

The background of the entire image is a dense, repeating pattern of stylized faces. Each face is depicted with its mouth wide open in a 'V' shape, representing a singing or shouting expression. The pattern is rendered in a lighter shade of blue against a darker blue background.

# **BIG** **SING** **BIG** **THE REPORT**



# intro

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras in tellus turpis. Phasellus hendrerit, eros eget mollis condimentum, lacus metus sollicitudin ligula, a bibendum enim justo ut metus. Quisque sed auctor arcu. Curabitur porta leo vitae suscipit cursus. Suspendisse tempus elit et fermentum blandit. Aenean eget tellus posuere, ultrices mauris eget, finibus ligula. Cras tristique aliquam odio, vel hendrerit turpis interdum ac. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos himenaeos. Phasellus nec nisi mi. Donec sed faucibus diam, malesuada varius nisi. Morbi et vulputate ligula, quis sollicitudin eros. Integer sit amet laoreet massa, vel finibus neque. Morbi velit ante, semper non tristique in, facilisis at orci.



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"I came away feeling lighter of heart and with a smile on my face... I think it is the first time I have really laughed for what seems like forever."

*Big Big Singer*

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Two years in the planning, and launched in January 2014, Big Big Sing (BBS) is a UK-wide initiative inspired by the simple proposal that not only is singing the most universal, inclusive and accessible way to make music – anyone who does it also enjoys better health, social life, self esteem and confidence – qualities that contribute to greater happiness.

Glasgow UNESCO City of Music initially planned a city-wide version of BBS in 2011-12. The opportunity of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and Festival 2014 expanded its ambition to become Scotland-wide. Then, in November 2013, funding from the Spirit of 2012 Trust enhanced it further and BBS became a UK-wide programme.

This report offers an insight into the delivery, impact and value of the project in its first year, a year in which it reached hundreds of thousands of people through live events and online resources.

Academic research worldwide shows singing to be of benefit in treating debilitating conditions such as COPD, Dementia and Aphasia and chronic conditions such as Parkinsons Disease. It may even prove a valuable enhancement of the medical treatment of strokes and cancer. (For a summary of the current state of research please see page 43).

BBS takes a preventative approach, promoting singing as a means to improve the life, health and wellbeing of any individual of any age, anywhere. As the many testimonial quotes that populate these pages show, its impact has been powerful and life-affirming.

Research and assessment of singing has been a key element of the project, so this report also summarises important lessons and makes recommendations for future development and support of singing.



**62.843**  
people sang at  
our live events





## THE AIMS OF BIG BIG SING

### PROMOTE

Publicise and communicate the benefits of singing

### INSPIRE

Make it as attractive as possible for people to start to sing – and then to sing more

### ENCOURAGE

Identify and remove obstacles to singing

### LEARN

Talk with the community singing sector to understand its needs, structure, extent – and how to grow and sustain it in the long term



"Big Big Singing makes you happy"

96% of participants agree





“Fab uplifting afternoon in Poole yesterday - please come and see us again!”  
*Big Big Singer*



# THE PLAN

**Taking the Commonwealth Games (July 2014) as a centre of gravity, BBS structured its year into three phases**

## PHASE 1: THE BUILD UP TO THE GAMES

- Create the team, identity and infrastructure.
- Build key resources including the most extensive choir database in the UK, a wide range of singing materials, learning and teaching resources, information on the health and wellbeing benefits of singing.
- Build BBS's UK-wide community using social media, direct contact and promotion.
- Present BBS Days and Events across the UK to inspire people to learn new songs, join a choir or even start their own choir.
- Build partnerships across the UK to maximize the impact of BBS through events and projects.
- Undertake Stage 1 research into the community singing sector.
- Prioritise learning about the challenges and barriers to participation and consider remedial responses.

## PHASE 2: THE GAMES!

- Welcome the Commonwealth: encourage people to explore singing traditions world-wide through Songbook arrangements and Commonwealth Playlist.
- Invite South Africa's top youth choir, Mzansi Youth Choir to perform and workshop alongside young singers in London and Glasgow.
- Put singing at the heart of key Festival 2014 events such as the celebration of Nelson Mandela Day.
- Create opportunities for community choirs to sing in Glasgow during the games on pop-up stages.
- Stage the UK's biggest massed singing event at Glasgow Green
- Partner with other Festival 2014 projects to promote community singing as part of their work.

