

GALA '22



Official Event
Programme



Peckham Rye Park
New Bank Holiday, 2–4 June 2022



FABRICLIVE X GALA FESTIVAL

2nd June 2022

The Pleasure Dome
Peckham Rye Park

Goldie

Groove Chronicles (Noodles)

Nia Archives

Off The Meds

Shannen SP

Shy One

FABRICLIVE



After the nail-biting build up and emotional release of last year’s festival, we’re beyond thrilled to welcome you back for the sixth edition of GALA. Looking back, the 2021 event was a gamble which truly paid off for everyone present, and the resounding success of the event set us up perfectly to head into our most ambitious year yet.

The music at the heart of GALA is still bound together by warmth and soul, whether it’s a veteran legend or a vital newcomer, a live performer or a razor-sharp selector. There are of course some treasured international guests amongst the line-up, but we’ve taken care to platform as much local talent as we can – a value we’re holding onto as we continue to grow year by year.

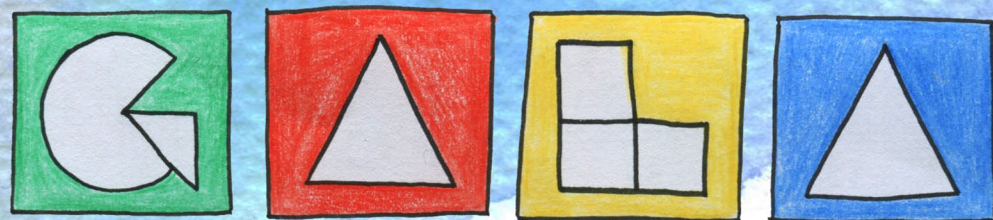
For us, GALA is nothing without the support of the local community, and that’s why we’re initiating more projects working with local groups to reduce our environmental impact and create opportunities for people from Peckham and the surrounding area. On that note, please take care when visiting our neighbourhood, and support the local businesses in the area where you can on your way to and from GALA.

Above all, we simply can’t wait to get together in Peckham Rye Park again. For ’22 we’ve tweaked the experience in subtle ways, whether looking at stage design differently or widening the scope of sounds. But like always at GALA you can be sure of a special three days and nights dancing amongst kindred spirits to some of the best music you’ve ever heard, brought to you by the most passionate souls on the planet.

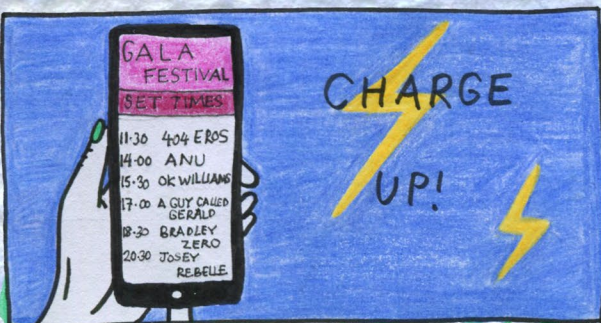
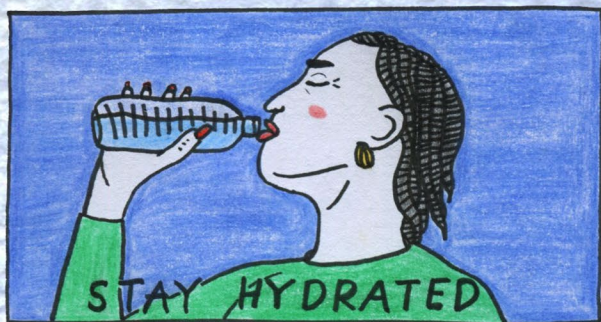
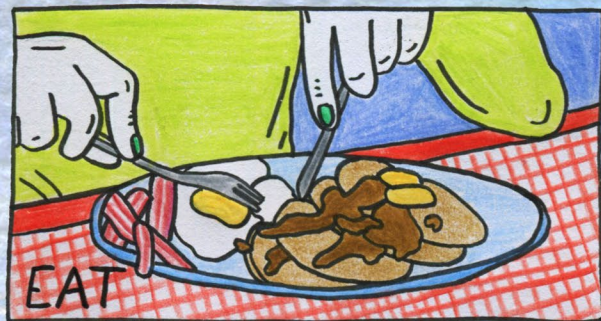
See you in June!

The GALA team x

PREPARING FOR YOUR DAY AT



BY ANU



AND REMEMBER... RESPECT PEOPLE'S
SPACE & DON'T TOUCH ANYONE ←
WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT! EVEN IF YOU
NEED TO GET PAST THEM!!!

Contents

Anu's illustrated guide to a great day at GALA – 04

The beloved DJ and illustrator
shows us what we need to
get the best out of three days
dancing in Peckham Rye Park.

Sue Veneers Club – 10

Chester Hayes guides us
through a visual celebration of
your fierce and fabulous hosts in
the Pleasuredome.

GALA 2022 Festival Guide – 13

From cutting-edge jazz and
deepest house to joyous disco
and so much more, here's
everything happening over three
days at GALA.

Everything is a Blessing: Leroy Burgess – 24

The disco and boogie legend
behind a near-infinite amount of
classics bestows his wisdom and
infectious positivity on us.

Editor
Oli Warwick

Design
Femke Campbell & Manu Rodriguez

Art Direction
Charlie Newhouse

Contributors
Anu Ambasna
Ruby Lott-Lavigna
Brynley Odu Davies



Changing Places: Life and sound in South East London – 6

Ruby Lott-Lavigna talks to Bradley Zero, OK
Williams and Ojerime about their relationship
with their surroundings on GALA's home turf.

