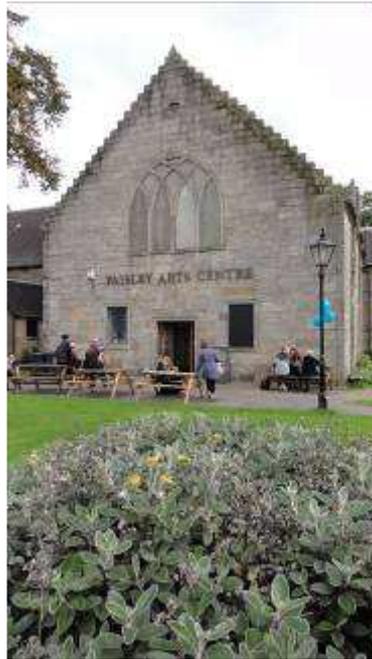


**SCOTTISH
MENTAL
HEALTH
ARTS & FILM
FESTIVAL**

RENFREWSHIRE

2010

The 3rd annual Renfrewshire Mental Health Arts and Film Festival got under way on Thursday 30th September 2010 in true style. Running for a massive 24 days, this will be the biggest and best festival yet. Jeanette Allan is the Festival Coordinator and together with an army of colleagues on The Creative Forum, has put together a varied and inspiring programme of events designed to reach as many people in Renfrewshire as possible.



*If you have binoculars you can spot
Mary and Marion outside the Arts Centre*

No festival would be complete without The Buddy Beat of course and our input this year would ensure we were kept busy. First off, Jeanette enlisted our services for the Festival Launch at Paisley Arts Centre. Thursday's are our normal days for our regular weekly meetings, and we used this time to have a few run-throughs of our performance for later that day. As usual we began with a jam and Jane sensed that we were all rocking and really up for it! There was a sense of nervous excitement building already and we were joined by James Cairns, who filmed more footage for our upcoming film while we played and also Ross McFarlane, from the Scottish Health Council. Ross had recently interviewed David Wright from ACUMEN and from that conversation Ross expressed a keen desire to catch The Buddy Beat in action. Ross sat to the side, wanting to listen, but of course that never really pans out with The Buddy Beat and soon we had him playing a musical frog and being our guinea pig audience. Jeanette had ordered fresh Buddy Beat coloured polo shirts for some of the gang and Karen made a dash down to Helensburgh to collect them to ensure we looked the part.



The Buddy Beat were:-

Jeannette Allan, Karen Auld, Jane Bentley, Marion Bisland, Allan Borland, Hazel Borland, Alex Boyd, Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie, Mary Graham, Eileen McGrory, Christine Robertson, Ian Tobin, Noreen Young.

Today would be Ian Tobin and Alex Boyd's debut Buddy Beat performances and at noon we were allowed access to the theatre space where the launch would take place so that we could arrange our seating and iron out our plan of action. James would be filming the event and sought out a suitable vantage point high up in the wings. Once that was done, we had an hour to kill and we took the chance to wind down and relax.

Reconvening at 1.30 in the theatre dressing room (what darlings we are!), we made ourselves presentable and Jane quickly talked through once more what we would be doing. The first part of our engagement was to play outside The Arts Centre as people arrived and we took our place on two picnic benches at 1.45 and began to play. It was really refreshing to play in the open air. The day had started foggy but had burned off and we had blue skies. Jane had us playing with passion and drive and soon a good crowd had gathered, clearly enjoying what was happening. Our sound also stopped a great number of passers by on the streets outside and brought some of the shoppers and workers out from the nearby Paisley Shopping Centre. With lots of stops and starts, call and responses, splitting us in half and general free styling, we all had a great time and when it sadly came to an end we received a smashing round of applause. It was just a pity it was so short, for I think we would have gone on for a good 30 minutes! We hurried back into the theatre and stored our drums on stage and took our seats in the 2nd and 3rd rows before the event began.



The gang in action



Dr Alan Curley "Emergency exits are situated here...."

Once again the proceedings were directed by MC Dr Alan Curley and his clear enthusiasm and humour make him more than the ideal candidate for the role. Dr Alan welcomed everyone and spoke about the upcoming festival. The first act on stage was local singer, 16 year old Fiona Liddle. Fiona recently entered the Search for a Star competition, telling us that not only was it the first time she had entered anything like that, but that she also won.