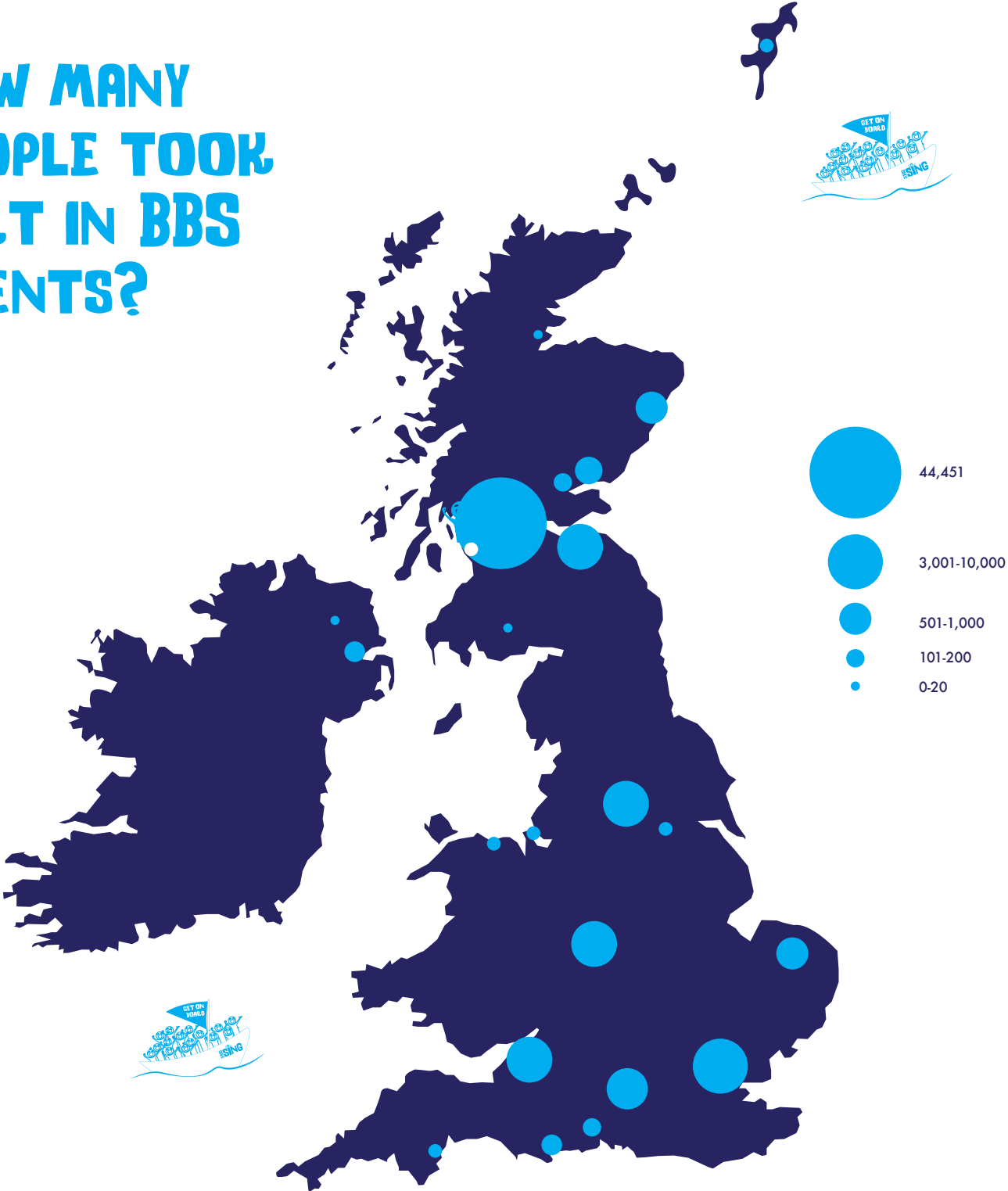
## PHASE 3: ONWARDS

- Assess feedback and evaluation to determine Stage 3 resources.
- Stage more UK-wide BBS Days.
- Launch the Choir Doctor training programme.
- Release new songs in the Big Big Songbook.
- Promote BBS nationally and internationally through conference presentations and partnerships.
- Develop plans for Phase 4.