Spaces of Worship: Amit & Aneesh – 21

The brothers behind Brilliant Corners,
Giant Steps and mu open up about the
relationship between space and sound.



For Our People: BORN N BREAD – 26

Meet the five-strong Peckham-rooted
collective running a stage takeover and
hosting talks and workshops in the run-up
to GALA.

Changing Places

Words: Ruby Lott-Lavigna
Photos: OK Williams by Guarionex Rodriguez, Jr.
Ojerime by Amy Peskett
Bradley Zero by Hannah Burton

Life and Sound in South East London

Ruby Lott-Lavigna speaks to three of GALA's South East London artists about how their music relates to the place they call home.

London is in a state of flux. Blocks of flats emerge out of nowhere. Clubs become Tescos. A pandemic turns a bustling city centre into a ghost town. Your favourite record store disappears. A new record store appears alongside a small plates restaurant and a deli. A festival is cancelled. People leave, people return. Cycles repeat themselves as the city changes its face.

When it comes to South East London, and in particular Peckham – the home of GALA festival – that change has been ongoing. It was here in 1795 that poet and artist William Blake had visions of an angel on the Rye. It's where one of London's largest clubs, Lazerdrome, existed by night as an emblem of 1990s rave culture, and by day as a Lazerquest. It's where grime, nu-jazz and electronic musicians have been born and moulded, streaming through the airwaves of pirate radio. Like most of London (and the UK), complex economic factors have impacted the demographic of the area, alongside a pandemic that threatened nightlife and hospitality. But today, as we emerge bleary-eyed into a year of parties, dinners, lateral flow tests, offices and festivals, the busy streets of South East London, lined with boxes of bright red scotch bonnet chillies and glowing Morley's signs, are coming back to life.

Bradley Zero, DJ and founder of the record label and night Rhythm Section, has been around long enough to witness the area's ebb and flow. Having moved there from Leeds in 2008 during his Fine Art undergraduate degree, Zero's early memories of South East London are of squat raves, art parties and thriving local radio. It all started on South City Radio and throwing parties at Canavan's pool club. In 2014, Zero launched the Rhythm Section label. His musical career has always moved in tandem with the South East – one of Rhythm Section's first releases, an iconic percussive album carefully melding jazz, hip-hop and house by Al Dobson Jr., was named after Peckham's main road, Rye Lane.

"When I moved down here, I was connected to creative people from all walks of life: people who I could see myself in, people who were doing things that I wanted to do, people who looked like me, people who looked different to me," he tells me, speaking from his flat in East Dulwich. "It was just a real eye-opener. I felt more at home than I had ever felt, and it shifted a lot of things into perspective."

"It just felt right," he adds. "I was immediately taken in by the people in the area, but then [I] also got to build my own community around the thing that I do. It felt like a very exciting dynamic."



As Peckham's popularity grows, increasing investment in the area risks changing it for the worse. "You have the double-edged sword of a place being the victim of its own success," he says of Peckham. "Somewhere becoming a destination and a recognised cultural hotspot [where] you get the negative aspects of prices rising, people commodifying it, money-driven enterprise coming from outside to exploit what's happening inside and then bringing more people in who aren't connected to what's going on. It's this endless cycle."

Zero's not wrong. After the financial crash in 2012, house prices in Peckham were some of the fastest to rise. In 2021, the average cost of a property in the area has more than doubled since 2012, according to Land Registry data. All the while, council-backed developments appear, accused of fuelling gentrification rather than halting it. If London's asset driven property market and profit-hungry developers weren't enough to damage an area, there was always the pandemic. With the

uncertainty facing businesses, much-loved venues closed down, including the aforementioned pool bar Canavan's.

"I can't think of [a solution] other than some form of rent control," says Zero, "so that an area can still flourish, but it doesn't have to [cause] a wholesale turnover of inhabitants."

"You definitely see South London change really subtly," Kanyin Williams tells me. "Actually, I don't know if it is that fucking subtle."

Williams, who DJs as OK Williams, plays energy-filled sets that boisterously transition from hard techno to pop to drill. She moved to the area after dropping out of uni and a short stint back at her parents' in Luton. As a result, Williams' musical career has been moulded in the cracks and pavements of South East London, her "spiritual home". She remembers an iconic New Year's Day gig early on in her career at The Rising Sun, a former



pub turned club/studio and living space, playing, er, as the sun rose. “My fucking set started at 8am and went on till 10am [and] it was incredible,” she says. “It was amazing. There was this girl crawling on the floor, having some sort of out-of-body experience.”

It’s fitting Williams mentions The Rising Sun. It’s a venue that encapsulates the struggle facing musicians in South East London. In the midst of the pandemic, residents – mostly artists and musicians – were faced with an eviction notice after their landlord decided to sell. Ever since, the tenants have been fighting to turn the creative space into a cooperative, bringing it under not-for-profit collective ownership and ensuring the residents can continue to live there without the risk of eviction or rent increases.

“I think the greatness of South London is that there’s such a prominent music scene, but there

are so many different music scenes [within that],” says Williams. “When I was learning how to DJ, I was hanging out with my friends who liked electronic music. But then there were other producers that made lots of hip-hop, R&B and jazzy stuff. I was really fortunate to meet and mix with loads of people that were doing so many different things with music. [It’s] just a big melting pot.”