Fiona on song

Fiona then told us the last few months have been very busy for her making appearances, doing gigs and proudly told everyone her album was available on I-Tunes and Amazon. Fiona sang two of her songs- “Pentagon” and “Play the Fool” and these were just great and she received a crashing round of applause.

Dr Alan then introduced Theresa Maitland, a local writer and poet and Theresa took to the stage and read aloud her powerful piece called “Reinvented”. As she took her seat amid a loud round of applause, Dr Alan urged everyone to seek out her poetry.



Theresa reciting “Reinvented”



Next up we had David Leese, Director of Renfrewshire Community Health Partnership and he spoke briefly about the various local support bodies who work together to provide the services available to the community and how their work is vital and that this event helps support the work they do.



David Leese

And suddenly it was time for The Buddy Beat! We moved to the stage and took our seats, ready for action. Dr Alan gave us a warm welcome and handed over to Jane who introduced herself. Now, Jeanette had produced vivid pink goodie bags, which were put together by the Dykebar Creative Recovery Group in Dykebar Hospital and filled with inspirational bookmarks, recovery quotes, a desk diary and last but

not least a musical frog. Maggi Boyd had the lovely job of handing out the bags to everyone as they came into the theatre.



Da Buddy Beat Rock Da House



So, Jane told everyone that they had a frog each and a few of the 150 people attending croaked their confirmation. Jane then said that everyone would get their chance but first The Buddy Beat would like to perform The Funky Lunch, telling everyone that we had been working on it all year. We sat in two rows with Mary in the front centre on the base drum and she started us off with a count of 8. Then Eileen, Karen, Alex and Marion started the first beat and were supported by Mary, followed after by the next rhythm from Christine, Hazel and Ian. Then the 3rd element arrived from Anne, Noreen, Jeanette and Tom and we were giving it wellie. Jane stood with her back to the audience, conducting us along and she was really in the zone, clearly enjoying herself. From the stage you could only really see the first two rows or so and it was a great feeling to be there and playing. Jane zipped us through our piece and we ended on a thundering series of beats in the middle, finishing on a heartbeat. The audience cheered and showed their appreciation.



Mary, Eileen, Alex and Karen

Jane then intimated that it was the turn of the frogs! This is something we had never done before and this idea was a bright one from Jeanette. Jane spoke to one half of the audience and gave them a rhythm and they responded. Then the other half were given another rhythm and on a count of four, everyone played, with The Buddy Beat supplying a gentle background beat. The room filled with the croaking of 150 frogs and it was magical to hear. It's amazing how a simple little thing like a frog can bring huge smiles to

adults' faces! Jane gave us a cue and we filed off stage to store our drums and then picked up a frog each and returned to our seats on the stage.



This is how you do it!



Now Jane had three frog choruses' to work with and got everyone to play and make up their own beats. Jane let that run for a minute or so and then told each section they would play on their own at her command and Jane switched between the three of us and that brought out a lot of laughter, particularly when Jane did her Cheeky Monkey thing and shortened the times each section played until we were almost all dizzy! Jane then finished things off by instructing everyone to make one big final croak on the frog on the count of four. Whew! The audience showed their appreciation as we took a bow and we could see not just the smiling faces in the first few rows but also the smiling faces amongst ourselves.



Jane goes for the big froggie finish

Dr Alan thanked us once more in his own inimitable style and then introduced Gail McIntyre from The Dykebar Creative Recovery Group. Gail is known to The Buddy Beat as she attended one of our weekly sessions not too long ago and we hope she soon becomes a regular. Gail took to the stage and gave a wonderful and brave talk on how Jeanette Allan through the Creative Recovery Group had helped Gail in her journey. Gail told us of the painting project, making and planning a rainbow jigsaw, producing a series of inspirational recovery quotes and designing bookmarks and a desk calendar, many of which were in our pink goodie bags. Gail stated that all this work helped give her a focus and brought out skills she never knew she had, informing everyone that Jeanette Allan and Martin Savage (yet another good Buddy Beat friend) - had been a tremendous support and helped her make friends and it was this support that gave her the courage to stand alone on stage and speak. Well, what a round of applause Gail received

and when the noise died down, Dr Alan quite rightly asked everyone to show their appreciation once more!



