



Artistic Policy and Principles

INTRODUCTION

Carnival - a spectacular parade of costumed troupes, Kings, Queens, Princes, Princesses and individuals, inspired by the traditions of Caribbean masquerade, accompanied by both traditional and contemporary Caribbean Carnival music including steel pan, soca, drum and calypso.

Since our establishment in 1967, Leeds West Indian Carnival's main resources have been people, their passion and goodwill. That combination has helped to establish Europe's longest running Caribbean Carnival parade as one of the most respected and authentic in the UK.

We believe that with an outstanding artistic programme, supported by strategic partnerships and visionary ambitions, Leeds West Indian Carnival (LWIC) can become the best Caribbean Carnival in Europe.

Those ambitions are;

- To secure an artistic and cultural legacy for Leeds and the region.
- To put LWIC at the heart of Europe's Caribbean Carnival experience.
- To be a premier Leeds and Yorkshire visitor attraction.
- To strengthen our carnival and organisation in preparation for delivery of our ambitions.

Crucial to the success of those ambitions and our vision for the future are;

A Creative & Robust Artistic Programme

A creative and dynamic Artistic Programme as the key driver for our ambitions. Our plans range from community outreach, engagement and audience development along side more ambitious plans including production of world class performances and international collaborations.

Raising The Bar

Ensuring excellence in delivery and presentation of all LWIC activities - whether that is through working with communities at a grassroots level on artistic projects and collaborations, with strategic local and international partnerships or by ensuring an approach to artistic programming that is driven by both creativity and quality.

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WHAT WE WILL DO

We are proud of our heritage and of our role as custodians of authentic Caribbean Carnival events and artistry. Our artistic programme will include a range of carnival art forms and will comprise a rich mix of the traditional, authentic, contemporary and the innovative. Governed by local people, engaging communities we will continue to be led by an abiding passion and ethos around championing that authentic yet inclusive approach to Caribbean Carnival arts which attracts our existing and new audiences.

WE DEFINE CARNIVAL ART FORMS AS

Costume. Design and manufacture.

Masquerade. Costumed performance and portrayal.

Dance. Choreography and performance.

Music. Including steel pan, calypso, soca, big drum and caiso.

Events and celebrations. Capturing any or all of the above.

We will deliver those art forms through a diverse, creative and innovative range of events, programmes, partnerships, learning opportunities and educational initiatives – all of which complement our core programme of annual showcase events as follows;

Carnival Parade

An authentic Caribbean Carnival celebration defined by a spectacular parade of costumed troupes, King, Queens, Princes, Princesses and individuals accompanied by a procession of both traditional and contemporary carnival music – steel pan, soca, drum and calypso.

J'Ouvert Morning

The traditional early morning, mini-procession start to Carnival Day.

King & Queen Show

A spectacular event featuring entertainment and showcasing the figurehead carnival costumes competing for the prestigious Carnival King & Queen titles.

Prince & Princess Show

A junior version of the King & Queen Show to find Carnival Prince & Princess, encouraging participation and engagement of families and younger audiences.

Calypso Monarch Show

A platform for the traditional music of carnival – a live lyrical and musical contest with singers performing their own original calypso compositions.



OUR ARTISTIC PRINCIPLES

In everything we do to promote and deliver Leeds West Indian Carnival and wider Caribbean Carnival arts we will be guided by principles and values which complement our ambitions, our history and heritage and, looking to the future, our legacy.

With this in mind and supported by a strategic audience development strategy, our artistic programme will be guided by the following principles and we will:

RAISE THE PROFILE OF CARNIVAL ARTS

- Ensure an ambassadorial role by touring and participating in other carnivals to strengthen the UK's Caribbean Carnival infrastructure through mutual support and sharing excellent work.
- Champion Caribbean Carnival through our showcase events (e.g. the annual King & Queen, Prince & Princess and Calypso Monarch Shows) and by touring to regional, national and international events.
- Ensure that our efforts are supported by strategic, planned and considered audience development, marketing and Public Relations activities.
- Think creatively and innovatively to engage and collaborate with other art forms so creating opportunities which raise the profile of carnival arts.
- Collaborate with other outdoor festivals to enable new audiences to experience a taste of Caribbean Carnival.

STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

- Partner with other organisations, suppliers, stakeholders and individuals to bring excellent carnival arts to our audiences through performance, touring, and educational programmes.
- Take a proactive approach to identifying excellent and innovative work by visiting or connecting with venues and events in the region, nationally and internationally.
- Continually evaluate the quality of our artistic programme and participating artists' experience by actively encouraging and analysing audience and artist feedback.
- Continually review artistic quality through measures to include peer event evaluation, project evaluation reports, press reviews and coverage, monitoring of social media.
- Build artistic quality measures into the judging criteria for all showcase events and competition shows
- Build excellence into our artistic recruitment, selection and programming.

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SUPPORT THE ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF CARNIVAL ARTISTS AND MAKERS

- Support and nurture established and experienced carnival artists alongside new and emerging talent across all our carnival art forms.
- Provide a platform for talented artists by commissioning new work wherever possible.
- Expose carnival artists to innovative and creative ways of practice, performance and delivery.
- Work with carnival arts organisations, troupes, artists and musicians of the highest quality.
- Adopt fair and ethical practices in the payment of fees to artists, designers and makers.

SECURE ARTISTIC LEGACY THROUGH YOUNG PEOPLE

- Work with young people to share the artistry, history and legacy of Carnival arts through educational workshops and events so developing their creativity and securing interest in Leeds Carnival.
- Nurture and work with young people with an interest in Carnival to develop and programme work which engages younger audiences and develops their skills as young producers and deliverers of Carnival events.
- Work closely with surrounding communities to develop and maintain a connection among the area's young people with Caribbean Carnival arts.
- Develop opportunities for new and emerging designers to work with and learn from more established designers and artists.

ENGAGE OUR AUDIENCES

- Develop a programme which aims to enrich the Caribbean Carnival experience for both local residents and visitors alike.
- Develop a programme which will appeal to diverse audiences whilst keeping authenticity at its heart.
- Actively encourage access to audience feedback through surveys, the use of social media and other virtual platforms.

ENCOURAGE A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO CARNIVAL ARTS

- Wherever possible ensure that we consider our environment and opportunities for sustainable actions.
- We will develop and share methods of good practice in sustainable approaches to carnival arts, with our artists and practitioners.



Leeds West Indian Carnival

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