**Macroom Music Festival, by Keisha O’ Hare, St. Mary’s Secondary School, Macroom, Co. Cork.**

Without any nightclubs in Macroom over the past few years, Macroom has had no night life. That was until June 2023, when there was the first Music Festival in Macroom to have been hosted since 1978. It was that day 45 years ago that Rory Gallagher played in the Mountain Dew Festival in 1978.

The Frank & Walters, the Riptide Movement and Mundy played in the 2023 Macroom Music Festival. It was a three-day event from the 23rd to the 25th of June. On Friday night there was a band trail in all the pubs in Macroom such as TP Cotters and JC Murphys. Each ticket was 35 Euro and tickets were limited. It was a good way to celebrate the opening of the N22 Bypass and the majority of tickets sold well.

Local businesses supported the Music Festival all through the weeks leading up to it. They decorated their windows with the music theme and had even closed their businesses early that day. It showed how supportive and close the local community is.

The gates opened at 5.30pm with plenty of seats available, lots of food outlets on site and a Heineken bar. . Although there was a drizzle until 5.30pm that day, it cleared away just in time. Sarah Hickey was the opening act of the night. Next, Mundy was up, he sang "Galway Girl” which had the crowd singing and dancing. He was also all dressed up with a cowboy hat too! The Riptide Movement was up next and started with “Something Special.” The Frank & Walters were the closing act, and everyone had their full voices singing the well-known song “After All I Really Love you.” That night the Square was alive and filled with young and old singing and swinging. The town was pulsating with music and dancing. There was a huge amount of work setting it up and organising it all including the stage set up, the lighting and amps. There were also the barriers and sound proofing which went all around the Square. On Sunday, there was a family day held in the Town Square organised by the Macroom District Lions Club with a range of activities for all ages.

The huge success of the Macroom Music festival has led to another one being planned for June 2024 with more bands. The line up that has been released so far includes the Hermitage Green and The Stunning. This will be a two-day event with a band trail the night before. I conducted a quick interview with a local resident of Macroom who had attended the music festival to see what they thought about the night. I asked, “Do you think the music festival will bring back life to Macroom?” Their response was “Yes, it was an enjoyable night for all. There has not been any festival over the last 10 years so it was nice to have experienced it and hopefully this year will be as good.” She also stated that “It was a roaring success and that if they bring good bands, it will bring a good crowd and more cash flow into the town”. I also asked if she would be going to the Macroom Music Festival again in 2024? She emphasised that she will definitely be going again, hoping that it will be as good as last year's.

It looks like Macroom Festival will go from strength to strength in the coming years- it will be vital to get your tickets early to avoid FOMO!