The area’s musical diversity is one that suits Williams’ style behind the decks: “I feel like the way I DJ is really indicative of who I am and what I like, because I am so interested and moved by loads of different things, scenes and cultures,” she says. “I love electronic music but that’s not where my love of music began. I love hip-hop. I love R&B. I love drill and trap. I love pop music. I love fucking ambient music. I love indie rock, I love indie shit. I just love so many different types of music. When I DJ, I try to show that.”

While South East London’s electronic music scene draws crowds, it’s not the only genre growing here. Ojerime, an R&B artist originally from Brockley, is a local in ascendance having released her much-awaited mixtape, *B4 I Breakdown*, in 2020.

“The lyrics [and] the melodies that I adopted for my music [are] from just being somebody who’s grown up listening to grime in South East London,” Ojerime tells me. “Though it’s not directly infused in my music, I’ve definitely seen that it’s had an impact on my vernacular, and things I’m able to say in my music.”

Ojerime’s smooth vocal lines and soft trap beats evoke a time of lipgloss in the back of a car with early 00s pop blasting through the radio. It’s a sound she’s picked up through a patchwork of influences: “My journey to music was pretty much hearing it around the house growing up, in the car, at parties,” she says. “Listening to my dad’s CDs in the car and in the house – it was like a fusion of hip-hop, R&B, a bit of reggae, [and] a bit of original Nigerian Afrobeat music.”

As a child of the South East, the changing nature of the area has stood out to Ojerime. “I feel like some businesses that have opened are not in the interest of Peckham,” she says. “There’s been a lot of changes in restaurants and businesses that are opening up, but none of them are really in favour with the people in the area.”

Despite the changes in the area, not all hope is lost – especially when there’s a strong sense of musical community. “I love living in South East London,” says Williams. “There are so many sick musicians that live really close to me. It’s really nice that I can easily see them and that we can collaborate really easily. I love living in this area. I always say: ‘I will live in South East until I die.’”

Not one to throw around the word community lightly, Zero has complex feelings on the area’s change. ‘Are we at a lull?’ I think to myself after our chat. Will the Foxtons and natural wine bars kill all that’s good with Peckham? After our call, he sends me a message.

“I think amidst all of the doom and gloom of gentrification and the endless cycle of being pushed further and further out of the centre I forgot to kind of express how almost triumphant and incredibly poignant it was to have the big return from the lockdown happen in, essentially, my backyard,” he says, referring to GALA’s 2021 festival. “Even for the first year of GALA – being able to literally push a shopping trolley of my equipment to the festival site just felt special. GALA felt like it was for us, for the locals.”

The changing face of South East, and London as a whole, can be hard to resist. Gathering with kindred spirits around culture, especially music, can be one way to offset the rampant individualism at the root of a city’s downfall.

“There are so many creative people living and working around here, you know?,” says Zero. “People always find a way in London. That is the story of the city.”



Sue Veneers has always stuck out like a fabulously adorned thumb. From her roots in a queer-centric space in the predominantly straight UK festival scene to countless club nights and festival appearances, Chester Hayes’ sassy, seasoned rave creation is the glamour nana still standing after the lights come up, faithfully embodied by Hayes’ extended family of dancers and performers. Sue’s imposing presence is the very essence of GALA’s own Pleasuredome, and they’ve got a brand new look in store for this year.

Quotes:
Chester Hayes
Photos:
Hannah Burton

Sue Veneers Club

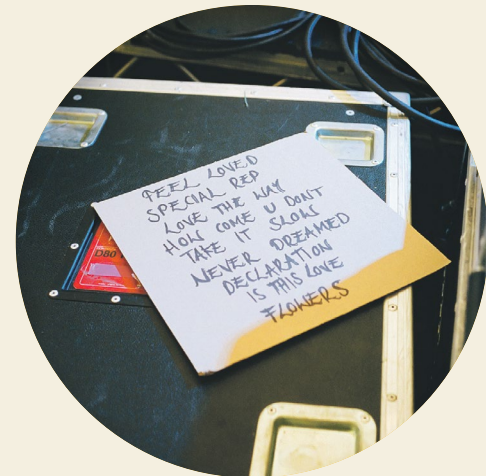
“Sue is this fictitious rave character – the last one to leave the dance floor. There's people on the scene I look at and think, ‘oh my god, you're such a Sue.’”



“The festival world is Sue Veneers’ true home. That's really where the magic happens for us.”

"I like to think Sue Veneers has its own movement language. We create a space to speak that language and express the power of our queer dancing bodies"

Photos: Frankie Casillo



Festival Guide

Thursday



Little Dragon

Hot on the heels of their sixth album *New Me, Same Us*, Little Dragon return for an exclusive UK gig. The Grammy nominated Swedish band have grown exponentially since their debut album way back in 2007. They've delivered more than enough party-starting crossover hits, swerved into silky slow jams and covered endless ground in between – natural-born headliners with a show and a sound just perfect for the GALA main stage.

Nia Archives

Fusing soulful songwriting with dexterous jungle production, Bradford-born Nia Archives is a shining beacon of self-reliant expression and creativity. Her sound is universal, steeped in warm melodies and catchy vocals, while the breakbeat cuts are sharp enough to satisfy the most jaded head. In the wake of the incredible *Forbidden Feelings* EP, this is the perfect chance to catch her brand of self-styled “soft-hearted, cutting edge, lo-fi jungle for introverted extroverts”.



Charlie Bones

Since going his own way, the legend of Charlie Bones has only grown stronger. It's impossible to imagine contemporary radio without the Do!!You!!! doyen's ruminations on life and his soul-warming selections. Stepping off the airwaves for some IRL good times, Mr. Bones and some of his nearest and dearest will be setting up shop in a secret location on the GALA site. Musically, anything could happen, but it's guaranteed to be magic.

