

## October 5<sup>th</sup> 2009

### Community Drum Circle

Next up and just two days after our Town Hall Gig, Buddy Beat opened their doors to the public for a night-time workshop. The venue had been booked at our normal place of practice in the Paisley Art Centre, but we only recently found that venue had been double booked so we rearranged to have it in the Lecture Theatre at Paisley Museum, a space Buddy Beat used last winter in the run up to Christmas for their weekly meetings due to the panto taking over at The Arts Centre.

The Buddy Beaters were:-

- Jeanette Allan
- Jane Bentley
- Allan Borland
- Tom Chalmers
- Stephanie Crew-Holmes
- Anne Dowie
- Lesley King
- Sarah Van Der Molen
- Jackie McDowall
- Eileen McGrory
- Noreen Young



*Paisley Museum*

*The Drum Circle was held in the room with the two tall windows to the left of the main stairs.*



*Madonna and Britney before showtime*

The Drum Circle was set for 7-9pm and Buddy Beat members were encouraged to bring along any friends and family. As we set up the hall, we were visited by a special guest in the shape of Stephanie's son and heir, 4 year old Ozzie. During his 5 minute flying visit, he sorted out who was who and which drum belonged to whom. Tom busied himself with The Buddy Beat Board of Photos and Allan produced his excellent home-made Buddy Beat book marks which were set beside the half-time drinks and biscuits.

The doors opened at 7 and very quickly we were joined by 12 visitors. Jane made the introductions and started everyone off with simple foot stomping and then altered this by getting everyone around the group to introduce themselves between the foot beats and then the same again but this time each of us had to tell everyone their favourite food and we went from pizza to bacon sarnies.

Next Jane set us off passing a handclap around the circle, challenging everyone to see how fast we could do it. Then we altered it slightly and anyone was able to turn the handclap in the opposite direction, and you could almost taste the concentration on everyone's faces. King of this was surely Lesley's husband Alan King, who despite being cornered several times by the hand clappers either side of him, magnificently managed to escape unharmed each time. Jane rounded off that exercise by telling us to fire our hand claps to anyone in the circle.

Then it was time to grab a drum and just as the eager beavers were making their choices, the door bell rang. Sarah piped up "It's a delivery!" to which Stephanie quipped "That will be the pizza!" It was in fact our last guest of the evening, George Cairns, director of The Bipolar Fellowship of Scotland, who we had met earlier at The Perth conference and who had expressed an interest in joining our night-time drum circle, and it was good to see him again.



*The group getting into the swing of it*

Jane showed everyone how to hold a drum and the correct way to bounce your palms off the skin before plunging the group into a ten minute and very loud jam. During this she split us into halves and sexes (never before has there been so many males at Buddy Beat Tom thought to himself, as he counted 5 other men!) and showed the ensemble shading with loud and soft, fast and slow.

Eileen had called prior to this saying she was on her way and it was only when the jamming had finished, and boy was it loud! Tom suddenly thought that we would not have heard her at the door and he dashed off to find her waiting outside in her Chitty Chitty. Eileen scooted into the hall like Penelope Pitstop on Speed and soon took her seat in the circle. What an entrance!

Next up Jane played Echo and Response which sounded great in the hall and then invited each and everyone to make up their own not once but twice and we all sounded it back, and this produced some neat rhythms from our guests. Then Jane invited anyone wishing to change instrument to come up to her preset Table of Tantalising Percussion which attracted sizable attention. Once that excitement had died down and we had bottoms back on seats, we played Percussion Tennis wherein each person would show a little of what their instrument could do before inviting anyone of their choice across the circle to do the same and then closed the first half with another almighty jam that certainly had real groove in it. Jane then announced that tea-break was now open and for twenty minutes everyone mingled and chatted.



*Our very own Sarah guarding the refreshments*

At 8.25 Jane reconvened the group and introduced the Boomwhackers, splitting us into small squads of 4 or 5, with each having a particular colour. We worked a short jam and it was a joy to see the faces light up as the notes from the tubes filled the air. Surely only someone as deaf as a doorknob would fail to see the appeal of Boomwhackers? Then Jane gave each group a different rhythm to play and with all the groups joining in together, the hall was filled with melody. Jane had been conducting this with a set of the colour tubes- if she lifted your colour then you played your tune until it was lowered. Jane then asked if anyone would like to conduct and Stephanie leapt at the chance. She sat in the middle of the group on the floor and took it away. It was just magic and the smile on Stephanie's face said it all. In fact, so good was she, that the BBC have already booked her for the 2010 Last Night of The Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in London That inspired one of the visitors to try it also.

Jane then produced the hang and gave a short instruction on how to play it, while we beat out a quiet rhythm. Oh how we laughed at Anne Ross who sat across the circle, who almost appeared to be drooling at the prospect of playing her favourite instrument and we were sure that Anne had a fleeting thought as Jane played- "Get off my Hang, lady!"

Anyway, we played out the last ten minutes with a massive group jam during which Noreen successfully managed to wrestle the Hang off Anne. As it neared the end Jane shouted for us to find our finish and the tempo raced away and it seemed like the air was filled by a runaway train that couldn't be stopped until suddenly it quietened and wound down to something peaceful and natural, and of course Anne D did her usual with her Big Bang at the very end, forcing some knicker elastic to burst around the stunned circle.

We had used this event to announce our forthcoming Evening Drum Circles for the public in November and December, and Jane was able to collect some email address's to contact people nearer the time and several of our guests took notes in their diaries, so here's hoping that our next evening in November is a great success.

It was an excellent night and everyone, including Buddy Beat, seemed to have terrific fun and we received some welcome feedback at the end. Another great Buddy Beat event!



*Guru Stephanie leading the way*



*Anne R on the Hang- "its mine- all mine!"*

Lastly, there is a split opinion over what is happening here in this picture. Is Jane a champion Highland Dancer or is she trying to catch a falling star?



Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers