

Briefing Notes on local, regional and national performance opportunities for Marching Youth Bands during the 2012 Olympics

Issued by The British Federation of Youth Marching Band Organisations

www.marchingbands.org.uk

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Olympic and Paralympic Games
www.london2012.com



Information from Page 3 onwards:

Opening & Closing Ceremonies (27th July , 12th and 29th August, 9th September)

(Note: December 2011- **Kim Gavin, Artistic Director of the Olympic and Paralympic Closing Ceremonies:** " there's still an opportunity into the New Year that we're going to open up auditions again, so, you know, if anybody's out there that's really keen please register and try and get to come along to the auditions" See page 4 for e mail address)

Welcome Ceremonies for visiting athletes
Olympic Park (and other official site) Spectator Experience performances
London's Outdoor Arts Festival
London's 'Live Site' entertainment
Our activity Showcase
Torch Relay
UK-wide Cultural Olympiad Festival June 21st – September 9th
Local celebrations July 27th
PLUS – HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Introduction

The Federation has been trying its best for more than two years to get marching youth bands involved in the London Olympics. This has been targeted at the London 2012 organisers, their regional personnel, and of course we have been encouraging bands to prepare for what should be a busy year.

Nationally and regionally, this has ranged from attending small group meetings with Ceremonies Chairman Martin Green and Cultural Olympiad supremo Bill Morris, to developing contacts and being provided with advice from the large number of other

key London 2012 managers. We have taken the view that the Federation is also raising the activity's profile with these people, who are likely to hold senior posts in the arts, politics, education and grant funding bodies after 2012. Legacy at work !

More important however has been the active involvement of bands. Firstly, in the Federation's 2010 and 2011 Olympic Open Weekend '2012 Together' and Marching for Gold' initiatives. Secondly, the parade of the 209 strong Band GB in 2011's New Years Day Parade which has been developed into an elite band for January 1st 2012. Thirdly, the nine bands leading regional workshop clusters as part of our 'Music Gold in 2012' initiative. Fourthly, the pre 2012 preparation that bands are planning in the next few months. Each of these has shown the activity's enthusiasm, commitment and talent. '2012 Together' and 'Music Gold in 2012' each achieved the coveted 'Inspire Mark' the badge of London 2012's Inspire programme.

We have been distributing information as it develops direct to bandmasters/directors and to our member organisations, requesting that it be forwarded to as many people as possible.

Since our whole activity national conference in 2008 and our subsequent '**Marching 2012**' **development strategy**, we have continually encouraged bands to capitalise on the Olympics to create a post-2012 legacy of '*more kids making great music with marching youth bands*'. Bands can only do this if they are proactive in their local areas, create Olympic related performance opportunities, and capitalise on this relationship in recruitment material.

Critical to any involvement is of course, with respect, the need for bands to polish their performances, adopt appropriate repertoires, consider adapting to the needs of different venues (eg smaller ensembles for stages/ small parks) and saving some hard earned cash to help pay for travel (however annoying it may be, most event organisers will have limited budgets). We have always argued that London 2012 is a 'once in a generation' opportunity for the members of our whole activity, and that we should all treat 2012 as special, making big efforts to respond to as many Olympic related opportunities as possible

We have launched ' **Music Gold in 2012**', a Youth Music funded programme in nine regional clusters where funding is available to stage workshops led by professional. The basic aim is to support bands in raising the musical abilities of their most talented members who can then pass on their skills to other members of their bands. (see our web site)

Perhaps surprisingly, some key teams who will officially develop performances related to London 2012 have only been appointed relatively recently, which makes advance planning difficult for bands, member organisations and the Federation

There are over **900 ceremonies**, including of course the four opening and closing ceremonies, but also the 700 victory medal presentations, 120 ceremonies welcoming athletes from different countries, and the 72 torch relay ceremonies as it is hosted overnight across the country.

Has the Federation got your band's contact details?

PLEASE make sure the Federation has your correct contact details accurately listed on its web site, which will be used by Olympic and other event organisers who want to engage marching youth bands. In addition, please make sure your web sites etc., contain accurate representations of what your band can do in 2012, with as much visually representative material as possible – event organisers will want to make quick contact and make quick decisions.

The Federation will NOT act as an agent

With the support of bands, we have published a colour brochure containing details of over 40 bands. This has been sent to major London 2012 event managers and producers. We will also direct event organisers to the band links page on our web site. All performance arrangements will be made between bands and event management teams, not by the Federation

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Opening & Closing Ceremonies (27th July , 12th and 29th August, 9th September)

The casting application process was launched on August 15th , and after representation from the Federation, the deadline was extended to September 9th - the ceremonies team also offered a special 'Group' application process for marching youth bands as they need hundreds of drummers !

Auditions will be held in November/December, and evening/ weekend rehearsals commence in March. The demands on this entirely volunteer cast are considerable, and these were included in the Federation information sent to bandmasters/directors in August. (Ceremonies contact e mail: casting@london2012ceremonies.com)

Welcome Ceremonies for visiting athletes

Through our worldwide contacts with Marching Bands Europe and The World Association, we have requested that national band associations contact their respective Olympic Associations asking that they request from London 2012 for a marching band to be part of their welcome to the UK. The Federation has also made this request to the Head of Ceremonies.

