

PRONK! Raises Voices and Instruments for Change



Photo Credit: Small Frye Photography

PRONK! street festival, which takes place on October 10 at Burnside Park, is a Providence favorite for those who love brass band music, community events and an old-fashioned good time. But the tradition that founded the original Honk in Somerville, Providence's PRONK! and street celebrations in other cities is not just a raucous party; it's a community event designed to address the social, cultural and political needs of the community in which it takes place. PRONK! puts the voice of the community into the limelight, does it unplugged (no amps here) without driving commercial interests (no vendors or monetary sponsorship) and makes a political statement in its design.

This year PRONK! champions The Community Safety Act, a proposed measure that seeks to decrease racial profiling and increase cultural competence and awareness by law enforcement in Providence. In an effort to end discrimination and prevent unjust practices that target community members of color, the ordinance is a proactive move penned by the community-based organizations Direct Action for Rights and Equality, the Providence Youth and Student Movement, and the Olneyville Neighborhood Association.

PRONK! organizer Avi David described the festival's solidarity with these organizations. "The goal of this collaboration is to use music, dance and art to bring attention to injustices and inequalities in our city and encourage people from across Providence to stand behind this legislation so that we can ban racial profiling and build a safer city, specifically for youth, immigrants and people of color."

The music lineup this year includes favorite Providence musical institutions, including Big Nazo, Extraordinary Rendition Band, Kickin' Brass Band and What Cheer? Brigade and will welcome international groups as well as bands from Texas, Chicago, NYC and Boston.

In a time when the events of the day can breed frustration, discouragement and paralysis, art and music offer a platform to express our sorrows and joys and to celebrate the things that unite us. PRONK! embodies that intention for connectedness and community and gives voice to the issues that we must find solutions to if we are to ensure a beautiful future, especially for those in our communities who have been disenfranchised, abused and silenced.

Join PVD at PRONK! and raise a horn, a voice or dance like a fool for change!

The celebration starts at 2pm at Burnside Park in Downtown Providence with performances and activities followed by a parade at 5pm down South Water Street, culminating in performances at The Hot Club. It wraps up by 10pm and is designed to be an all-ages celebration and community event. More information can be found at: providencehonkfest.org