QUEENS BATON RELAY RECEPTION GLASGOW 10.10.13 🎤 GLASGOW CENTRAL STATION  
FLASHMOB 18.10.13 🎤 FESTIVE FLASHMOB GLASGOW 23.11.13 🎤 SCOTTISH SING ALONG  
GLASGOW 30.11.13 🎤 BBS DAY DUNDEE 01.02.14 🎤 BBS DAY GLASGOW 09.02.14 🎤 BBS  
DAY EDINBURGH 16.02.14 🎤 BBS DAY ABERDEEN 08.03.14 🎤 CHOIR OF THE YEAR CROYDON  
08.03.14 🎤 CHOIR OF THE YEAR BRISTOL 30.03.14 🎤 CHOIR OF THE YEAR LEEDS 06.04.14 🎤  
BBS DAY LONDON 20.04.14 🎤 CHOIR OF THE YEAR BASINGSTOKE 27.04.14 🎤 FLASHMOB  
PROPOSAL GLASGOW 08.05.14 🎤 MOUNT PRIMARY SCHOOL CHOIR WORKSHOP MERSEYSIDE  
09.05.14 🎤 CHOIR OF THE YEAR WARWICK 10.05.14 🎤 SIGNING WORKSHOP DUNDEE  
11.05.14 🎤 BBS DAY CROMARTY 11.05.14 🎤 CHOIR OF THE YEAR LONDON 11.05.14 🎤  
CLARK COMMUNITY CHOIR WORKSHOP EDINBURGH 11.05.14 🎤 WILDERN COMMUNITY CHOIR  
WORKSHOP SOUTHAMPTON 12.05.14 🎤 BBS DAY PERTH 14.05.14 🎤 RETFORD COMMUNITY  
SINGERS WORKSHOP DONCASTER 14.05.14 🎤 NORTH WEST COMMUNITIES ADULT CHOIR  
WORKSHOP HIGHLAND 14.05.14 🎤 BBS DAY BALLYMENA 15.05.14 🎤 ROCK US COMMUNITY  
CHOIR WORKSHOP PAISLEY 15.05.14 🎤 SINGSTATION WORKSHOP ABERGELE 15.05.14 🎤 BBS  
DAY DARTINGTON 16.05.14 🎤 GIRLS BRIGADE WORKSHOP EDINBURGH 16.05.14 🎤  
BBS DAY LERWICK 17.05.14 🎤 GOING FOR GOLD GLASGOW 17.05.14 🎤 GOING FOR GOLD  
DUNDEE 18.05.14 🎤 CHOIR OF THE YEAR NORWICH 17.05.14 🎤 GALLERY OF MODERN ART  
FLASHMOB GLASGOW 17.05.14 🎤 SIGNING WORKSHOP GLASGOW 18.05.14 🎤 SPIRIT OF  
2012 FLASHMOB GLASGOW 21.05.14 🎤 BBS DAY DUMFRIES 08.06.14 🎤 SCOTTISH REFUGEE  
WEEK WORKSHOP GLASGOW 15.06.14 🎤 CHOIR OF THE YEAR GLASGOW 22.06.14 🎤 THE  
ROYAL BLIND SCHOOL EDINBURGH 25.06.14 🎤 MZANSI YOUTH CHOIR PERFORMACE LONDON  
14.07.14 🎤 MZANSI YOUTH CHOIR WORKSHOP LONDON 15.07.14 🎤 TIN FOREST WORKSHOP  
GLASGOW 17.07.14 🎤 MZANSI YOUTH CHOIR WORKSHOP GLASGOW 17.07.14 🎤 MZANSI  
YOUTH CHOIR PERFORMANCES GLASGOW 18.07.14 🎤 FIELD CHOIR WORKSHOP GLASGOW  
19.07.14 🎤 LOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL WORKSHOP GLASGOW 23.06.14 🎤 BBC AT THE QUAY  
SONG STAGE 25.07.14 🎤 GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL SONG STAGE 21.07.14 🎤 TIN  
FOREST WORKSHOP GLASGOW 21.07.14 🎤 BIG BIG BIG SING DAY GLASGOW 27.07.14 🎤  
BBS AT KELVINGROVE BANDSTAND GLASGOW 30.07.14 🎤 EMPIRE CAFÉ GLASGOW 01.08.14 🎤  
CHAIRMANS RECEPTION GLASGOW 01.08.14 – BIG SONG RELAY SCOTLAND 14.06.14 - 23.07.14  
🎤 BBS DAY SOUTHAMPTON 19.10.14 🎤 BBS DAY BELFAST 25.10.14 🎤 BBS DAY POOLE 01.11.14  
🎤 SCOTTISH SING ALONG EDINBURGH 30.11.14 🎤 FESTIVE BBS DAY GLASGOW 07.12.14

# HOW MANY PEOPLE TOOK PART IN BBS EVENTS?







30442

downloads  
from the Big Big  
Songbook



99

videos



46209

video views on

vimeo & **You Tube**

174

events

BATON RELAY  
RECEPTION -  
GLASGOW  
CENTRAL  
STATION  
FLASHMOB  
GLASGOW LOVES  
CHRISTMAS FLASHMOB  
SAINT ANDREWS DAY SONGS  
DUNDEE BBS DAY - GLASGOW  
BBS DAY - EDINBURGH BBS  
DAY - CHOIRSON CHOIR OF  
THE YEAR - ABERDEEN BBS  
DAY - BRISTOL CHOIR OF  
THE YEAR - SINGSTATION  
WORKSHOP - LEEDS  
CHOIR OF THE  
YEAR - DARTINGTON  
BBS DAY - ROCK IS  
COMMUNITY CHOR  
WORKSHOP - COSLA  
WORKSHOP - MAREEL  
SHETLAND BBS DAY  
GLASGOW  
GOING FOR  
GOLD - DUNDEE  
CARD HALL GOING  
FOR GOLD  
NORWICH CHOIR  
OF THE YEAR  
GOMA FLASHMOB  
GLASGOW SIGNING  
WORKSHOP - SPIRIT OF  
2012 FLASHMOB - TIN  
FOREST WORKSHOP - DUMFRIE  
BBS DAY - SCOTTISH REFUGEE WEEK  
WORKSHOP - SCOTTISH REFUGEE WEEK  
PERFORMANCE - CHOIR OF THE YEAR  
GLASGOW - CHOIR OF THE YEAR  
WORKSHOP - ROYAL BLIND SCHOOL  
BBS WORKSHOP - AZANZI PERFORMA  
FOREST WORKSHOP - LOCH PRIMARY WORKSH  
FIELD CHOR REHEARSAL - LOCH PRIMARY WORKSH  
BALFRON HIGH WORKSHOP - TIN FOREST OPENING  
WORKSHOP - GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT

62843

people sang at  
our events



**BIG SONG  
BIG BOOK**

111697

people visited

[www.bigbigsing.org](http://www.bigbigsing.org)

574560

estimated number  
of people who've  
used a songbook  
resource





“I thought the whole event was inspiring... I have applied to join my local choir”

*Big Big Singer*

## In more detail

### Phase one: Build up to The Games [Nov 2013 – May 2015]

#### Getting underway

Launching in January 2014, BBS had just seven months to establish itself, deliver resources and achieve all goals linked to the Commonwealth Games. We were able to achieve a great deal in such a short time thanks to supportive funders and an outstanding team on and off-stage.