KOKOROKO

Led by Sheila Maurice-Grey, KOKOROKO fuse Afrobeat and jazz with a fierce, modern impetus which has rightly placed them at the forefront of London's live music scene. Riding high on a run of incredible singles since 2019, their debut album *Could We Be More* is due this summer in a burst of powerful P-funk style vocal choruses and fluid melodious patterns and pattering rhythms inspired by West Africa.



Children of Zeus
Little Dragon

Main Stage
Flo Dill
Mansur Brown
Ojerime
KOKOROKO

Joe Armon-Jones
Nu Genea (full band)

The Pleasure Dome hosted by Fabriclive
Goldie
Off The Meds
Groove Chronicles (Noodles)
Shannen SP
Nia Archives
Shy One

Patio
404 Eros
Bradley Zero
Anu
Josey Rebelle
A Guy Called Gerald
OK Williams

Giant Steps
Amit & Aneesh
Beauty & The Beat
Binker & Moses
Brian Not Brian
Charlie Dark
Hunee (extended set)
Nubya Garcia
Sons of Kemet
+ special guests TBA

BORN N BREAD
Jordss
Laelo Black
Clarisse C
DJNEYNEY
Glade Marie
Rivah

Friday



Soichi Terada live

From his breakthrough years in the early 90s to his 2014 renaissance, Soichi Terada has spread infectious positivity as a Japanese house music pioneer. In those early years he was a cult concern, but these days he's known and loved the world over. That's equally down to his incredible shirt collection, his unmistakable grin, and of course the unbridled uplift of his live sets.

Yen Sung

As a resident of Lisbon's infamous Lux club, Yen Sung is one of the most prominent DJs in the history of Portugal's club scene. She's got a deep connection to the music she plays, whether indulging in her first love of hip-hop (she was in pioneering crew Da Weasel) or locking into a house and techno marathon. Whatever direction her set takes, you're guaranteed to hear sounds you'd never heard before, expertly blended by a seasoned pro.



Courtesy

If there's one DJ who embodies the upwards curve of the Danish club music scene, it's Courtesy. Since breaking through in the mid-00s she's established radio stations, run labels and developed her own craft in a canny blend of obsessively dug-out obscurities and the latest cut and thrust from the scene in Copenhagen and beyond. She's a thrilling, unpredictable DJ joining the dots between disparate sounds you'd never dare to pair.



DJ Harvey

One of dance music's great survivors, DJ Harvey has a near-mythical charisma from his physical presence through to the way he plays his selections. His experience adds up to a Herculean instinct for party dynamics, from the best dub of a classic track to the perfect time to drop a monster curveball and set the place alight. Quite simply, Harvey brings it, without fail, every time.



Main Stage

Damiano von Erckert
Jamie 3:26 b2b

DJ Harvey
Secretsundaze

Donna Leake
Move D

Patio

Antal
RAW SILK

Gerd Janson
Soichi Terada live

Mafalda
Yen Sung

The Pleasure Dome

Courtesy
Shanti Celeste

iona
With performance by Job Jobse
Parris
Sue Veneers Club

Worldwide FM

Awesome Tapes
Gilles Peterson

Dan Shake
Lauren Hansom
Tereza
Thristian

ERICA
Ruby Savage

Refuge Worldwide

Amaliah
Richard Akingbehin

NIKS
No Plastic
Riva & Saachi

Saturday



Marcellus Pittman

Detroit maverick Marcellus Pittman doesn't do it like anyone else from his hometown, but he undoubtedly captures the essence of Motor City dance music in his sublime, deep tracking, soul-nagging DJ sets. Finding emotional power in angular machine funk and knowing just when to bring a wayward groove home, he can span disco, house, techno and beyond. Pittman's sets speak to the fundamentals of Black American dance music, and they're a marvel to behold.

Pender Street Steppers

If there was ever a crew who summed up the sumptuous haze of Vancouver's dance music scene, it's surely Pender Street Steppers. Jack Jutson and Liam Butler's partnership has yielded reams of woozy house since they first came through with their Mood Hut label nearly 10 years ago, but when they take to the decks their sound leaves ample room for sweet 80s electro-funk, jangly new wave and all manner of other cosmic delights.



Powder

With a keen instinct for ear-catching curveballs outside of house music conventions, Japan's Powder has quietly become one of the most treasured artists in this here scene. As a selector she approaches each set with an exacting sensitivity to the situation, delivering an experience somewhere beyond what you expect, but always exactly what you need. From slippery rhythms to gorgeous melodic crescendos, she's a truly unforgettable DJ.

Tama Sumo b2b Lakuti

Tama Sumo and Lakuti are a match made in heaven, consummated in the beating heart of Berlin's club scene but very much a globally conscious collaboration. Their shared reverence for house music pays due care to the roots while always looking for authentic artists carrying the culture forwards. Their sets reflect this discerning approach, where joy and empowerment spills from every track and a deeper meaning comes as standard.



