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LADYFEST LONDON 2002

Ladyfest is a celebration of the achievements of women in music, art and society



“Ladyfest started when some women got together as a result of an Experience Music Project event that recorded people’s responses to riot grrrl about 10 years after the movement had started. A lot of the women involved in riot grrrl started realising they were still really active and interested in how feminism and art are connected and wanted to bring this discussion to a wider audience”

***Sarah Dougher,
Singer-songwriter***

Ladyfest London is a celebration of the achievements of women, primarily in independent music and arts. It is one of many festivals which have grown out of the legacy of the "riot grrrl" movement of the early 90s.

1999 had been a bad year for women in music, with publications such as Spin and the New York Times reporting a backlash against women as either musicians or fans since the days of riot grrrl, and there was also the spectre of the rapes at Woodstock '99. The first Ladyfest was held in Olympia, USA, in August 2000, as an attempt to do something about this apparent step backwards, and to actively promote and encourage women's achievements.

The huge success of the inaugural Ladyfest, which attracted over 2000 people and raised \$30000 for charity, was such that it spawned several other events: in 2001 there were Ladyfests in New York and Chicago, and also the first UK Ladyfest, held in Glasgow.

Ladyfest Scotland may have been a smaller affair than its American cousins, but it was still a sell-out success as well as a publicity coup, attracting coverage in at least 30 national and international publications, including such mainstream bodies as The Guardian and The Scotsman.

The aims of Ladyfest are not only to showcase the talents of women working in the creative arts, but also to build a sense of community among female artists, musicians and activists, and to raise money for women's charities. It is also vitally important to give as many women as possible a chance to participate in the organisation of such a large-scale project. To these ends Ladyfest is community-based, democratic and not-for-profit.

Finally, it is important to convey the message of Ladyfest equally to both men and women, and the festival will be open to all (with the exception of some of the workshops, which may only be available to women).

LADYFEST

LONDON 2002

Ladyfest London aims to acknowledge and celebrate the cultural diversity that London offers



'...Ladyfests aren't just about the music. While rock plays a key role in the Ladyfest aura, its organizers hope to create a sense of community that goes beyond music and helps women get a leg up in all forms of art. It's those goals more than the allure of a night of rock that have attracted The Hissyfits to the Ladyfest fold.'
Princess - The Hissyfits

Rather than seeing the vastness of London as a hindrance in the staging of this event, Ladyfest London aims to acknowledge and celebrate the cultural diversity that London offers and tries to give a voice to as many of London's different communities as possible. It aims not only to offer opportunities to women in independent arts, but also to link female artists, musicians and activists of all backgrounds. Ladyfest London is intended to be as varied as possible in its definition of what constitutes 'the Arts', and endeavours to appeal to a wide national and international audience. It will feature visual art, film, spoken word, poetry, seminars and workshops in addition to music, which will form its core. In order to preserve the 'local feel' of Ladyfest that helped to make the event in Glasgow such a success, Ladyfest London events will be held in the Islington and North London area, with the Garage in Highbury (capacity 500) as the main evening venue. We have teamed up with a private hostel in order to offer suitable and reasonable accommodation for the many visitors expected for the event.

Ladyfest London, like all previous Ladyfests, is strictly non-discriminatory. Although the aim is to present opportunities to women who would normally find it difficult to find a platform to share their ideas, the event itself is open to everyone, regardless of gender, from the planning stages through to the actual event.

In the run-up to the main event in August 2002 Ladyfest London is running various benefit events to help fund and promote the festival. In addition to UK-wide benefit nights, Ladyfest London has so far teamed up with various venues in London for gigs, merchandise sales and other kinds of performance art benefits.

Like its predecessors in the US and Scotland we expect LF London to be a sell-out success.

All profits made from the actual event will be donated to a charity, yet to be decided on.

MUSIC LONDON 2002

***Throughout history,
music has been used by
people to express their
feelings, desires, outlooks,
even outrage***



***'On purely musical terms, rock
needs to work toward the day
when a female musician is
considered a great artist instead
of a great female artist.'***

Jim Derogatis

Throughout history, music has been used by people to express their feelings, desires, outlooks and outrage. The Ladyfest festivals were born of this tradition when a group of socially active women got together a couple of years ago to express their own feelings similarly.