**Svend Brown**, Director

**Siobhan Clark**, Producer

**Ann Monfries**, Marketing Consultant

**Mike Griffiths**, Partnerships Consultant

**Elaine Craig**, Event Manager

**Katharine Barrington**,  
Event Co-ordinator

**Trish Elms**, Social Media Manager

**Amy Potter**, Marketing Assistant

**Kirsty Walker**, Project Assistant

**Marianne Gallagher**,  
Administrative Assistant

**Claire Blackwood**, Material PR

**Claire Snedden**, Material PR

From the outset, a key partnership with Love Music Productions Ltd (who created Love Music Community Choir, the largest community choir in Scotland) strengthened the project by offering community choir expertise and artistic direction.

**Stephen Deazley**, Director

**Ruth Davie**, Manager-Producer

Over the course of the year a team of amateurs and musicians developed to deliver BBS events UK-wide.

**Marcina Arnold**

**Colin Btainnes**

**Phil Bancroft**

**Bellatrix**

**Steven Blake**

**Colin Bloack**

**Ali Burns**

**Mairi Campbell**

**Davy Cattanach**

**Claire Clark**

**Lea Cornthwaite**

**Alyn Cosker**

**Suzi Davies**

**Stephen Deazley**

**Sidiki Dembele**

**Joy Dunlop**

**Fraser Fifield**

**Anna Flannagan**

**Matthew Forbes**

**Ranjana Ghatak**

**Chris Greive**

**Lucy Griffiths**

**Adey Grummet**

**Mohamed Gueye**

**Paul Harrison**

**Corrina Hewat**

**Dougie Hudson**

**Fraser Jackson**

**Duncan Lyall**

**Laura MacDonald**

**Natalie MacDonald**

**Ronnie MacNiven**

**Erick Mauricia**

**Cameron Maxwell**

**Dave Milligan**

**Ross Milligan**

**Conrad Molleson**

**Magnus Pickering**

**Robert Pettigrew**

**Jason Singh**

**Eugene Skeef**

**Soul Nation Choir**

**Graham Stephen**

**Euan Stevenson**

**Tom Walsh**

**Jonathan Williams**

**Ali Wood**



# Online Resources

Early in the development of BBS we understood that the best way to achieve the greatest impact in the short time available to us would be excellent use of the web and social media. We consulted with choral activists to hear their priorities, concerns and ambitions, and scoped our work to respond to them.

Three main themes emerged:

- Information.
- Better information.
- More connectivity, easily available.

# Choir Directory

We created the most extensive and accurate directory of UK choirs of its kind.

It is easy to access and use.

Looking for a choir to join? Type in your postcode, refine your search by rehearsal day and genre and we will show you all the choirs we have listed within a 20 miles radius.

In a choir? Add your choir to the directory and recruit new members.

# Top reasons to sing

We created a digest of the latest research demonstrating the mental, social and physical benefits that singing can bring.

# Big Big Songbook

The single most successful element of BBS has been its Songbook.

To celebrate the Commonwealth Games we featured 10 traditional and newly commissioned songs from different countries around The Commonwealth and made them available for free.

It has been used by singers of all ages from schools to pensioners.

# Training and Support

The Songbook was just one aspect of our response to the type of training and support choir leaders told us they wanted. Each song was accompanied by videos to address such things as:

- Warm-ups
- Tips on how to teach the song
- Information about the song
- Pronunciation guides

# Inspiration

We discovered that people in the community choir sector are eager to hear how other people are doing things in order to inspire their own work. We created case studies about inspirational people who have started, led or manage fantastic choirs around the UK and shared them online.



“Loved all the arrangements, as did the children in the choirs and in class music lessons.

Can’t wait to see which new resources you add”

*Big Big Songbook user*

# How to Guides

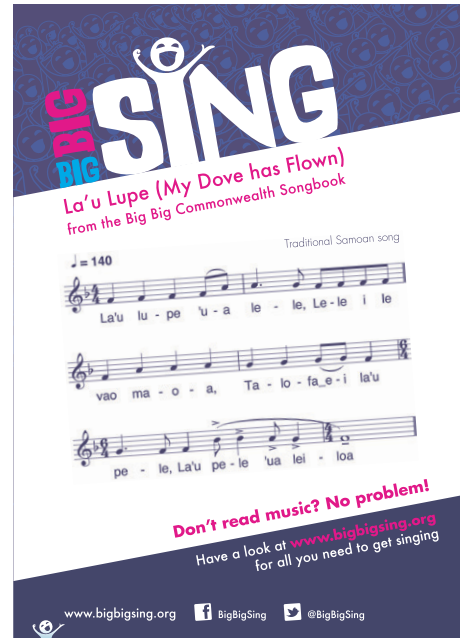
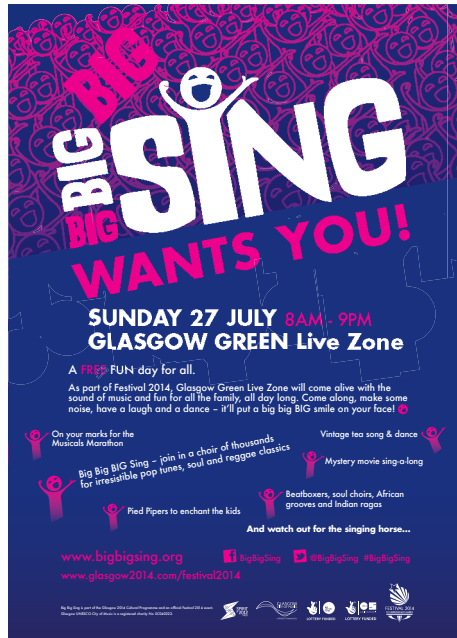
Short informative guides on how to set up a choir in your community, workplace and school.