Gail addressing the audience



Councillor Eileen McCartin

Next on the agenda we had Buddy Beat friend Deputy Council Leader Councillor Eileen McCartin. Councillor McCartin spoke about the Arts and Culture strategy stating that local government can build schools, hospitals and factories to make a community, but it is the Arts and Culture created by local residents that is the true soul of a community. Councillor McCartin then told us that the council are dedicated into bringing the soul back into Renfrewshire. She hoped that the festival would be a great success and supported by as many local people as possible, and then cited The Buddy Beat as a great example of getting people going and enthused, announcing excitedly that she had drummed with us in the park in May at The West End Fair.

Next Dr Alan introduced Mark Reilly a Mental Health Development worker based at The Charleston Centre in Paisley and also a key-member of the Creative Forum behind the Festival. Mark is also heavily involved in The Paisley Wynd Up Drama Group which is a drama club for individuals who have a lived experience of mental health issues and was joined on stage by Fiona MacFarlane, a senior nurse from within Mark's team and they were there to tell us about drama group's new self penned play "Shuggy The Paisley Millionaire". It's a tale about a man who wins the lottery only to discover he has many new "friends." Does money buy you happiness? Mark said that the play would make you laugh and cry and urged everyone to come along to their free performance and The Wynd Centre in Paisley on Friday 22nd October.



Mark and Fiona talking about "Shuggy"



Then Dr Alan introduced the woman behind the machine, Jeanette Allan. Jeanette began by telling everyone that her passion throughout her years in Occupational Therapy has been to help people on their healing journey. Jeanette went on to say that this year's festival would be the biggest yet with 69 events spread over 24 days involving 55 community partnerships. Jeanette also added "We didn't plan it this way, but Renfrewshire is hosting the biggest festival in Scotland!"



"I did it my way....."

To round the launch off, Dr Alan introduced OTYS Choir or Oakshaw Trinity Youth Singers if they use their full name. They had 12 in number, and their leader Angela McCallum, a lady with an infectious personality said that the choir have gone from strength to strength and have performed at 42 gigs this year alone and would sing at anything, even the opening of a crisp packet.



OTYS ended the event on a high

Wanting to sing two songs that seemed apt the choir firstly sang the emotive "You're The Voice" by Australian singer John Farnham. That went down very well and had everyone clapping and singing

along. Lastly it was audience participation time and we were shown the various moves associated with the 100 mph song from the musical Hairspray, “You Can’t Stop The Beat” and the auditorium burst into voice and laughter as we tried to catch the moves and the rapid lyrics. Buddy Beat member Marion Bisland was beside herself and her dulcet tones could be heard above us all. Not sure if she was actually auditioning!



That ended the Launch Event on the right note and Dr Alan thanked everyone for coming along, stating that what they had seen today was a taster of what is to come, because Renfrewshire does it the best! He also invited everyone to move into the Paisley Centre for the opening of the Festival Hub.

That was a wonderful Launch event, with varied acts and speakers, and was enjoyed by everyone there, and was ably knitted together, as ever, by Dr Alan Curley. As we filed back into the dressing room, Alex said he enjoyed himself, having been nervous at first but soon settled into it and Ian also said he had enjoyed his first Buddy Beat performance.

Mark Reilly emailed Tom and said these great words- “The Buddy Beat was their usual brilliant selves yesterday. You guys are like a reusable fireworks display!” Tom also received an email from Carin Coyle, a Community Health Development Worker and she said the following- “I attended the launch of the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival and thought that the Buddy Beat was absolutely fantastic.”

Its comments like these that make it all worthwhile!



The Goodie Bags were a big hit with everyone and a real credit to the gang at Dykebar Creative Recovery Group



The Hub

The Festival Hub is the brainchild of Jeanette Allan and her vision was to take over one of the empty shops in the Paisley Shopping Centre. The Shopping Centre management were very keen on this idea as it would reopen one of the sadly too many closed shops and help bring people back into the centre. Jeanette opted for two shops- the former Barratt's Shoe Shop and the aptly named Sanity, a former music store.