Olympic Park (and other official sites) Spectator Experience performances

As of December, the team responsible for this have still not announced what they envisage. They have confirmed that whatever the rumours circulating, no performance groups had yet been booked to appear or contracts signed with providers. It is likely that this information will be clearer in the New Year.

London's Outdoor Arts Festival

The Mayor of London's office has contracted the events company Allium Opus to manage and deliver this seven week programme. Five producers were appointed in September to create and deliver the festival in north, south, east, west and central London. The Federation has made contact with the events company, and the five producers. It is unlikely that they will be able to confirm their requirements until at least January. They have already indicated that they particularly want a range of performance groups that include those which are innovative, creative, *playful* and engaging for audiences.

London's Live Sites

Woolwich, Waltham Forest, Potters Field, Victoria Park, Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square are the designated 'live sites' and the co-ordinators were announced in August. The Federation has made

contact, and has been advised that it will be the New Year before outline plans will be published.

Our own activity Showcase

Although in early 2011 the Federation's national board set a provisional date of June 23rd to stage a whole activity 'showcase' in London, the restricted release of venues until late 2011 and the possible greater benefit in trying to secure performances for bands across a range of high profile events, has encouraged the national board to withdraw this proposal. Instead we will pursue opportunities for bands to perform in high profile Olympic events which will significantly enhance our activity's audience profile. We of course appreciate that such late decisions make it difficult for bands and for member organisation scheduling their annual events.

Torch Relay

Starts on May 19th and on its country-wide route is never more than hour from anyone ! During the evenings of the 72 overnight stop-overs, Local Authorities have agreed to stage evening festivals.

As stated in previous editions of this briefing sheet and in other communications with band leaders, we believe this is where bands may be able to get earliest confirmation of involvement. The general route has been published and the details of the local routes are currently being finalised by local authorities and the police. It is suggested that bands find out their local routes as soon as they are announced – a bit of pestering to County and City authorities would be a good idea – and to then identify a suitable place on the route that your band can perform. Get permission from the site owners, and then use this in recruitment material “ *join us and be part of the London 2012 Olympics*” .We believe that schools will be agreeable to releasing pupils for this special occasion providing it does not clash with examinations.

Additionally, when pestering County and City Officers, clarify who is in charge of the stop-over evening festivals and get yourselves a gig !

See www.london2012.com for the torch relay route

(Did you nominate anyone to carry the torch by the June 2011 deadline? Let the Federation know if they are selected)

Note: One band has already been signed up for route fanfares and for a full performance at their local evening festival. We can't currently share this information because it is under embargo by their local authority.

UK-wide Cultural Olympiad Festival June 21st – September 9th

Billed as the biggest national arts festival ever staged, events will be planned in every part of the country. This will be one of the best opportunities for bands to make the kind of impact that will encourage more young people to join your band, and to be seen by key decision makers – who could be useful to you after the Olympics ! Make sure you contact your regional Cultural Olympic Programmer to advise them of your availability and requesting details of events – they are the key people in this UK-wide Festival. (see www.london2012.com)

Of course, either on your own, with other local groups and/or with other local marching bands, you could stage your own event and link it to this Cultural Olympic Festival. It's possible that existing annual events, such as competitions, could be linked.

Local celebrations July 27th

London 2012 are hoping that in streets and parks across the country, events will be organised on the first day of the Olympics. Again, contact local authorities / local event organisers / keep an eye on local media announcements / arrange your own ! It is anticipated that many schools, especially primary schools, will stage celebratory events – make it your business to be there !

Funding

We achieved a Youth Music grant to create the nine training clusters (see above), but have been unsuccessful three times in the past 18 months for an Olympic related Arts Council grant. We have submitted one more application, which we hope will include funding to support some bands travelling to take part in London and regionally based events. The sums won't be great, but if we are successful they will help.

As advised in previous editions, all event organisers will have limited budgets, so if bands want their members to be part of 'the greatest show on earth' then it would be sensible to create an 'Olympic War Chest' of funds to help with travel costs.

Queens's Diamond Jubilee. 2nd – 5th June

As previously advised, we have expressed the enthusiasm of the activity to support HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, including the Thames River Pageant. At time of writing we have not had a response. Again, there will of course be local events in which bands could take part, and as they are likely to be family events, these will provide great recruitment potential. Thames Pageant and country-wide Big Lunch on June 3rd. Beacon lighting 4th June (fanfares ??)

Too much for you to do ?

How about creating an 'Olympic Squad' of members/supporters whose job will be to identify all of the potential events as they unfold, determine the costs and then meet regularly to decide which you can afford to take part in / which you cannot afford to miss ??

The Olympic Media machinery will continue to build until we are gasping for a break! Your members will be enthused by the media frenzy and will want to be at the heart of what for all of us, is almost certainly the biggest international event staged in the UK for fifty or more years – and there won't be another one like it for generations to come.

Regional Cultural Programmers

The Regional Olympic Programmers are the people who should know everything – or if not, they know someone who does. The Federation has been very well supported by the SE's RP, Caterina Loriggio as she is the key person for the region where the Federation is based. It really is important to make contact and then keep in touch with these important ambassadors

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WHAT NEXT ? Formed in 2000, the totally voluntary **Federation** serves the whole activity, and a National Board, made up from reps of all youth organisations with marching bands, sets its priorities. The Olympics has been its agreed recent focus but what of post 2012 ? Send your vies to marchbands@aol.com