# Learning through Fun

We created videos featuring Eugene Skeef demonstrating various warm-ups and exercises. They were challenging but also just a little silly...

over  
**3,300**  
choirs in the  
directory and  
still growing





“Anthems set to unite UK in song for 2014 Games”  
*The Scotsman*

“Gena’s singing the praises of choir group”  
*Sunday Post*

“Singing for the Soul”  
*The Press and Journal*

“Raise those voices loud and proud for a Big Big Sing”  
*Belfast Telegraph*



## Building the Big Big Sing Community

### Social

As a UK-wide initiative it was imperative that BBS reached singers and potential singers across the nation. Social media proved a powerful tool because the choral sector is active on it.

We have built up an active community on social media with over 5,000 page likes on Facebook and more than 1,500 Twitter followers.

Our followers and fans are incredibly engaged, using BBS’s social media channels to share news, announce upcoming concerts, get new choir members or simply comment on our regular updates and posts.

BBS’s online content aims to be fun but also thought-provoking and inspiring. We draw on quotes, images, videos, academic research, news and personal stories to engage and build a bond with our online community.

We invested extensively in video content both to capture magic moments from our events, and also to offer training and development with a light touch. This approach has proved extremely successful - one video has had more than 9,200 views!

## Promotion

BBS took a big picture view of media promotion from the outset: our aim was to attract participants to events, but also to highlight the all-important wellbeing messages.

### In the Media

BBS featured strongly in both national and local press, appearing in more than 40 printed publications including: The Scotsman, Belfast Telegraph, Evening Times, Daily Record, Woman’s Weekly, The List, The Herald, Southampton Daily Echo and The Dundee Evening Telegraph. That’s a total circulation of over 1,900,000.

Coverage ranged from individuals sharing personal stories about the health and wellbeing benefits of singing, through to publicising and reporting on BBS events.

Audio clips from the Big Big Songbook and interviews with BBS team members have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio Scotland, Radio Tay, Radio Shetland, BBC Radio Coventry + Warwickshire, Clyde 1 FM and STV Glasgow.

## Getting the word out about Big Big Sing

We hit the ground running with event advertisements in national and local papers, distributed flyers and posters UK-wide and made direct contact with hundreds of community groups and choirs.

In April 2014, a BBS ad in The Guardian and The i included the score of *L’au Lupe* - a traditional Samoan Song from the Big Big Songbook. It promoted the upcoming event at Southbank Centre and drove readers to our website and social media.

With a mailing list of over 3000 and growing almost daily, we keep subscribers updated with news, events and opportunities.



“We had a super blast! Sung our little hearts out all day. Found a whole new meaning to the power of singing.  
**#BigBigSing**”

**@NOW\_Volunteers**





## Big Big Sing Days

The Big Big Sing Days were among the highlights of the first year. They were also critical to our success and enabled us to:

### Stage extraordinarily enjoyable and high quality sessions of learning and singing:

typically five hours long, participant responses were invariably euphoric.

### Meet the community:

at each BBS Day we invited local choir leaders to meet with us to talk about singing. As the Day took place in locations across the UK and in a wide variety of contexts including inner city, rural, island and coastal, we were able to make incredibly useful contacts and gather a great deal of knowledge.

### Grow the BBS community:

over the course of seven months we built impressive loyalty and passion for the project; individuals travelled considerable distances to attend different events. We gave out free t-shirts and by 27 July at the BIG Big Sing Day on Glasgow Green we saw a mass of BBS t-shirts across the Green.

### Build our expertise:

we knew that within seven months we would produce the UK's biggest sing-along event at Glasgow Green. Every BBS Day helped shape our ideas and increased our expertise and sureness.

**Build profile:** without a doubt each BBS Day triggered significant word of mouth, press coverage and social media interaction which helped build the 40,000 audience who attended the BIG Big Sing.



"I have just had the most amazing afternoon at the Big Big Sing Belfast. The joy, energy, happiness and harmony was exceptional and inspiring. I joined a choir as soon as I got home, after thinking about it for 40 years!!"

*Big Big Singer*







Big Big Sing is a fantastic project which offers anyone looking for a fun way to improve their health and wellbeing a great opportunity to get involved and start singing.

*Sir Harry Burns, CMO for Scotland*

## Partnerships

Partnerships need to mature over long periods to deliver truly excellent value; here BBS benefited from existing mature partnerships that Glasgow UNESCO City of Music had, as well as capitalising on opportunities that arose from Spirit of 2012 and participation in Festival 2014. Partners include:



### Love Music Productions Ltd

Love Music inspires people to be curious, creative and adventurous with music regardless of their skill base or background. We have partnered with Love Music to deliver events and the Big Big Songbook.

[www.lovemusic.org.uk](http://www.lovemusic.org.uk)



### Voluntary Arts Week

Voluntary Arts Week is a celebration of cultural creativity across the UK and the Republic of Ireland. We teamed up with the organisers, Voluntary Arts, to encourage people to get involved in the festivities by organising a Flashmob choir. A Flashmob guide was created for distribution to arts groups and choirs through a range of networks. During the week we also hosted 20 BBS events, most taking place in rural areas.