As at the previous Ladyfests, music will form a key element of the events taking place at Ladyfest London, and we are planning acts from around thirty performers. During the afternoons of the four-day festival, we will be featuring, predominately unsigned, lesser known performers "Upstairs at the Garage" and the evening's musical performances will be from more established acts and will be held at The Garage. After the live music in the evening, the entertainment will continue with sets from both new and established DJs.

We feel that through our selection of acts we should attempt to best reflect the diversity of female musicians. To achieve this we will include performances from the genres of rock, punk, electronica, folk and pop. We also recognise the importance of representing the diversity of London's ethnic mix as best we can.

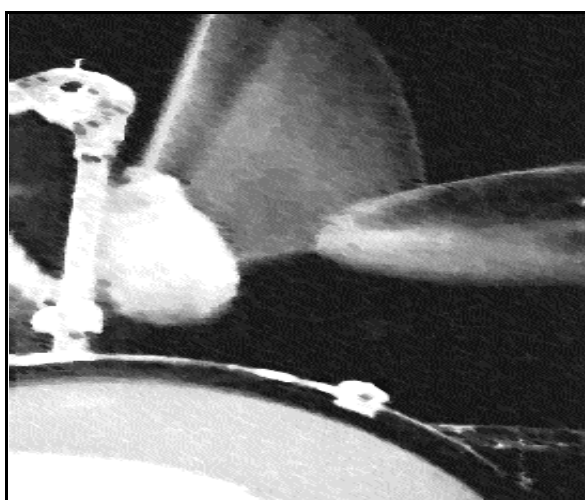
Furthermore we will be involving performers who were instrumental in the planning of the both the inaugural Ladyfest Olympia and those who were involved in planning subsequent Ladyfests.

Confirmed performers include The Haggard, Sarah Dougher and The Gossip from the US and Electrelane, Angelica and Spy 51 from the UK.

In addition to their on-stage performances, many of the performers at Ladyfest London will also be running workshops to share musical skills with those attending the festival. These will include basic guitar instruction, songwriting, and DJing workshops as well as a drum panel where participants will be given the chance to ask technical questions.



We want to provide a demystification of the notion of The Artist as this is historically situated within the male arena and absent of female experience



***'Ladyfest, to me, is all about building community. Women musicians, activists and supporters need these opportunities to come together and create alternative realities, because we are not represented in the mainstream. Our work gets trivialized, or watered-down. Isn't everyone sick of seeing the same images over and over? (...)
Ladyfest is a great chance for us to come together and address these issues in creative and proactive ways.'***
Gina Young - Privy Magazine

The visual art and film exhibits aim to showcase women's art in a liberating way for a wide range of women working in both traditional art circles and underground practices. We are aiming to provide a space for women working on art who feel that their work is not 'valid' or 'proper' in the sense of traditional art schooling in particular.

Many women have uncertainty over the quality of their work due to the constraints put on women's art in this way, the need to prove one's self better than male counterparts is very evident within art history and reflected in young women's attitudes today.

In providing a space for women to display their work without 'traditional art' scrutiny and without the imposition of ideas of 'perfection' placed upon women's production, it will create a nourishing arena. This is not only for women who find it hard to get exhibited after art school training, but also for younger artists creating work related to their own experiences. We are also interested in male artists looking at gender issues or sexual politics and hope that these will form part of the exhibits too.

We want to provide a demystification of the notion of 'The Artist' as this is historically situated within the male arena and absent of female experience. We plan to provide an historical display of women's art in addition and, incorporating workshops and talks, plan to have current artists displaying and discussing their work in a comfortable and uncritical way. These will be learning spaces and also give practical experiences of creation for the audience.

Within a time where women are presented with the idea of (false) equality within the art and film worlds these exhibits will hopefully show a resistant force, against continued negative and under representations within these areas.

Key to our exhibitions is the idea of inclusiveness, of showing work from different countries, different ages, races and sexualities.

Gathering all these areas together in a comprehensive way to avoid marginalisation of each, and definitions subject to each, ie: black female artist, gay female artist, (outdated) feminist artist. The exhibitions aim to draw on and situate women within an art history generally absent from the dominant art arena and to showcase new talent.

WORKSHOPS LONDON 2002

Workshops, talks and panels encourage active festival participation



"It's really important for me that people don't forget that riot grrrl never ended and that there continue to be radical women creating art and music in the underground (...) I see women from all over the country here, all over the world, who are trying to make these spaces for themselves in their own communities, and I just hope Ladyfest gives them some energy and some fuel to keep at it and know that they're not alone."

