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# At Honk! fest, crowds sure to have blast

By Bob Young

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Like your entertainment a little eccentric and politically irreverent? How about mobile, dancing-inducing and free?

If you're nodding in the affirmative, this weekend's aptly named Honk! Festival was put together with you in mind.

A quirky event that's taken on a life of its own, the second annual Honk! presents nearly 20 brass-heavy street bands from as far away as Rome and Portland, Ore.

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In addition to scores of outdoor performances in Somerville's Davis Square tomorrow, Honk! has expanded to three full days of events, including a Sunday parade that's likely to be one of the most amusing ever.

Marching from Davis Square to the Harvard Square Oktoberfest, the bands will be joined by a hodgepodge of

groups including the roller skating Derby Dames and Vermont's Bread and Puppet Theater. Click and Clack of NPR's "Car Talk" are grandmasters.

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The parade's theme: "Reclaim the Streets for Horns, Bikes and Feet." A new Honk! stage has been added to the Oktoberfest extravaganza, which will feature one of the weekend's special guests, the Original Big Seven Social Aid and Pleasure Society band from New Orleans.

Last year's inaugural festival attracted throngs to Davis Square, where a dozen mostly East Coast street bands performed everything from Balkan jazz to funkified klezmer.

"It was a big success last year, kind of to our surprise," said trombonist John Bell, a member of the locally based Second Line Social Aid and Pleasure Society Brass Band and a festival organizer. "Afterward we had all these other bands contact us and say they wanted to come this year."

And they're coming from Italy (Pink Puffers Drum and Brass Phunk Band), Canada (ChaoticInsurrection Ensemble), Oregon (MarchFourth Marching Band), North Carolina (Cakalak Thunder), San Francisco (Brass Liberation Orchestra), Chicago (Black Bear Combo), Brooklyn, N.Y., (Hungry March Band) and Providence (What Cheer? Brigade).

Drummer Big Ed Buckner, leader of the Original Big Seven Social Aid and Pleasure Society band, is bringing a group of new-generation players, many of them teenagers who had relatives in earlier editions of the group. He said they carry on a centuries-old New Orleans tradition in which Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs serve as neighborhood civic associations.

"Our club's band was the first to have a parade after (Hurricane) Katrina," Buckner said. "At least twice a week we parade around the neighborhood. We do all kinds of services. If somebody needs help - financially, physically - we're willing to do it. We're in the business of helping brothers and sisters in the community. We're coming up north to bring that spirit and our New Orleans jazz-junk-funk. When we get up there, we're gonna take it to the streets, man."gftaglinerobercyoung@comcast.net

*The Honk! Festival, today through Sunday, with free outdoor performances tomorrow from noon to 7 p.m. in Davis Square, Somerville.*

Go to [www.honkfest.org](http://www.honkfest.org) for details.

Big Draw: The Pink Puffers Drum and Brass Phunk Band from Rome, above, and MarchFourth Marching Band from Portland, Ore., are among the acts coming from far and wide to attend the Honk! Festival.

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