Main Stage

Gabrielle Kwarteng
Leroy Burgess & Saving Coco
Marcellus Pittman
Jeremy Underground
Palms Trax
Tarzsa

Patio

Cormac
Roman Flügel
Danielle
DJ Tennis
Powder

The Pleasure Dome hosted by Horse Meat Disco

Artwork
Horse Meat Disco
Homoelectric: Luke Una ^{b2b} Jamie Bull
Michelle Manetti ^{b2b} Gina Breeze
Tama Sumo ^{b2b} Lakuti
With performance ^{by} Sue Veneers Club

Rhythm Section

Bradley Zero ^{b2b} Hidden Spheres
Pender Street Steppers
The Colours That Rise ^(live)
Jerry
Session Victim ^(live)
Paula Tape
Zakia
Z Lovecraft

Rye Wax Takeover

Lmajor ^{b2b} Decibella
VY-S ^{b2b} Tomomi
Huna ^{b2b} Eich
Marcy ^{b2b} Unlikely
33rd December
Ambient Babestation Meltdown ^{b2b} Bleaching Agent
Nowt ^{b2b} Jlte



Spaces in the Place: Amit & Aneesh



From Brilliant Corners to Giant Steps, Amit and Aneesh Patel are on a devoted quest to match exquisite music, impeccable sound and excellent food and drink with the perfect setting.

Words: [Oli Warwick](#)
Photos: [Brynley Odu Davies](#)

You would think Amit and Aneesh Patel have enough on their plates already. Their Dalston audiophile bar-cum-Japanese eatery Brilliant Corners continues to lead the way for London's growing network of high-end listening spaces, while their Idle Moments shop has become a coveted destination for those seeking expertly selected wine, records and hi-fi gear. They also have Giant Steps, which has moonlighted at various festivals and recently took up temporary residence by the canal in Hackney. Giant Steps will soon be hosting a stage at GALA, as the brothers Patel collaborate with the Assemble design collective to create a bespoke space geared towards incredible musical experiences.

As if that wasn't enough, they're busy opening a new venue just a short hop down Kingsland Road from Brilliant Corners. Where their first venue is dedicated to the ultimate experience for recorded music played through a near-mythical Kilpschorn sound system, the nearly-completed "mu" is aiming to be the restaurant and live music space we all dream of.

"We want it to appeal to everybody," says Amit. "Ideally, it would be a pleasant surprise for someone who's just coming for simple meal. We don't want it to be snooty or elitist."

"Last summer we started to do more live things at Giant Steps," says Aneesh. "DJ listening bars these days are quite ubiquitous in some ways. But actually, are there enough places for live music, where you can go on a casual basis? Like how it might have been in New York in the old days. You might not know who's playing, or there might be a band playing the whole week, as opposed to rushing to buy tickets and shows selling out."



Musically, "mu" looks set to continue down the path laid out by Brilliant Corners. It's certainly not strictly defined, but amongst the coterie of selectors closely related to the listening bar (think Donna Leake, Cedric Woo, Charlie Dark) there's a consistent tendency towards jazzy flights of fancy, psychedelically-charged soul, awe-inspiring sounds from distant lands and the most deeply dug obscurities from between the conventional cracks, all shrouded in a pervasive warmth that mirrors the soft amber tones of the lighting in their spaces. Given the rude health and youthful exuberance of London's live jazz scene, there's a fully-formed culture ready to align with the space, but the discerning tastes of the team involved

suggest a night at mu will have a distinct twist. Space has sat at the heart of the Patel's endeavours since they started out with intimate album listening sessions in the basement of their friend's wine bar, and they take the idea of setting seriously. Whether it's the dimensions of Brilliant Corners in relation to the sonic physics of their prized system or the prevalence of palms in their temporary builds for Giant Steps, the environment is as important as the music in the experiences they seek to create. When it comes to creating such spaces for a fleeting weekend, the endeavour seems even more impressive, even if their dedication sometimes slips into downright impracticality.

"I can't believe we took the BBC console to a festival," admits Amit.

"The BBC console is basically what they used to broadcast radio back in the day," explains Aneesh, "when the BBC spared no expense in terms of the quality of the engineering. It does sound good, but more than that it just looks quite amazing. But it's supremely heavy and very, very impractical to take to a festival, and I think most of the DJs were like, 'that thing is very difficult to DJ on.'"

"Just putting in the sound system alone is not what it's about," he adds. "For us there always has to be the whole feeling when you walk into a space. That's a major contributor to this ability to get a bit deeper into the music. If the lighting gives it that right kind of glow, the acoustics of the tent, the palm trees... Sometimes half of the schlep is these 300kg, 10-foot palm trees."

The design for the Giant Steps space at GALA itself is still in development at the time of writing. The designer Amit and Aneesh are working with is Turner Prize-winning Joe Halligan, who work across art, architecture and design on a staggering variety of projects. From community-oriented housing designs to exhibition spaces of all shapes and sizes, temporary theatre stages and artistic

revamps of tube stations, Halligan's reputation with his Assemble collective is rooted in the intersection of art and functionality, and both qualities get elevated wherever possible. How Halligan's own flair will enmesh with the Giant Steps environmental flourishes is a tantalising mystery to be revealed when the gates to GALA open.

"Putting aside the design of the space, we just want to present musicians that we've been working with and already get along with on a personal level," explains Amit. "And me and Aneesh will try to play some something interesting, or try to take a different angle in a festival setting."

It's a salient point Amit raises, because on top of their frankly head-spinning projects and enterprises, the Patels are also serious DJs with fathoms-deep collections and a sharp instinct for selections. At a time when they're busier than ever creating incredible places to hear music, they've had to turn to more practical methods to come across new sounds.

"One of the cool things about Idle Moments is that we have a really tight selection of new releases we work on, which is curated by our friend Cedric [Woo]," explains Aneesh. "He goes in real deep

that probably won't help me at a festival." They may play down their own role as artists within this sphere, but hearing one of Amit and Aneesh's sets meets all of the formidable criteria for a Brilliant Corners experience – impassioned, organic music you've largely never heard before, and the odd impeccably timed classic. Life commitments and time pressures aside, it's their own interests which have informed the style many people now associate with their various venues and spaces of that ilk, where the music is played with intense reverence and the emotional, energetic flow of a set is about more than just BPMs and genre definitions.

