Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games
The Spirit of Friendship Festival

Capital PR's London office was appointed in 2002 to provide media relations advice and support for the landmark Spirit of Friendship Festival (SOFF) - the biggest multi-cultural community arts festival ever staged in England.

Similar to the Olympic Arts Festival, the Spirit of Friendship Festival linked artistic achievement with athletic accomplishment in an inspirational celebration of the diversity of the human spirit and the cultures of the Commonwealth that have helped to shape modern Britain.

The Festival was designed to celebrate and spread the spirit of the Commonwealth Games to communities around the United Kingdom through a series of innovative and contemporary exhibitions and performances in art, music, dance, theatre and photography.

As the most ambitious artistic and cultural event ever linked to a sporting event in the UK, the Spirit of Friendship Festival featured hundreds of performances and exhibitions around the home nations involving some of the world's leading sporting figures and creative performers.

These included jazz icon Courtney Pine, cricketing great Ian Botham, Olympic sprinting legend Linford Christie, Dwain Chambers, Opera heroine, Dame Kiri te Kanawa, percussionist Evelyn Glennie, Anoushka Shankar, and world famous writers Germaine Greer and Margaret Atwood.

Capital PR devised and implemented events and opportunities for the media to promote Spirit of Friendship highlights, including the Commonwealth Parade (a cornerstone of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Year weekend festivities, June 2002), in national, regional and international media.

The media attention and publicity surrounding the Spirit of Friendship Festival played a key role in helping to generate a highly positive atmosphere of community support and celebration across England and the UK for the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games.

This brought a further sense of occasion to Manchester's sporting showpiece both as an occasion for widespread community involvement and celebration of the cultures of the Commonwealth group of nations which account for more than a quarter of the world's population and land mass.

It also left a legacy that will remain in the minds and imaginations of children for years to come.

"Diversity key to success..."
(London) Financial Times

"Commonwealth grooves"
(London) Financial Times, Arts Week

"Truly a fine showcase for the musical wealth and diversity of the Commonwealth."
Evening Post, Bristol