

Weekend preview: Happy St. Patrick's daze! 16 things to do in South Florida this weekend and beyond

Irish singer Sarah Packiam will perform in Miami on Sunday, while you'll find Off Kilter in West Palm Beach and Funky Buddha's Maple Bacon Coffee Porter in Coconut Creek. (courtesy / September 20, 2013)

By Ben Crandell, SouthFlorida.com
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This is the weekend when, overflowing glass in our hand and wacky slogan on our chest, we brave the crowds and the lines and the boisterous pageantry, to cloak ourselves in another culture, to down strong drinks, taste exotic dishes and dance badly to unfamiliar rhythms.

Happily, one of our favorite local singers, Sarah Packiam, born outside Dublin in County Wicklow, will be right in the middle of it. And we've got the perfect T-shirt to wear to her show, the one that says "Kiss Me, I'm Cuban!"

Packiam will be among the long list of performers at the annual Calle Ocho Festival 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday in Little Havana, a lineup led by Chino y Nacho (named Kings of Carnaval 2015), Johnny Dread, Ivy Queen, Nicky Jam, Jerry Rivera and others.

She is scheduled to play at 4:30 p.m. under the flag of **the Louder Side**, which will gather non-Latin-music acts on the 19th Avenue North Stage. Others performing on that stage throughout the day include AstroMaps, Raggy Monster, Quantum Waves, Scary Iowa, Above the Skyline and Sunghosts. (Calle Ocho info: **CarnavalMiami.com**)

"It will be a fun afternoon to share my Irish culture with my Miami people," Packiam says. "Perhaps we'll see a few early green T-shirts around."

The Louder Side stage, in its second year at Calle Ocho, includes an anti-bullying theme that is important to Packiam.

"I've experienced bullying first-hand," says Packiam, whose father, Peter, is a jazz-blues guitarist from Agra, India. "In school, when I was in Ireland, I was bullied, so I was really happy to be able to help out in any way and speak out about that."

The singer says it's unlikely she'll perform anywhere on St. Patrick's Day itself, due to the late-night demands of finishing her third album, called "Again," which she hopes to release next month (stay tuned at **SarahPackiam.com**). The album has been recorded at producer-performer Marthin Chan's Afonico Music in Miami and George Noriega's Cutting Cane studio in Davie.

Packiam says the album, produced with Chan and frequent collaborator Tim Mitchell (Shakira, Gloria Estefan, Jon Secada), will see her edging toward a new sound: “Perhaps it’s more rock, and more indie. I hope people will find that my voice has opened up a little more. There are a few songs that I’m certainly belting.”

At Calle Ocho she’ll perform a new song she wrote about Miami called “Big World.” But it’s a recent song about New York City (written with Mitchell) that inspired a video with a unique global appeal: It features Packiam and international soccer star David Villa.

A conversation with a soccer-crazed New York friend inspired Packiam and Mitchell to write “New York City All The Way,” a salute to the Big Apple’s new MLS team, which stars former Barcelona star Villa. Through mutual friends, Packiam says, Villa heard the song, loved it and agreed to appear in its New York-set video.

“Such a humble guy. Considering he’s a superstar soccer player, he was so nice and very respectful and down to earth,” says Packiam, acknowledging that filming the more energetic scenes with such expensive legs, ankles and feet made her nervous. “We were jumping up and down a lot in the studio and I was thinking, I wouldn’t want to hurt him in any way!”

Packiam says they wanted to film scenes for the video on grass, but they couldn’t find a patch of green in snowy New York. No problem with that in South Florida this weekend, which brings a wave of St. Patrick’s Day celebrating that will run through the day itself on Tuesday.



<http://www.southflorida.com/events/go-guide-blog/sf-weekend-things-to-do-in-south-florida-st-patricks-events-20150312,0,7350528.story>