



Honk! Festival, bands toot their own horns

By **BOB YOUNG**
MUSIC

If the airlines are wondering why so many oddly dressed people with instrument cases are flying into Boston this weekend, they should check the city's events calendar.

The Honk! Festival is back. Hundreds of activist street musicians from as far away as Canada and Italy are making their way to the epicenter of Honk!, Davis Square in Somerville, for three days of raucous music-making starting

Friday. Not everyone is traveling by air. Cars, vans and buses are bringing hundreds of players in from all over the map.

But the likes of Vancouver, British Columbia's Carnival Band, Austin, Texas' Minor Mishap Marching Band, Seattle's Yellow Hat Band and the all-female Pinettes Brass Band of New Orleans will be carrying tubas, trumpets and drums through airport security. And they're thanking their sequined marching helmets that they get to come. Only in its fourth year, Honk! is turning away bands.

"There are way more bands that would like to participate than we can accommodate," said saxophonist Ken Field, a member of the Somerville-based Second Line Social Aid & Pleasure Society Brass Band and a festival organizer. "We had to put a limit on the number."

On Friday, Honk! In the Neighborhoods pairs out-of-town groups with local bands at schools and nonprofit organizations in Roxbury, East Boston, Jamaica Plain and Cambridge.

On Saturday, nearly 30 bands playing everything

from New Orleans-style parade music and Brazilian sambas to klezmer and goofball covers of pop songs will perform in seven locations in Davis Square starting at noon.

And on Sunday at noon, the Honk! Parade kicks off from Davis Square and travels down Massachusetts Avenue to Harvard Square to perform at Oktoberfest. That night, in the only ticketed event, the bands take to the stage and aisles of the Somerville Theatre.

"What we have in common (with the rest of the Honk! bands) is everything!" Pink Puffers Brass Band sousa-

phonist Fabrizio Iannucelli said via e-mail from his band's home city of Rome. "Music passion, human relationships, music skills — and dinners. I think we are all a big band whose name could be Honk! Worldwide Everything-in-common Marching Band."

Elena Zanza, a trapeze artist with Bologna, Italy's Banda Roncati had this to say: "In Italy, we sometimes organize meetings for the marching bands who are involved in social activism. We are going to Honk! to meet other bands and exchange our perceptions and experiences of music as a tool

to let our voices be heard, and give our little contribution to change the world."

The members of the Pink Puffers and Banda Roncati are among more than 350 musicians who will be housed by local residents who have offered to put them up for the weekend. The nonprofit Honk! organization provides some bands with travel stipends, but many hold their own fundraisers back home to finance the trip to Boston. Local restaurants and businesses are pitching in with meals and other donations.

Honk! is catching on be-



IN THE PINK: Rome's Pink Puffers Brass Band adds a blast of color to street music.



ON THE MARCH: A band steps out at the Honk! Festival.

yond Boston. There's now a Honk West in Seattle; several offshoot events take place after this weekend: Pronk! in Providence on Oct. 12; Brass

Mayhem! in Northampton and Amherst, Oct. 13-14; and Bonk! in Brooklyn, N.Y., Oct. 15-18.

"It's this incredible movement that was just sort of waiting for somebody to seed," Field said. "Now there's a downpour."

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