guide on how to set up your own choir, a playlist of performances by choirs and singers from around the Commonwealth and details on all Big Big Sing events.

For further details on all Big Big Sing activity visit www.bigbigsing.org and keep up-to-date with Big Big Sing on Facebook and Twitter.

1. Up-coming Big Big Sing Events:
BIG BIG SING DAY – LONDON
Date: 5th April 2015
Time: 1pm - 6pm
Location: Southbank Centre, LONDON
Tickets: Free! No ticket required. Come along to The Clore Ballroom at Royal Festival Hall anytime between 1pm and 6pm.

BIG BIG SING DAY – GLASGOW
Date: 16th May 2015
Time: 12pm - 5pm
Location: GLASGOW Royal Concert Hall
Tickets £5 / Concessions (U16s, Students, Senior Citizens, Unwaged): Free.
Book online at www.glasgowconcerthalls.com/events/big-big-sing-day or call 0141 353 8000.

BIG BIG SING DAY – EDINBURGH
Date: 17th May 2015
Time: 12pm - 5pm
Location: Usher Hall, EDINBURGH

Ticket £5 / Concessions (U16s, Students, Senior Citizens, Unwaged): Free
Book online at www.usherhall.co.uk/en-GB/shows/big big sing day/infoor call 0131 228 1155.

BIG BIG SING DAY – ABERDEEN
Date: 30th May 2015
Time: 12pm - 5pm
Location: Music Hall, ABERDEEN
Ticket £5 / Concessions (U16s, Students, Senior Citizens, Unwaged): Free.
Book online at www.aberdeenperformingarts.com/events/big-big-sing-day-316019or call 01224 641122.

BIG BIG SING DAY – DUNDEE
Date: 31st May 2015
Time: 12pm - 5pm
Location: Caird Hall, DUNDEE
Ticket £5 / Concessions (U16s, Students, Senior Citizens, Unwaged): Free
Book online at www.dundeebox.co.uk or call 01382 434940.

2. **Choir Doctor:**
The Choir Doctor Health Check is a national education initiative, specially designed by Big Big Sing to help choir leaders keep choirs healthy and happy. Over the next 6 months Big Big Sing will be working with some of the most exceptional choir leaders in the country to publish five instructional films base on the Choir Doctors programme's main principles: Keeping your voice in tip top condition, Putting the body and the voice back together, How to get the music out of the music, Singing as a team and Supporting wellbeing with singing.

To take part in a session, choirs can register at www.bigbigsing/choirdoctor

3. Glasgow UNESCO City of Music is funded by Creative Scotland and Glasgow City Council. The aims of Glasgow City of Music are:

ICONIC - Maintain the title on behalf of Glasgow as a highly visible symbol of the excellence, excitement and pride the city takes in its music, past and present.

KNOWLEDGABLE - Acquire detailed knowledge of Glasgow's Music and thereby become the primary trusted source of information and advice to all interested parties.

ACCESSIBLE - Be available to all and seize the opportunity to increase participation and access to music in Glasgow.

SUPPORTIVE – Assist those active in Glasgow's Music through partnership, championing, knowledge and advice.

REPRESENTATIVE – Be deeply embedded in the community of Glasgow's Music and, through dialogue, become ever more representative of the music community.

PROMOTIONAL – Seize every chance to promote Glasgow Music past and present by prioritising events, actions and projects with the power to inspire and celebrate Glasgow's Music.

UNIQUE – Work with organisations active in Glasgow's Music to avoid duplication of effort

The Creative Cities Network connects cities who want to share experiences, ideas and best practices aiming at cultural, social and economic development. For more information please visit: www.unesco.org.

For further information on Glasgow UNESCO City of Music and its initiatives, please visit: www.glasgowcityofmusic.com, twitter.com/AllGlasgowMusic, or Facebook.com/GlasgowCityofMusic.

4. About Spirit of 2012
Spirit of 2012 is an independent trust established with a £47m endowment from the Big Lottery Fund.

Our vision is inspired by the London 2012 events that went beyond sport and reached out to communities across the UK. Spirit invests in happiness; empowering people to get out, be involved and feel better.

We're working to ensure that the spirit and opportunities from London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics is felt everywhere. By connecting events to communities across the country, we ensure our investment is of local, regional and national benefit. We tackle isolation and disadvantage by supporting those providing opportunities in sport, physical activity, culture and the arts, volunteering and social action.

We believe that by enabling people to participate in a wide variety of activities, we can improve wellbeing, challenge perceptions of disability and lead to greater social cohesion. We invest nationally and locally to build on the energy, creativity and positive sport we saw during the London 2012 Games, where people felt better because they were helping others, celebrating local and national success and joining together in a public cause.

For more info on Spirit, go to www.spiritof2012trust.org.uk and for media enquiries, please contact Head of Comms, Penny East, 020 3701 7440.

5. Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit www.creativescotland.com. Follow us @creativescots and www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland

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