"I think when you hear music on a great sound system, the synapses start to open up and you say to yourself, 'oh yeah, I forgot, I actually really love music,'" laughs Amit. "Maybe it's a bit of a cliché now, but it allows you to hear details in the music you don't otherwise pick up on. It's a much more sensory, inspiring experience, and it ends up building on an almost religious pursuit of more, and better, sound."

Praise be, then, for musical obsessives like these, going further out to create those truly spiritual experiences with sound and space.



in terms of his research into music. With the new stuff coming in and what we're going to pick for our monthly record club, we're trying to focus on interesting records which wouldn't be obvious purchases. So when I've got a moment away from the kids, I know exactly where to go. That's probably my go-to at the moment, and home listening records

Everything Is A Blessing: Leroy Burgess

Words: [Oli Warwick](#)
Photos: [Laurie Diaz](#)

Catching up with the disco and boogie legend ahead of his full-band performance on GALA's main stage.

To disco devotees, Leroy Burgess is a household name. But even if he exists just outside the mainstream popularity of contemporaries like Nile Rodgers, there's every chance his music has touched your life at some point. From Black Ivory and Inner Life to Phreek, The Universal Robot Band, Aleem and writing anthems for the likes of Jocelyn Brown and Fonda Rae, his legendary status is undisputed in Black American dance music.

Burgess is coming to GALA with his band Saving Coco, promising a life-affirming ray of sunshine for Saturday afternoon, whatever the weather brings. Burgess has always spoken about his creative mission to uplift people, and his music lives up to that task without fail. Even in the hard-times social commentary of Universal Robot Band's *Barely Breaking Even* there's a sense of joy. Catching up with Burgess in New York in late February 2022, you have to ask if an ambassador for good vibes can hold fast in the face of the world's difficulties and keep spreading love.

"My songwriting and composition has always reflected what I'm living or what's going on around me," says Burgess. "I'm working on my first new album since 2010, and the title is *These Days*. It's relevant to our current condition, but I want to help people believe in themselves, and what's possible when we're truly unified. I've been all over the world, and I find that, basically, we're alike in more ways than we are different."

There was a period where we didn't hear so many of Burgess' positive messages. After his peak of productivity through the 70s and 80s, music culture was shifting from the full-band orchestrations and studio craftsmanship he had come up through into the DIY era of house and hip-hop. While there were a few moments where Burgess dipped his toe into the house scene as it was taking off, he by and large sat the 90s out working behind the scenes as a senior producer. It was hip-hop in particular, with its focus on sampling existing material, which perplexed an artist so steeped in the tradition of great songwriting. It wasn't until 1999, when he struck up a connection with Chicago house titan Glenn Underground, that he was pulled back into the mix. "I said, 'Okay, let's try to do this again. See if there's any fuel left in the tank.'"

Burgess was no stranger to electronic sounds, being a keyboardist himself and singing over the slick synth funk of Aleem. Despite the huge growth of electronic music culture during his down time, he views the likes of house and techno as dance music in the same lineage as swing, rock n' roll, 60s Motown and so on. "That's just one person's apples and oranges," he shrugs. "Further down the line in the 2030s and 2040s it's going to be renamed again, but it's still going to be the same."

Music may have travelled considerable distance since Burgess cut his teeth in Black Ivory, but more recently there's been just as much emphasis on reviving old values, from analogue studio practices to classic songwriting. The sound Burgess made his name on has become prized by a younger generation discovering it for the first time. It was through the Lyon-based festival Nuits Sonores Burgess was invited to perform in France in 2016, and he listed his requirements as a nine-piece band



including backing vocalists who could learn the songs and get them tight.

"I said, 'If you can get me committed musicians, I can come in and we'll see where it goes,'" explains Burgess. "We set up a show with two days for rehearsal. But the band were so good at the first rehearsal, I cancelled all the others. When we did that first performance, they nailed *everything*."

Saving Coco was the band in question, and from that first gig they've formed a close working relationship with Burgess, even releasing an EP of original material in 2019. More than just studiously rolling out carbon copies of Burgess' evergreen songs, what Saving Coco achieve is that all-important vibe in and around the notes and rhythms.

"It's like walking back into the studio, and actually walking into the recording," Burgess enthuses. "All

of the parts are there, all of the background, all of the feeling and emotion. If I were ever to imagine my perfect band, it's them."

After all these years, Burgess' sincere passion and gratitude shine through when he talks about his work. Humble to the last, paying tribute to his own musical heroes and heaping thanks upon the people still enjoying his music the world over, he's the embodiment of soul in the most uplifting, nourishing sense of the word.

"The best music is done by people that are extremely happy to be doing it," he explains. "And that translates within their performance. Everything is a blessing, if you have the foresight and wisdom to see it as such."

By that token, Burgess is a very wise man, as you'll see when he brings his live show to GALA.



For Our People: BORN N BREAD

From DIY zines to workshops and club nights, community is everything for this five-strong, Peckham-rooted collective.

The BORN N BREAD collective are busy. Between the five of them, they have jobs to hold down, kids to raise, lives to lead. On the Thursday evening when I link up with them, Chika is looking after her toddler and Adelaide is on the move running errands around town, and the other three haven't even finished work yet. We're all locked into the everyday hustle just to get by, but these five women from Peckham are collectively doing so much more on top of all that.