[www.voluntaryartsweek.org](http://www.voluntaryartsweek.org)



### Hands Up For Trad

Hands Up For Trad was formed in 2002 to increase the profile and visibility of Scottish Traditional Music through information, education and advocacy. Hands Up For Trad produced 'The Big Song Relay' as part of BBS and we supported them with video materials and by distributing the song online through the Big Big Songbook.

[www.scottishcultureonline.com](http://www.scottishcultureonline.com)

## || CCC ||

### Children's Classic Concerts

Children's Classic Concerts stage family events to introduce children to live orchestral music. We worked with Children's Classic Concerts, the National Youth Choir of Scotland and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra to help create a special singing participation event, 'Going For Gold'.

[www.childrensclassicconcerts.co.uk](http://www.childrensclassicconcerts.co.uk)



### Choir of the Year

Choir of the Year is the UK's national competition for amateur choirs. At each of its national rounds, songs from the Big Big Songbook were taught to all participants, spreading the word and building awareness of BBS.

[www.choiroftheyear.co.uk](http://www.choiroftheyear.co.uk)





## Unique Projects

Whilst BBS is not targeted at any specific part of the community, we made it our priority to explore four specific areas of interest through unique projects:

- Schools and Young People
- New Communities
- Signing choirs
- Engaging with Gaelic and Welsh speakers

Each of these projects were successful in their own terms, but also enabled us to deepen our knowledge of different sectors of the community who may experience barriers to participation in community singing.

## Refugee Week Scotland

Refugee Week ran from the 16 – 22 June 2014, celebrating the contribution of refugees to Scotland. We put together a choir to perform at the opening event in Glasgow. The choir comprised of members from the local community of refugees and asylum seekers.

Two workshops were delivered alongside the performance and participants were encouraged to bring along instruments and songs from their own cultures, giving everyone the opportunity to work with music from different countries and languages. Through engagement with local refugee centres and asylum seekers networks, we were able to contribute a unique performance to the celebrations.

## Welsh and Gaelic

Key pages of the BBS website have been translated in to Gaelic and Welsh, including resources on how to set up a choir.

### GAELIC

We worked with Gaelic speakers and singers to develop repertoire for the website and use at key events:

*Here's To All Our Common Wealth* was translated into Gaelic and made available to download from the Big Big Songbook .

At the BIG Big Big Sing we provided a free drop-in workshop for Gaelic Mouth Music and encouraged 15,000 participants to join in with singers on the main stage.

Gaelic choirs were invited to participate in events and join our choir directory – there are currently 27 Gaelic choirs listed online.

We received a number of Gaelic submissions from pupils to the Schools Songwriting Competition.

The Commonwealth Playlist is a valuable means of sharing Gaelic song, with singers, songwriters and choirs uploading their own videos and recordings to share with the world.



“Enjoyed the Gaelic singing. Amazing what can be taught in such a short time.”

*Big Big Singer*



“Singing together makes you feel like you’re in a band and makes me feel happy and excited”

Edinburgh Royal Blind School pupil



## Schools & Young People

We engaged with young people and schools simply as part of the wider community – and there was plenty of evidence that teachers, youth choir leaders and young people discovered the project for themselves and joined in.

We also engaged with young people through focused initiatives:

### SCHOOLS SONGWRITING COMPETITION

In the lead up to Glasgow 2014, we challenged school pupils in Scotland to write a song inspired by the Commonwealth Games. We were wowed by all of the entries.

**Primary School winners:** Loch Primary School, *Run Jump Swim*

**Secondary School winners:** Shanon, Evelyn and Lucy from Balfron High, *Life’s a Game*

Both groups were the recipients of a BBS workshop and performed their winning songs in front of thousands of people at the BIG Big Sing in Glasgow. They also featured on BBC Radio Scotland’s *The Culture Studio*.

## SCHOOLS RESOURCES ONLINE

The Big Big Songbook includes a set of resources created specially for Schools. Focusing on *Fruits of Our Gifts*, a simplified score was produced accompanied by two videos to aid teachers. The videos were filmed in Edinburgh with pupils from Stockbridge Primary taking a starring role.

### EDINBURGH ROYAL BLIND SCHOOL

In May 2014 we visited Edinburgh Royal Blind School to run a workshop with 90 pupils, working with repertoire from the Big Big Songbook.

## YOUNG SCOT REWARDS

We teamed up with Young Scot to encourage 11-26 year olds in Scotland to get singing through the Young Scots rewards platform. Collectively the BBS activity pages received over 3000 unique page views.

### GAME ON SCOTLAND

Game On Scotland - the official education programme of the Commonwealth Games - featured BBS on its website complete with details of how to take part.

### GOING FOR GOLD

Produced by Children’s Classic Concerts, Going for Gold was a musical celebration of inspiration, ambition and talent. We helped fund the two concerts at Dundee Caird Hall and Glasgow Royal Concert Hall to a family audience of 1327.



“Thanks @BigBigSing we are using Fruits Of Our Gifts for a joint Year 5/6 Harvest performance! Amazing resources!”

@MirandaGMusic





## Signed Song

We created specially choreographed signed song resources for three songs from the Big Big Songbook:

- Here's To All Our Commonwealth
- Amazing Grace
- Fruits of our Gifts

The singing incorporates a mixture of British Sign Language and Sign Supported English, which means that deaf, hard of hearing and hearing singers can join in with the same song. The resources comprise of a performance video and an instructional video.

## SIGNING WORKSHOPS

We held two signing workshops teaching both deaf and hearing singers our signed songs.

