



STEPPING OUT

This month, **Marianka Swain** learns about London's bid for the Gay Games 2018

"The success of the 2012 Olympics

was a huge boost for London – it gave everyone confidence that this is a city in which you can run major international sporting events," notes Rory Desch, who is on London's bid team for Gay Games X in 2018.

"We're in discussion with the Mayor of London's office and venue operators about using some of the Stratford facilities if our bid is successful."

London is competing against Amsterdam, Limerick, Orlando and Paris to host the largest gay sports and culture festival in the world. Since 1980, the Gay Games has been held every four years, regularly attracting more than 12,000 participants from 70 nations competing in 30 events under the banner "Participation, Inclusion, and Personal Best".

"We founded our bid team, co-ordinated by Sport London, after the 2010 Games in Cologne," says Rory. "There was a huge representation by British participants, which made us think how fantastic it would be to bring the Games



to London. Organising it is complex, with so many different sports and cultural events across multiple venues – we need the involvement of local government authorities and the event will really be delivered by volunteers.

"We've had invaluable assistance from the London Legacy Development Corporation and London & Partners in planning our bid, plus support from David Cameron and Boris Johnson, and our cultural offering has backing from the Barbican, Matthew Bourne's New Adventures and same-sex dance organisations like the Pink Dancers, Pink Jukebox, the Gay Gordons, the Sugar Dandies and the Cactus Club."

London's bid will be submitted to the Federation of Gay Games

at the end of this month, and the host city will be announced later in the year. Rory feels we have a strong chance of success: "I'm sure London's vibrant LGBT community and businesses would roll out the red carpet for our tens of thousands of international Games visitors. This is one of the most inclusive cities in the world, with a number of gay

sports teams like Out to Swim and Soho Rowing Club, and our history of equality inspired one of our bid slogans: 'You can be your best self in London 2018'.

"Just like in the Olympics, the UK did brilliantly at the Cologne Gay Games, third only to the United States and host nation Germany in the medal table.

Along with the 2017

World Athletics Championships, we'd love for the 2018 Games to be part of London's extraordinary Olympic legacy." ●

BACK THE BID

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• Donate £100 via the 100Out website www.100-out.org.uk