As BORN N BREAD, Abigail, Adelaide, Chika, Olivia and Stephanie have built up an open-ended enterprise covering music, media and community-oriented projects to uplift marginalised voices, especially those of Black women. They're not exclusively focused on their home turf in Peckham, but it is formative in what they do – it's where they came together as school kids, and they've grown up as the area has dramatically changed.

To watch them DJing, you can tell BORN N BREAD run deep. There's a level of sisterhood which

trumps any back-slapping DJ camaraderie you might be used to seeing behind the decks. Chika and Adelaide have been friends since they started secondary school, while Abigail is Chika's godmother after their mothers grew up on the same estate. Olivia is Abigail's sister, and Stephanie and Adelaide bonded going to dance classes at Pineapple Studios in Central London. They all left Peckham around 2009 to go to university at a pivotal time for the area. Studying everything from biomedical science to fashion marketing to molecular genetics, they followed their own paths but found themselves back home after, confronted with the early onset of gentrification changing their neighbourhood before their very eyes.

"When we came back from uni it was just a totally different space that we didn't really recognize," says Chika. "I remember going into Peckham to get some food. I walked into the shop, and by the time I walked out, there was this big line of people outside the Bussey Building. I was so shocked. I think I did a Snapchat or something, like, 'is this actually Peckham?'"

Naturally, seeing the change so drastically over a relatively short space of time left Chika and the others wondering what it meant for them and their community, and there's no escaping the racial backdrop to this situation. Long-standing Black businesses pushed out to make way for young white ventures to cater to a young white crowd – the change was far from subtle. Between them, Abigail, Adelaide, Chika, Olivia and Stephanie came together with a plan around 2015 to counteract the gap they observed between the influx of white creatives to the area and those from the Black community who had been there all along.

"Adelaide originally had the idea to make a zine for us to speak our truth and speak our minds," explains Chika. "Our first zine was called Black, and that was just to explicitly say, 'Hello, we're here, and we do deserve a spotlight.' The majority of people that came in were white, and to see that stark change, and see some of our Black people



who have businesses being pushed out, was quite difficult. So that zine was a protest, to let whoever was reading know we have talented people in our community."

"Our second issue was about our trip to New York," says Adelaide, "and it took in stories on gentrification happening globally. For us it wasn't just a personal diary – we wanted to tell stories from other communities going through the exact same thing as us, as well."

The zine was a truly DIY endeavour – a scissors and glue, cut-and-paste job scanned and printed on the sly at work. Side-stepping the traditional grind of industry arrangements, they met Kelela in the street and dealt with her directly for a feature, and likewise electro dancehall star MeLo-X. The Kelela hook-up eventually led to BORN N BREAD's first brand collaboration – opportunities driven by real-world connections rooted in community.



Through giving voice and prominence to Black creators in and around Peckham, their project became a vital bridge across that aforementioned racial divide. One of the places they distributed the zine was Charlie Bones' record shop Do!! You!!!, which led to him inviting them onto his dearly departed NTS breakfast show. One thing led to another, and soon enough BORN N BREAD were a regular fixture on one of London's most beloved radio stations.

“Charlie Bones gave us an opportunity like, ‘your story needs to be told,’” says Adelaide, “and then Femi from NTS loved us. But we didn’t even know how to DJ. We were talking so much rubbish on NTS. But the chat was always going wild and the show got really popular.”

Music isn’t the sole focus of BORN N BREAD, but it acts as the fabric that helps bind them together. In soundsystem style, they fluidly glide between genres depending on who happens to take control, and there’s no fixed time for any one of them to be playing. Even in the space of one hour you can travel from Afrobeat and Ghanaian sounds to RnB and disco, but they’ve more recently had the run of the whole night at spots like Peckham Springs and now The Prince Of Peckham.

“The party at Peckham Springs is a free night for people to just come, vibe, have a boogie,” says Adelaide, “but we prioritise it as a space for our people. And when I say ‘our people,’ I’m talking about Black women who want to find a safe space to dance.”

What’s different about BORN N BREAD as DJs is they’re not pursuing these gigs in the careerist way most people do. The music is an extension of their wider aim to amplify and provide opportunities for their community. When brands come knocking, as they always will for such infectious, successful energy, the girls look first and foremost at where there are opportunities for people from their community to use their talents, whether they’re photographers, film-makers, designers or stylists.

BORN N BREAD are also carrying that forward as they team up with GALA this year. As well as hosting a stage on the Bank Holiday Thursday, which is spotlighting DJs from their wider community, they’ve teamed up with the festival to organise additional talks and workshops exploring topics around access and opportunity.

“We’ve already got Josey Rebelle lined up for her first ever IRL interview,” explains Adelaide. “She’s going to be talking about her journey as a DJ, her longevity, and the importance of women in musical communities and on radio.”

As a collective, Abigail, Adelaide, Chika, Olivia and Stephanie are carrying each other like any lifelong group of friends would. As a unit, you can see the fun they have together – a positivity which radiates outwards, whether it’s when they’re on the decks or in the projects they help initiate. The vibe is infectious, and by doing great things themselves, they’re inspiring others to do the same.

“We’re running a community call-out competition for someone to come and DJ with us at GALA,” says Adelaide. “We want to ensure more Black women are seen in these spaces. It’s that ripple effect of other individuals realizing, ‘I can DJ too. If those Black girls are doing it, why can’t we?’ It’s the importance of opening doors, as opposed to shutting them.”



