



School-O-Rama Festival 2024 Celebrates 10 Years of Steel Pan Excellence

The School-O-Rama Festival 2024 marked its 10th anniversary on Friday 12th July, at the Trevor Bailey Sports Ground in Dulwich. The event was a tremendous success, with nine school steelbands from across London participating.

School-O-Rama is a unique blend of a school steelband competition and a Blockorama, and has evolved significantly over the years. Originally called Classorama until 2021, the event focused solely on the competition aspect. However, following the lockdown, the Steel Pan Trust team took time to reflect and decided to broaden the event to include a Blockorama. This new format allows schools that may not wish to compete to still showcase the repertoires they have been learning throughout the year. This change has introduced new schools to the event and contributed greatly to its continued success.

Since 2023, UKON Career, based in Barking and the organisers of Barking Carnival, have sponsored the School-O-Rama prizes. This generous sponsorship includes £2,700 for one of the winners and the opportunity to perform at the Barking Carnival. Last year, our 2022 champions, Kingsdale Foundation School, had the honour of performing at the Barking Carnival, and this year, on 13th July, our 2023 champions, Harris Primary Academy Coleraine Park, took to the stage. Not only is this a wonderful opportunity for our young musicians, but it is also an honour to showcase a large school steelband at such a prestigious event. This partnership with UKON Career has added immense value to School-O-Rama, and we hope this prize continues long into the future.

The day was vibrant and energetic, hosted by the charismatic Coco P, who brought the spirit of Carnival to the event. The competition was judged by an esteemed panel of musicians, including Marcus Cumberbatch-King, Paul Dowie, and Jody Humphries, who will soon be completing his Master's in Jazz at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

The champions of the competition were Kingsdale Foundation School, tutored by Mr. Kishan Shorter, and Harris Primary Academy Coleraine Park, tutored by Mr. Daniel Sadler. Both tutors have been integral to this annual event since its inception in 2014, with Kishan originally participating as a pupil at Kingsdale Foundation and later becoming their tutor in 2018. Kingsdale Foundation School has won the competition an impressive seven times.

A standout performance at the Blockorama came from Stepney All Saints School, led by Mr. Kyron Akal. Their stunning rendition of Tchaikovsky's "Dance of the Little Swans" from *Swan Lake* captivated the audience, showcasing the quality and finesse of a top-tier community steelband. All of their pieces were beautifully arranged, and it is an honour to have such a prestigious steelband at our event. Stepney All Saints School has been a valued participant in School-O-Rama since 2014.