Sarah Dougher - Singer-songwriter

Workshops, talks and panels encourage active festival participation. They will take place in the daytime over the three days. There will be around 12 workshops/talks and four panels over the whole festival.

Workshops, talks and panels will be held at The Union Chapel and The Horse Hospital; some panels will run at The Hen and Chickens Theatre. They will be run by a mixture of festival organisers, performers and specially invited speakers.

In workshops and talks there's a chance to develop skills and knowledge - learning from the ladies who practice and perfect certain arts, mainly professionally. Learn new dance steps from an all-female dance troupe The Actionettes; perfect the art of songwriting with U.S. singer Sarah Dougher; do some gentle craft-making with the ladies from fashionable East London knitting collective Cast Off; learn to DJ; try some creative writing and hear about self-publishing with zine expert Teal Triggs. Some projects will be collective: learn filmmaking skills with curator and film-maker Emma Hedditch (collaborator with seminal U.S. performance artist Miranda July) - and then make a group film to be shown at the end of the festival; 'stitch n bitch' in a group quilt-making afternoon. Watch some full-length and short independent films made by women - linked by a film talk.

Panels will encourage debate around particular issues and questions. Hear about inspirational heroines in a show 'n' tell-type panel, including festival performers and invited celebrities like music journalist Lucy O'Brien. Debate issues around men in feminism and women in the music industry. Find out how the festival organisers planned the event - and think about running one in your own community.

WORDS LONDON 2002

...too often Spoken Word & Performance events seem to attract only a specific, minority audience



'People can put on their own festival and make it however they want, whatever suits their communities.

And a lot of us will attend.'
Allison Wolfe - Bratmobile

Expressing yourself through various artistic media is at the core of what Ladyfest is about. Spoken word, comedy, cabaret, performance poetry, readings and performance art are all included in the festival. The intention is to provide a showcase for as many performers and writers as possible, encouraging a vocalising of women's feelings about such diverse issues as ethnicity, gender, nationality, self image etc. As well as providing a serious political, emotional and intellectual forum, the events planned promise to be a lot of fun, incorporating music, satire and lots of humour.

London has a thriving arts scene, but too often 'Spoken Word & Performance' events seem to attract only a specific, minority audience. We hope at Ladyfest London to bring different types of media and new means of expression to a fresh audience, who will be inspired to perform themselves or encouraged to seek out similar events in their hometowns.

Some of the 'Spoken Word & Performance' Acts will show at The Hen and Chickens Theatre in the daytime. Other artists will also be performing their work onstage at The Garage in between bands. There will also be a special readings event at The Horse Hospital in the daytime, featuring special guest writers such as music journalist Lucy O'Brien.

The series of Ladyfest London benefits held in the run up to the summer featured a number of the 'Spoken Word & Performance' artists who will perform at the festival. These include London performance poets Salena Saliva Godden and Sue Prince (of the Last Chance Saloon, Waterloo), author Charlotte Cooper, cabaret act 'The Kitsch Kittens' and many more.

ORGANISATION LONDON 2002



Ladyfest London will bring different types of media and new means of expression to a fresh audience



"This is one of the most empowering things I can think of. Listening to what everyone has been able to accomplish with their time and energy - it's counter to what we've been told we should be doing. Instead of consuming, we're producing."

Alice

(A girl who attended Ladyfest Olympia)

In the hope of creating an event that reflects a diverse range of ideas, we actively encourage and support anyone who wants to get involved with the festival to take part in the planning process. In order to achieve this, event co-ordination follows a democratic, committee structure. The opinions of each organiser are valid and respected and so any decisions are made using a consensus-based model.

One of the aims of Ladyfest London is to enable women to participate in the organisation of a large-scale project - giving them valuable experience in many areas, from planning and curating events and booking acts to working on the financial and logistical side of the festival. Although we are keen to encourage women to take part in the planning process, we also encourage like-minded men to become involved in this stage of the festival.

Through publicity and word of mouth, we have encouraged many volunteers to take part in the planning of Ladyfest London. We have a team of eleven key committee co-ordinators and numerous committee members who are also active in developing the project. All of those working on planning the festival are unpaid volunteers. However, we will be paying performers at the festival, believing that it is often particularly important for female artists to be compensated financially for their contribution to the arts.

Although the money raised by ticket sales for Ladyfest London will fund a proportion of the event, the organisers are also applying to organisations for grants, soliciting sponsorship and raising money through benefit events (including a monthly Club Night).

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