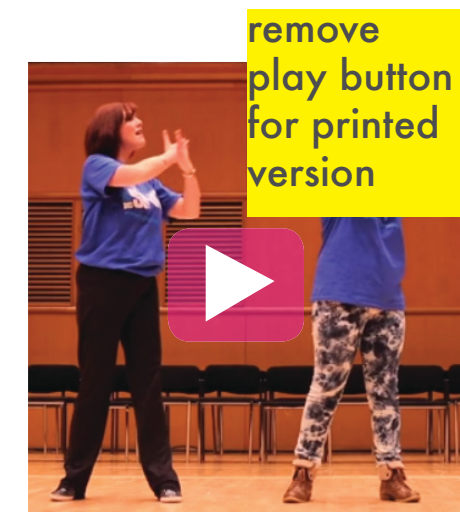
**Dundee Deaf Hub: 18 participants**

**Glasgow Royal Concert Hall: 9 participants**

Signed Song was also incorporated in to BBS events in London, Belfast and Glasgow.

## SIGNED SONGS R US

Signed Songs R Us, a Deaf choir from Dundee, performed onstage at our BIG Big Big Sing in Glasgow, leading 15,000 people in signed song.







“It was the  
best day  
of my life”

Hearts In Harmony  
member



## Hearts in Harmony

Many individuals in Glasgow-based choir Hearts in Harmony are isolated as a result of illness or disability. We secured funding from the Creative Scotland Access Fund to give the choir the opportunity to participate in the BIG Big Big Sing at Glasgow Green during the Commonwealth Games and work with repertoire from our Songbook.

Hearts in Harmony performed at the event, choosing the songs and shaping the performance themselves. The members were immensely proud of their work and overjoyed with the opportunity to let people hear and celebrate their music.



“Being involved in Big Big Sing offered our choir members an opportunity to engage and be part in the unique celebrations surrounding the Commonwealth Games. They played an active part in Big Big Sing, which has resulted in feelings of validation and pride in their own achievements and abilities.

The BIG Big Big Sing event did not just impact on the lives of our choir members, but also their wider communities: family members, care staff and those who work to support them through Capability Scotland. The feelings of pride shown by choir members on the day was also shared by those who were there to support them.”

Jo Edgar – Leader of Hearts in Harmony







“Never sung a harmony before and I don’t read music – yet I felt included and learned so much!”

*Big Big Singer*

## In more detail

### Phase two: The Games! [Jun – Aug 2014]

#### Engaging with The Games

The Commonwealth Games created an unmissable opportunity for BBS to present itself as part of Festival 2014 and to put community singing at the heart of a global event.

#### Commonwealth Playlist

The playlist offers an interactive jukebox of music from every country in the Commonwealth; you choose the country, you pick the song. There are over 350 songs on the playlist and singers, bands and choirs all over the world are invited to upload tracks and share their performances.



#### Song Stages

We worked with the organisers of the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme to animate areas all over the city with singing during the Commonwealth Games. 74 participants performed on three Song Stages across Glasgow.

#### THE STAGES:

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Steps

BBC at the Quay

Cubby Hole at Glasgow Green



“We have had people coming up to us and asking if they can join our choir!”

*Big Big Singer*





## Mzansi Youth Choir

Glasgow has a very special relationship with Nelson Mandela, being the first city in the world to honour him with the Freedom of the City in 1981. To celebrate Nelson Mandela Day, we brought Mzansi Youth Choir – a choir of some of South Africa’s best young singers – from Johannesburg to perform and work with school children in London and Glasgow.

### CITY OF LONDON FESTIVAL

Mzansi brought a VIP audience of 700 to its feet to dance and sing, inspiring The Times reviewer to write “To say I was bowled over...would be an understatement.”

### SOUTHBANK CENTRE

93 pupils from schools in Lambeth and Southwark Boroughs worked with Mzansi and BBS animator Eugene Skeef to learn a traditional African song.

### GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL

Mzansi and 80 members of Glasgow Youth Choir took part in a workshop sharing repertoire, then performed as a flashmob on the steps of the Concert Hall and at Kelvingrove Museum.

### NELSON MANDELA GALA CELEBRATION

Mzansi joined South African legend Hugh Masekela for a musical celebration of Mandela.







## BIG Big Big Sing

The climax of Phase 2 of BBS was the BIG Big Big Sing, 8am – 9pm on 27 July at Glasgow Green.

# 40000 PARTICIPANTS



## SINGING MARATHON



## ROVING PERFORMERS



## SIGNED SONG



## INDIAN SONG



got any apt  
text to use?





## Festival 2014 projects

We partnered with organisations to offer unique opportunities for participants to get singing and maximise the reach of BBS.

### The Big Song Relay

**108 CHOIRS – 78 UNIQUE PERFORMANCES – 1 SONG**

In October 2013 the Queen's Baton began a 118,000 mile route across The Commonwealth to reach Glasgow ahead of The Games.

As it journeyed through Scotland the specially commissioned song *Here's To All Our Common Wealth* was passed from choir to choir along the route, coordinated by Hands Up For Trad.

Following 25 regional workshops with community choirs, more than 4,000 participants took part in The Big Song Relay, performing to a total audience of over 29,000.

*Here's To All Our Common Wealth* was downloaded over 6,000 times from the Blg Big Songbook.

### The Tin Forest

A National Theatre of Scotland project, Tin Forest, was a celebration of Glasgow's industrial past and creative future, presented through a series of events across the City.

