Cowley Road Carnival Goes Virtual, online on 5 July

Friday 3 July, 2020

Oxford's iconic Cowley Road Carnival goes virtual this weekend on Sunday 5 July. This year's event will be broadcasting online across 4 'stages' from 11 am with the eclectic mix of live music, DJ sets, dance, performances, workshops and fun activities you expect from Oxford's biggest and liveliest community festival of the year.

Tune in via the Virtual Carnival Live page of the website www.cowleyroadworks.co.uk where you will find out how to watch and get involved. The Road stage will feature live music from

Indie rockers Quartermelon with their signature surf-rock style upbeat contemporary pop music which will scream summer – and bring the sunshine to lockdown Carnival!

Little Brother Eli, an energetic local 4-piece combining rock, disco and electro sounds with hip-hop rhythms are playing, as well as The Jerichos, Waterfahl, Danny Mellin, Doctor Steevo. Newcomer Sarah Derrick will be performing as well as established Carnival favourites Horns of Plenty and Ran Kan Kan.

Josh Rigal from Little Brother Eli said: "We're super excited to be involved in the Carnival this year - It's our first ever virtual festival and we're stoked to be able to bring our fans some live music at a time when live music is almost impossible."

Danny Mellin said: "It's really great to be invited to play a set for Cowley Road Carnival after being unable to play regular gigs for so long. It's such a good idea for the community and to help raise money for mental health charities. It's an absolute pleasure to be involved."

There will be more music from Lost Darren, Leon P Fields, Patrick Griffin, Roguey Roads as well as dance from Pos Decadent Dance Hall and Ethno England Brazilian Workshop, all live on the Carnival Music Stage via Zoom (the link will be published on the website www.cowleyroadworks.co.uk)

Singer songwriter Patrick Griffin will be performing his beautiful lyrical songs with catchy melodies. He said: "This is my first time being involved as a performer with the Cowley Rd Carnival, it's a shame it isn't under the usual format but it's great it has the support and team behind it so it can still go ahead virtually. Having attended in previous years, it is such a vibrant, diverse and eclectic event with a fantastic energy about it which is so well supported in the community, so I appreciate the opportunity to be able to contribute to that."

Carnival Day wouldn't be complete without some really BIG DJ sets and, of course, Count Skylarkin' who will be closing the DJs Live Mixcloud stage from 4pm.

Skylarkin' said: "Everything has changed this year. We've never needed to feel connected by music, art, and community so much - and recent happenings such as Lockdown Festival have proved that this can be achieved in a way that generates genuine excitement and interaction. I've played every single Carnival since the first in 2001, so I'm not going to stop now. I'll be doing my best to bring the vibes and possibly roadblock my back garden. Bring your airhorns and blow your whistles."

Cheeky DJ representing Good Riddims will get the day off to a kicking start at 11 am, followed by DJs Tiger Mendoza and Yaya who will be smashing their trademark "Wheedle Scratch" from their respective homes – Tiger Mendoza beats and instruments and Yaya with the cuts. Although they have both been streaming DJ sets live during the lock down this will the first time that they have done anything like this together.

Completing the Live DJ line up are DJ Binge, DJ Ova Proof and DJ G' s Soulful House. DJ G said: "I have been involved with Carnival since before the beginning. Glad to be a DJ on the line up. Usually I am on the Simple Stage

"Coming home means a lot to me, getting together with the community, my family and friends. I do a lot of work internationally, so this is always the cherry on the top of the cake for the year and why I love doing the Carnival so much. Having grown up in Cowley, it's part of who I am and the multi-racial aspect of Carnival.

Playing music has the power to touch people's hearts and soul to make them feel good."

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The Playroom Stage is a second Zoom performance and activity area. Go here for dance, poetry, workshops, AfroFusion and hula hooping! Plus on the Discovery Zone there are more fun activities to get involved with, including some suggestions for decorating your home and garden for Carnival at Home.

Clare O'Hara, director of Cowley Road Works, the charity which organises the Carnival said: "Everyone has been amazing. We are really thrilled that it has all come together for what will be a uniquely different Carnival Day on Sunday. We have a real mix this year, with some big names like Little Brother Eli and Quartermelon, alongside new local acts like Sarah Derrick and Carnival favourites Ran Kan Kan, AfroFusion and Count Skylarkin'.

Supporting Mental Health

Autumn Neagle, who usually manages the line-up of performers at the Restore Garden, is organising a Virtual Chill Out Zone featuring a lyrical journey through one day in lockdown from dawn to dusk featuring a colourful and talented array of friends, collaborators and past carnival performers, to raise funds and awareness for Oxfordshire Mind, Restore and Cowley Road Works.

Autumn said: "I've seen everyone's favourite party grow and transform through many incarnations to the amazing diverse cultural celebration we all know and love. From street to park, dancefloor to balcony, pub to road – no year has been so unusual or challenging as 2020. Today's line up would normally be set in the sunshine and flower-filled oasis of Restore's garden stage, but even so, this year we've created something special that I hope we can hold as a memory of these strange days. A huge thank you to the creativity and time given by the performers."

Clare O'Hara said: "We work closely with both organisations which are based on the Cowley Road. In this most challenging of times, with so many people struggling and needing mental health support, we are delighted to help. We urge anyone who enjoys this unique Virtual Carnival Day to donate if you can. We have donate buttons on the website and you can go straight to the fundraiser at JustGiving. "

Watch and take part in Virtual Carnival Day online on Sunday 5 July from 11 am at www.cowleyroadworks.co.uk , Facebook, Twitter @CowleyCarnval and Instagram #Cowleyroadcarnival #virtualcarnival #carnivalathome.

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