Oh Happy Day! Black gospel music's UK roots preserved

13/05/2011

Newham-based Zoe Gospel Promotions will be tracing the effect of post World War II immigration on black gospel music in London. With virtually no archives in existence the project will tap into people's memories and their own private collections.

A group of young people from the boroughs of Newham, Waltham Forest and Kensington & Chelsea will be trained to record interviews with a wide range of community elders. Supported by staff from the archive services in the three boroughs and working with local schools they will use the information gathered to create a website and a video documentary.

The three-year project will also produce a publication that will be made available to local schools and libraries and the archive of recordings and images collected will be deposited for safe keeping at Newham borough archives. A number of local exhibitions are also being planned.

For the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Head of HLF London, Sue Bowers, said: "A group of young people will gain a range of skills in the process of helping to create a lasting record of the development of black gospel music in London in the years following World War II. In so doing they will not only add to general awareness of this particular form of music, but will enrich the history of immigration."

For Zoe Gospel Promotions, Director Isaac Odeniran, said: ''This is a great opportunity to uncover the great gems that are hidden away in people's memories and to build a body of written and photographic data. We are excited about sharing our discoveries with the wider public and providing numerous opportunities for them to enjoy and appreciate the diversity, richness and history that is British black gospel music.'

Public events for the project, which has been named Jordan's Demeanours, will be held in several locations across London and will include exhibitions, live music and video presentations. For further information and links to local library and archive centres go to the website or phone the Jordan's Demeanours Project Coordinator on 020 8534 2194.

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.7billion across the UK, with £873 million of that in London.

Further information

For further information please contact Vicky Wilford, HLF press office, on; 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401 937, email vickyw@hlf.org.uk or Phil Cooper, HLF press office, on: 07889 949173.

Or contact Isaac Odeniran, Director, Zoe Gospel Promotions, on: 020 8534 2136.