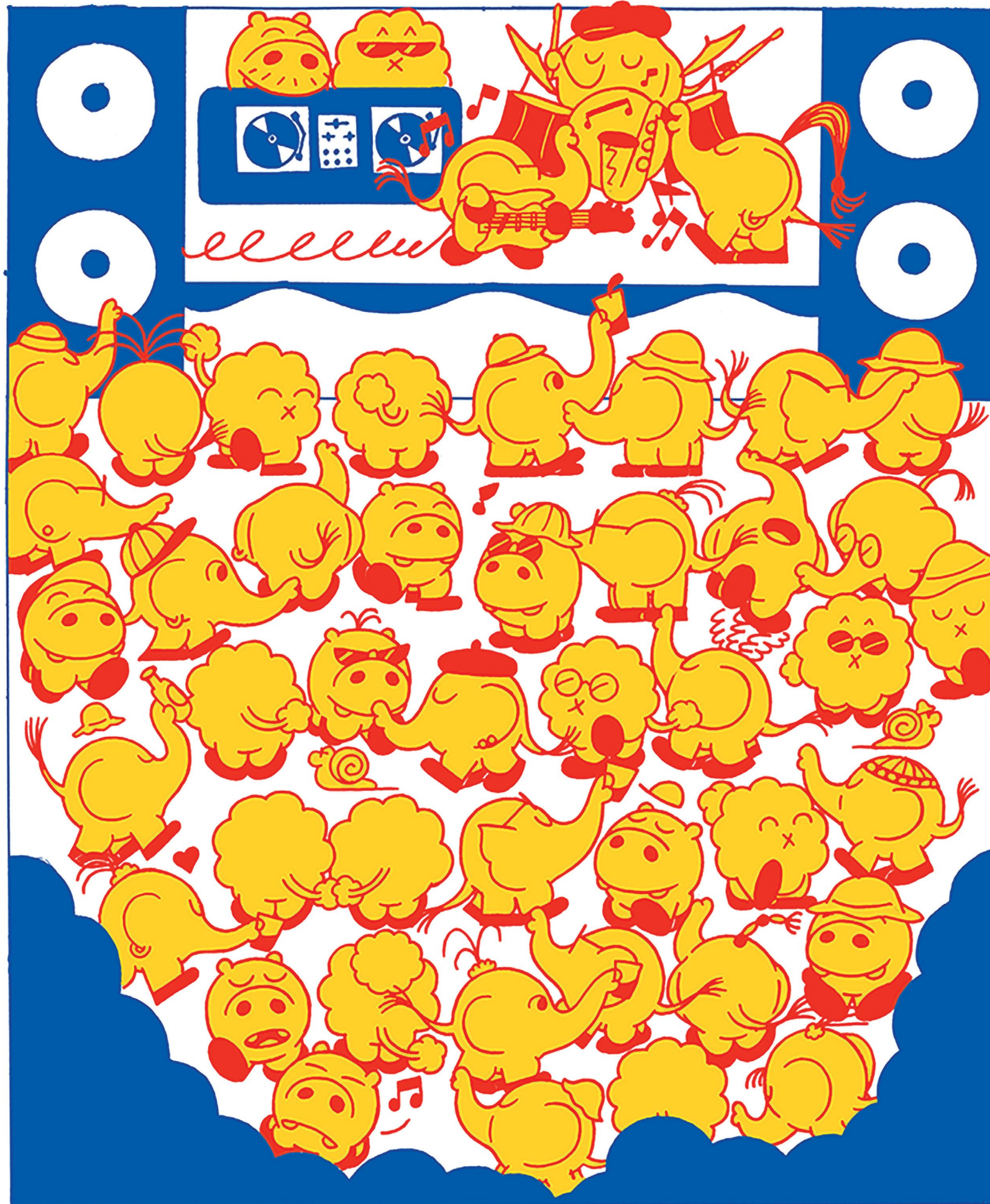
Words: [Oli Warwick](#)
Photos: [Sulay Kelly](#)

Photos: [Frankie Casillo](#)



GIANT STEPS

GALA Festival
Peckham Rye Park
Bank Holiday, Thursday 2 June



Partner artwork

Amit & Aneesh Beauty & The Beat Binker and Moses Brian Not Brian
Charlie Dark Hunee ^(extended set) Nubya Garcia Sons Of Kemet
+ Special Guests tba

GALA '22

Here Together

Peckham Rye Park
New Bank Holiday,
2-4 June 2022

A Guy Called Gerald Antal Anu
Artwork Binker and Moses Bradley Zero
Charlie Bones Charlie Dark Children of Zeus
Courtesy Dan Shake Damiano von Erckert
DJ Harvey DJ Tennis Donna Leake Gerd Janson
Gilles Peterson Goldie Homoelectric: Luke Una & Jamie Bull
Horse Meat Disco Hunee Jamie 3:26 Jeremy Underground
Job Jobse Joe Armon-Jones Josey Rebelle KOKOROKO
Leroy Burgess & Saving Coco Little Dragon Mafalda
Mansur Brown Marcellus Pittman Move D Nia Archives
Nu Genea ^(full band) Nubya Garcia OK Williams Ojerime
Palms Trax Paula Tape Parris Pender Street Steppers
Powder Roman Flügel Secretsundaze
Session Victim ^(live) Shanti Celeste Shy One
Soichi Terada ^(live) Sons Of Kemet
Tama Sumo ^{b2b} Lakuti Zakia
+ many more



Festival Partners

BORN
N
BREAD



FABRICLIVE

GIANT STEPS



Tickets: thisisgala.co.uk
@thisisgala