

The Buddy Beat
At
Drumdee



August 20th 2013

What happens when two drumming groups collide? Cracking rhythms, that's what!

Buddy Beat travelled to Dundee to join forces with our brothers in rhythm, Drumdee, for a mega music making session.

A few years back, Buddy Beat performed at a major conference and in the audience, two Occupational Therapists from Dundee, Adam Devine & Gillian Funai, were inspired by what we delivered that day. A few weeks later and they visited Buddy Beat for one of our regular weekly music sessions, to garner a feel for the group, what it meant to the members and also for practical advice on how to set up and run a group of their own. And so, using The Buddy Beat model, Drumdee was formed. That was three years ago and since then our two drumming dynasties have met up twice before.

On May 30th 2012, Buddy Beat travelled to Dundee to meet with the Drumdee gang and it was a memorable day, packed with music and singing. In fact it was there that we were first taught our favourite song "O Ye Narimbo".

In September last year, Drumdee trekked to Paisley to the Town Hall for the National launch of the Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival. That same day Buddy Beat and Drumdee joined forces for The Big Drum- a pulsating hour of drumming that could be heard the other side of Mars!

The Buddy Beat were-

Jeanette Allan, Dr Jane Bentley, Marion Bisland, Graham Blair, Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie, Mags Hanney, Jackie McDowall, Eileen McGrory, Jess McMillan, Lesley-Anne Orr, Christine Robertson and Sandy Smith.

Drumdee were Occupational Therapists and group founders Adam Devine & Gillian Funai, facilitator Chris Morris and seven of the Drumdee regulars.

Buddy Beat arrived in Dundee by minibus, with the gang looking forward to the day. The venue was Club Redd in Session Street in the town, a basement bar and club where Drumdee meet weekly.

A bountiful buffet was provided with two complimentary drinks from the bar- the soft variety!-and this gave both groups a chance to get to re-acquaint with one another, with much chomping & slurping!



Jess, Eileen & Anne - 3 jewels in the Buddy Beat Crown

At 1.30 we were called to order and we sat in a large drum circle on the club's dancefloor. We kicked off naturally with a jam and it was something rather powerful. We crackled along for some time and the energy was almost tangible. When we finished there were many happy faces around. Who needs banging dance music when 23 djembes had just blasted the roof off? Amazing!



*And so began a kind of "Show & Tell Drum Gathering". Drumdee's facilitator Chris Morris started off by teaching us a rhythm known as "Dukeke". This originated from West Africa and was used as a warning along the coast when the white slave ships were approaching. Chris ran through this a few times to let us hook into it and soon we were all playing and repeating this together, sounding strong and rhythmic. *Left- Drumdee's Chris Morris in full rhythm mode**

Over to Jane, it was then Buddy Beat's turn. We opted for the Buddy Beat Mash which, as Jane explained, was a good number to play in a large group but the beauty of it is that it is flexible enough to be played by just a handful of drummers- indeed at Agefest in March there were only 4 of us to perform it! And so we set off, with Buddy Beat Anne as musical leader & we fair rippled along, with the infectious beats filling the room. We ended with a customary "Yeah!" and Drumdee showed their appreciation.

Jane asked Drumdee if they would like to learn The Mash and started by instructing them in the 3 musical breaks. Mags demonstrated the first and soon had everyone copying. Anne did likewise with the second and Tom took care of the final break. A quick run through of the opening and we started off, 23 djembes- the first time we have heard our tune at such a volume. When we finished, there was a real sense of achievement and plenty of smiles and looks of triumph!



The Rhythm Kings

Chris then suggested we try "Call & Response". This is something that Buddy Beat has always used as part of our weekly sessions and performance, but Drumdee put a slightly different spin on it. Buddy Beat approach Call & Response with one person playing a rhythm or series of rhythms and everyone else repeats, and then it is the turn of someone else. Drumdee have one person, Chris in this instance, delivering three separate rhythms, and at the end of each, the circle replies. Chris demonstrated with Drumdee how that works and then taught us the individual replies that were required. We took off and it sounded really punchy. Then Chris slowed it down for a while, and then upped it to a normal speed before kranking it up to breakneck pace! We had to be on our toes to keep up with that!



Our Marion,
The Lady of
The Hats, just
loves her
Buddy Beat
days out, as
does Sandy
who is waiting
for the bingo
to start!

Next Chris asked everyone to keep a pulse. When that was going, he created a short rhythm burst, which the next person joined in with, and the next and so on. Within a few minutes we were all playing along. Chris let that rhythm ride for a few moments and then delivered a second rhythm, which we took on board one by one. Of course at one point, you could hear the two distinct rhythms being played simultaneously and that was impressive.



Groovers

Drumdee are about to perform at their first ever conference- a Suicide Awareness event- and knowing that Buddy Beat have trodden that path many times before, Adam Devine asked if we could provide any tips to help include a large audience in the music. In June, Buddy Beat closed a prestigious 3 day occupational therapy conference at the SECC in Glasgow. With 600 delegates in attendance, this was an impossibly huge gathering to arm with percussion instruments.



This is where our Jane Bentley comes into her own and on that day in June she had sections of the circle clapping, some jangling keys, and others open and closing their conference brochures while some tapped their brochures with a pen. You get the idea- we can make music with almost anything around us. Drumdee took this advice on board, sensing the possibilities for their upcoming gig.

Jane demonstrated how to split an audience into sections and set them playing along in the rhythm. Splitting us into three, each section had a particular hand-clap and hand-gesture. It worked swimmingly and Drumdee's Lynne was eager to try this herself, and she soon mastered the art. That was food for thought for the Drumdee gang.

Time was rapidly running out and to close our 90 minutes of music, we returned to Chris's Call & Response which soon merged into a free-style frenzy.

Adam thanked Buddy Beat for making the journey and sharing everything with them. Jane thanked Drumdee for the excellent buffet and for making everyone so welcome.

And as we all began to pack up, the ever industrious Christine appeared with a tray of fairy cakes, announcing that our very own Marion had turned 60 the previous weekend. That prompted a chorus of "Happy Birthday!" much to Marion's delight.



That was another of Buddy Beat's great days out. Who knows what is around the corner? Watch this space.....



Buddy Beat's Auntie Anne & Uncle Tom relax after a mammoth drum session

Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers

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