

BAY AREA MUSIC GROUP INVITED TO SING AT THE LONDON OLYMPICS



By Kenny Wardell

I have to admit that I am a huge fan of the Olympic Games. Every two years, I thrill at the first few bars of the Olympic theme, "Bugler's Dream." (For the uninitiated, both the Summer and Winter Olympics are held every four years. But since 1994, they stagger the two Olympics, so fans have to wait only two years to witness what some call "the ultimate sports competition," with over 200 countries participating at each games.)

The **2012 Summer Olympics** in London are right around the corner, and I was very excited to learn that a Bay Area music group has been invited to journey to the U.K. and perform at one of the most prestigious events at the games.

Bet you can't guess who they are! Here are a few hints:

This Bay Area music group hails from Benicia. (I didn't know this before researching this story, but Benicia was once the capitol of California, a much cooler location than Sacramento in many ways.)

This group performs a wide variety of ethnically diverse music from around the world, all done in the native languages.

The group was formed 18 years ago, but 99 percent of the current members are not yet old enough to vote.

This Bay Area music group is no stranger to the big stages of the world, having performed at The White House for President Bill Clinton and President George W. Bush, and at the Vatican as a guest of Pope John Paul II. The group has toured to China, Mexico, Italy, Greece, and Japan.

Give up?

The phenomenal Bay Area music group that is leaving soon for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London is none other than **VOENA Children's Choir: Voices of Eve and Angels**.

Founded in 1994 by **Annabelle Marie**, VOENA, the extraordinary children's choir from Benicia, has 55 young girls and guys (aged 5 through 18) packing their bags for a trip of a lifetime. They will be singing at the London Canal Museum as the Olympic Torch arrives in London on July 26. Later that evening, they perform with **Mediaeval Baebes** (the U.K.'s top-selling vocal ensemble) at **The Church of St. John-at-Hackney**.