

Mayor plans to take music to young Londoners across the capital

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London Mayor Boris Johnson has unveiled plans for Rhythm of London, two days of music events and activities being developed as part of his drive to increase musical opportunities and education for all young Londoners.

Dozens of events are planned across the capital for the musical celebration, which will take place on 10-11 July. From performances in schools to 'street pianos' in London squares, the aim is to inspire and most importantly encourage musical participation, especially by those who may be less experienced or doing it for the first time.

Boris Johnson says: 'We are planning a magnificent programme of events to get young Londoners enthused about music making, and give them a chance to shine.'

'London's thriving music scene is known around the world and is constantly re-invigorated by fresh ideas and talent. But despite music being such an important part of London's cultural and social landscape, it is not always easy for young Londoners to get access to music education, instrument tuition and venues.'

'Rhythm of London will be a brilliant chance for young Londoners to have a go. We want to capitalise on their incredible enthusiasm for music and unlock the capital's hidden talent.'

The first day, Friday 10 July, will focus on music education and performance in schools. Schools throughout the capital have been invited to take part, with all types of music and musical activity welcome in any location – not just school premises - and young people of any ability being encouraged to have a go.

Rhythm of London will feature other free local events at a range of locations the following day (Saturday 11 July), including the finale to the City of London Festival and Sing London's 'Street Piano' project, which will see pianos placed in public squares and at city landmarks for the public to use and enjoy.

There will be live music performed by local musicians in bandstands in Barnet, Golders Green, Hampstead, Hillingdon, Redbridge and Tower Hamlets, in collaboration with Matrix and the Musicians Union.

Young buskers will get the chance to perform on the London Underground and there also will be an opportunity to encounter a variety of stringed instruments – which could range from the guitar to the balalaika to the ukulele - at 'Pluck', which is taking place in Canary Wharf as part of the City of London Festival.

Chris Cull, Richmond Music Trust, says: 'We welcome the Mayor's Rhythm of London campaign. London has so much to offer young musicians whatever type of music they play. To raise the public profile of what is out there for young people is fantastic and we very much hope that as many schools as possible in Richmond will get involved.'

Kate Smart, Music Coordinator, Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School, Brixton, comments: 'We are delighted to be a Rhythm of London School. Not only will the campaign allow us to showcase our talented youngsters to a wider audience, but through the scheme we will be able to find out how our students can further their musical development.'

Susanne Buck, Education Manager, The British Music Experience, adds: 'The British Music Experience is delighted to be working with the Mayor of London as a Rhythm of London 2009 Partner. As Britain's only fully interactive permanent exhibition of Rock and Pop, based in The O2 London, we are ideally placed to help raise standards in schools not just in music education but across the curriculum.'

Further information will be released in due course about Rhythm of London, which is part of the Mayor's plan to ensure Londoners have access to musical events and education in every part of the capital, not just central London.

To help achieve this, the Rise festival, which was first established in 1996 and developed by the previous administration and cost £551,000 to stage in Finsbury Park last year, will not be taking place this summer.

Without a major sponsor in place it is not considered appropriate to spend such a large amount on a single music event, particularly during a recession. Instead, the money will be used to fund a multitude of events and grassroots activities across London. The Mayor hopes to energise the local music scene across the capital, and feed into a longer-term strategy to get young people more involved in making and listening to music.

Rhythm of London is also part of the Mayor's longer-term aim to increase access opportunities for young Londoners to participate and develop skills in music and art. This includes launching the 'No Strings Attached' musical instrument amnesty with Julian Lloyd Webber and Time Out and a major music summit at City Hall that culminated with a live performance by young musicians and Lloyd Webber in February. The Mayor is backing Children's Art Day, which also takes place in July and information about other initiatives is being developed to improve access to music and music education will be revealed in coming months.