

'I'm excited to be celebrating a festival so close to my heart'

Bristol musician Makala Cheung is among the many and varied acts to be performing at the Fleece's Mini Moon Festival this weekend, celebrating Oriental arts and culture

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he Fleece celebrates a popular Chinese mid-autumn festival this weekend with a seven-hour event that includes the album launch for Bristol musician Makala Cheung.

The Knowle West singer-songwriter has just released her Oriental-infused electronic pop album, *Moon*, and she is joining forces with the Bristol and West of England China Bureau to celebrate the arts and culture of the Orient.

The all-dayer at the Fleece on Sunday features a line-up of performances and activities that will showcase Far East culture and promote local Bristol artists like Makala, who have Oriental heritage.

Confirmed acts include Bristol Shaolin Wushu Academy; University of Bristol Chinese Lion Dance Troupe; Bristol singer Tita Lau; Anglo Chinese singer-songwriter Kerensa Mason; Yee Ling and Molly performing classical violin and Chinese and Korean covers; Nadiah and The Light Fantastic performing Cape Malay jazz, blues and Latin; Streeteny Dance Academy with Oriental-inspired dance, and DJs Usagi Drop, Belakia and Jay Unearthed.

In China, the Mooncake Festival takes place in the eighth month of the Chinese calendar, during the full moon, and involves families coming together to give thanks for the harvest, eat moon cakes and admire the full moon.

Chief executive of the Bristol West of England China Bureau, Dianne Francombe,

said: "This is not the first time Bristol has celebrated the Mooncake Festival. In 2013 we held a festival of entertainment, which was a great success, and we are aiming for this one to be even better, engaging with the vibrant, young Oriental community in Bristol."

"Due to her Chinese heritage, being half Chinese, Makala is a fantastic ambassador for the Bristol West of England China Bureau and we are thrilled to be working with her on the Mini Moon Festival and the launch of her new album."

"She gave a brilliant performance during our Chinese New Year celebrations in 2014, so we are very excited to see her perform new material."

Makala said: "I am so excited to be putting on this event to celebrate a Chinese festival that is close to my heart."

"It wouldn't be possible without all the great acts and support of the Bristol West of England China Bureau, to bring our own Bristol twist to the Chinese Mooncake Festival."

As well as music and dance, the event will include traditional Chinese calligraphy, origami and face painting, and Oriental-inspired fancy dress is welcome.

Adding to the atmosphere, local street food business, Ah-Ma's Dumplings, will provide traditional Cantonese dim sum for the evening, with food ready to buy from 5pm.

Makala's latest single, *A Little Deeper*, has already picked up a lot of radio play both internationally and locally, as well as receiving rave reviews from many bloggers and magazines.

She wrote and produced most of the songs on her new album, much of it at Knowle West Media Centre.

The record features collaborations with Bristol musicians including DJ and producer Jay Unearthed, hip-hop/dubstep producer B'Lash and multi-instrumentalist and producer Phantom Trophies. Makala also worked with Jagos on some mixes and Ian Miller at Studio 9 in Glastonbury for other mixes and mastering.

The former St Bernadette's School pupil said: "People can expect a mix of synths and Oriental sounds, with pop vocals and catchy chorus lines, from emotionally responsive lyrics to reflections on the situations in the world. Although it's quite varied in genre, from ballads to dance tunes, it's also held together as a body of work that I think still has my signature sound and vocals."

Makala still lives in the Knowle West home where she grew up and she says the videos for her music often combine her love of kung fu and Asian movies with her love for the area.

"I like familiarity and get very nostalgic, so a lot of my music videos and shoots have been based in Knowle West and south Bristol."

"A recent shoot was based in Totterdown as my Chinese grandmother lived there and I spent many evenings as a teenager at the YMCA youth club. I have a big love for Bristol as well as China and I think this festival is a great way of promoting Oriental culture and Oriental artists."

■ Mini Moon Festival, The Fleece, Sunday, September 27. See listings for details.



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