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THE WORLD WE WANT TO LIVE IN: MIGHTY HOOPLA 2023

QUEER JOY

G DAVID ROSKIN
16:40 5TH JUNE 2023



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Mighty Hoopla, the UK's largest pop festival returned for a sun soaked Brockwell Park, South London for it's annual display of flamboyance, maximalism and queer joy.

This year's edition saw 60,000 attendees welcome an array of pop icons, drag legends, DJs, comedians and more. A far cry from its much smaller debut in 2017. Since then, the word 'Hoopla' has become synonymous with queer ecstasy, unbridled pop excellence and a true safe space for all forms of self-expression.

The masterminds behind legendary club night Sink The Pink consistently ensure underrepresented and marginalised groups are all over the roster. While most festivals are failing in their goals to achieve a better gender split, Hoopla offers an inclusive and diverse atmosphere. Basically, it's a big school disco for all the people who worried about their outfit as soon as that letter went in their book bags.



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Londoners **Flo** took to the Main Stage for their first ever hometown festival slot, wowing the crowd with their impressive harmonies and a stunning cover of Jamelia's 'Superstar'. **Kelis** brought the energy as the sun hung low in the sky, giving us a mega mix of her hits and a massive crowd pleaser in 'Bounce', her timeless floor filler with Calvin Harris.

Kelly Rowland commanded the stage with her first UK headline set for 12 years, performing a masterful live set, slimming down most of her anthems to give the crowd as many hits as possible while still letting everyone get off home for 10:30.



Drag thrived all over, as surprise guests, as hosts and as completely magnetic performers. Love Potion No. 9 dominated the Birdcage, with Beau Jangles delivering 1940's reworks of contemporary hits, whilst somehow not overheating in a vintage suit.

Reigning Eurovision Champion **Loreen** dropped by to impress with her two Eurovision winning anthems 'Euphoria' and 'Tattoo', keeping the crowd in the palm of her terrifyingly manicured hand the entire time.

Followed by Australian icons **Confidence Man** delivering undoubtedly the best set of the weekend. Their campy outfits, choreographed moves, and huge anthems like 'Break It, Bought It' and 'Holiday' - no notes, simply summer perfection. No other band has

quite captured the uncaring, unwavering spirit of the freedom of festival season. Finishing with their legendary 'Heaven' cover, the band was joined by legendary London nightlife performers for an erratic explosion of extravagance.

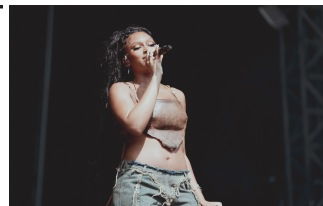
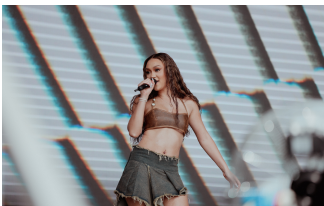
Elsewhere, **Jake Shears** dominated with Scissor Sisters bangers, Sophie Ellis Bextor remained as alluring and sickeningly talented as ever, Beverly Knight drew crowds and had Adam Lambert drop in, while Norwegian superstar Dagny delivered pop perfection.

Samantha Mumba brought top tier production, **Danny Beard** came with tons of Scouse charm and **Shon Faye** delivered an empowering speech about the safe space Hoopla provides for trans and queer people, and the work we as queer people need to do, to ensure trans liberation.

Years & Years closed the weekend, returning after a six-year Hoopla absence, delivering hits from 'Desire' to 'Sanctify', then joined by Jake Shears to light up the crowd with 'Filthy Gorgeous'. The level of gay screaming was off the charts when Girls Aloud legends Nicola Roberts and Kimberly Walsh strutted on stage straight into 'The Promise', followed by one of the greatest pop songs of all time, 'Call The Shots'. Olly Alexander gets what makes Mighty Hoopla what it is, he lives and breathes the exact level of pop culture required to craft the perfect closing ceremony.

Mighty Hoopla represents a world we want to live in. A place where love wins, where fun is the only objective and we're free from any chains of restraint. Mighty Hoopla returns to Brockwell Park in June 2024.

See the shots from the weekend, captured by **Fabiola Bonnot**:



Grab your copy of the Gigwise print magazine [here](#).

More about: [MIGHTY HOOPLA](#)

Photo: Fabiola Bonnot