We provided a rehearsal space and recruited over 40 singers to take part in two workshops led by National Theatre of Scotland. A recording of participants singing 'Mother Glasgow' featured in one production and participants went on to perform at the Tin Forest Opening Concert.

### The Empire Cafe

The Empire Café was a week-long event in Glasgow, exploring the context of Scotland and the North Atlantic slave trade. We contributed to the programme by inviting local choir, Garnethill Choir, to perform.







“To sing in such a prestigious venue as Glasgow Concert Hall, surrounded by 850 enthusiastic choristers was one of my life’s best experiences.”

*Big Big Singer*

# In more detail

## Phase three: Building on Success [Aug 2014 – Dec 2015]

### Onwards

After the excitement of the Commonwealth Games we quickly moved on to delivering more BBS Days around the UK:

Turner Sims Concert Hall,  
**Southampton**

**Belfast** International Festival

Lighthouse, **Poole**

We also produced two seasonal BBS events:

**St Andrews Day Scottish Sing Along**  
– St Andrews Square, **Edinburgh**

**Festive fun – Glasgow** Royal Concert Hall

### What’s coming up?

#### EVENTS

In 2015 we will have a wide range of activity taking place both online and locally.

5 April: Southbank Centre, **London**

16 May: **Glasgow** Royal Concert Hall

17 May: Usher Hall, **Edinburgh**

30 May: **Aberdeen** Music Hall

31 May: Caird Hall, **Dundee**

More events will take place in autumn – sign up at [www.bigbigsing.org](http://www.bigbigsing.org) and stay up to date.

#### SONGS

We will be adding five new additions to the songbook, each with full supporting resources and downloads. This year’s theme is songs by women singer-songwriters.

### TRAINING

Big Big Sing’s Choir Doctors are ready to help! They are going on the road to:

**Give your choir a health check:**  
how are you doing?

**Diagnose any problems:**  
what could you change?

**Suggest some remedies:** towards a healthier, happier singing future!

Each session, delivered by experts to community choirs across the UK, will be made available online accompanied by a host of resources.

### PROMOTION

We presented BBS to a gathering of the UNESCO Music Cities in January and at the Association of British Orchestras Conference in Gateshead. In March we will present BBS at the Singing Cities Colloquium in Berlin.

### RESEARCH

Working closely with Edinburgh University, we are developing plans for an innovative research project. More on this on the next page.





## Research

BBS is concerned with the idea that singing in a community setting should be promoted because it can benefit individuals, households and communities in a variety of ways:

**Better mental health:** as a natural stress buster, singing reduces anxiety and depression.

**Improved physical health:** singing can improve breathing, posture, obesity.

**Social wellbeing:** singing offers an easy and natural way to connect with other people. It offers routes out of loneliness and isolation, improves mutual understanding and sows the seed of greater social cohesion within communities.

Singing also has benefits at a more clinical and therapeutic level as Dr. Stephen Clift, the Director of Britain's foremost centre for research in this field (Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health Canterbury Christ Church University) writes:

An increasing body of evidence supports the view that group singing can offer participants considerable benefits in terms of their mental, emotional and social wellbeing (Clift, et al., 2010; Gick, 2011; Clark and Harding, 2012). A cross-national study of over 1,000 singers in choirs and choral societies in Australia, England and Germany found clear evidence of reported wellbeing benefits as a result of singing (Clift and Hancox, 2010, Livesey et al., 2012). Regular singing has also been found to improve the mental wellbeing of older people living independently with little or no previous experience of group singing as adults (Coulson et al., 2015). Singing can also be beneficial for older people in need of care and affected by long-term conditions including dementia (Skingley and Bungay, 2010). For people with a history of severe and enduring mental health issues regular group singing can also result in clinical improvements in mental health (Clift and Morrison, 2011)

A more challenging issue, however, is whether singing can have measurable benefits for physical health, over and above the value it may have for mental and social wellbeing.

One exciting area of research has explored the value of singing for breathing and lung function, particularly for people with chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD) A community-based feasibility study in the UK (Morrison et al., 2013) and small randomised controlled trials in hospital settings in Brazil and the UK (Bonilha et al., 2008; Lord et al., 2010, 2012) have shown that group singing is an acceptable and enjoyable activity for people with COPD, and leads to measurable benefits for self-assessed physical health and increased performance on lung function tests.

Bonilha, A.G., Onofre, F., Vieira, M.L., Prado, M.Y.A. & Martinez, J.A.B. (2008). Effects of singing classes on pulmonary function and quality of life in COPD patients, *International Journal of COPD*, 4(1), 1-8.





"The whole Usher Hall was packed with happy people... more of those and NHS will save a lot of money..."

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Skingley, A. and Bungay, H. (2010) The Silver Song Club Project: singing to promote the health of older people, *British Journal of Community Nursing*, 15, 3, 135-140.





“It was one of the most uplifting, liberating and enjoyable days I have ever had. I would encourage everyone to go.”

Big Big Singer

## Thank you

We would like to give a Big Big thank you to all of the partners and funders who have supported Big Big Sing in its first year. Extra special thanks also goes out to the inspiring Love Music Productions.

Let's keep singing.



LOTTERY FUNDED



Dominic Coccozza, Belinda Lawley, Louise Marther, Rob McDougall and Mick McGurk - thank you for capturing so many brilliant moments from Big Big Sing's first year.







# **BIG** BIG SING

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# **BIG** BIG SING

## THE REPORT