Jeanette Allan and bodyguard Hamish





The crowd being entertained outside The Hub

Barratt's would be the Hub and this generously sized store was given a makeover this week to get it ready for the launch thanks to Henderson Clark, Technical Instructor from Dykebar Hospital who possesses amazing organisational skills. Jeanette, Allan & Hazel had set up The Buddy Beat Stall and there were also other stalls from local organisations such as RAMH and ACUMEN. The shop floor was fitted with two large tables and chairs and also has a space set aside for performances. Every lunch hour at 12.45 a 20 minute performance would take place with the idea that you bring your lunch along with you. Nattily titled "Arts4Lunch" the performances vary from artists, classical guitar playing, soprano singing, poetry, choir singing, theatre, The Buddy Beat (ever heard of them?), dance and music. Henderson will be the Hub mainstay during the festival and his duties include vendor, guide, janitor, candy salesman, light bulb changer, tea and coffee maker and a friendly face!

The Creative Forum enlisted Radio Clyde's Gina McKee and Bill Reid to launch The Hub and a stage was set outside the shop. The shopping centre was abuzz with activity as the music and activity seemed to have pricked the ears of the Paisley shoppers. It was a great atmosphere and over the next hour we were treated to musical performances from Jill O'Sullivan and Jenny Reeve, the Starlight Youth Theatre, The Creators and also the announcement of the See Me Photography Competition (all the entries were hung inside the Hub) by Jeanette as she was being interviewed by Gina McKee. Also present was the BBC news to record the happenings which aired the following evening, and also our film-maker James Cairns.



Cheese! Bill Reid and Gina McKee





Gina and Jeanette about to reveal the Winner of The Best Underpants 2010



SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
RENFREWSHIRE

ARTS4LUNCH

12.45-1.05pm Festival Hub,
 * Paisley Centre

Daily arts performance while you eat your lunch, with a diverse programme from poetry to film and music

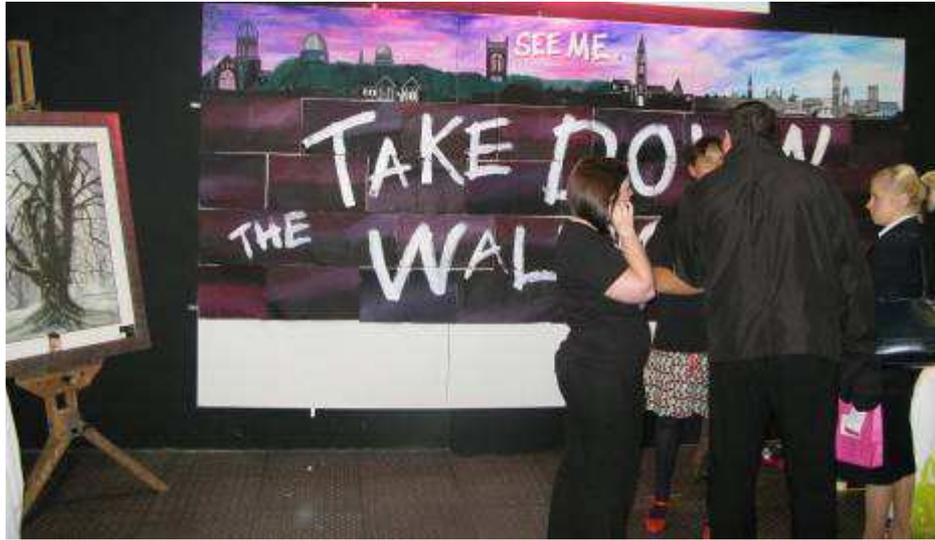
FRID 1 st Oct	Artists in Residence
SAT	2 nd Oct Artists in Residence
MON 4 th Oct	Mathew Oliver on classical guitar
TUES 5 th Oct	Sarah McNeil, soprano
WED 6 th Oct	'Changes Within', short film, James Cairns
THUR 7 th Oct	Poetry with Read Raw
FRID 8 th Oct	'Who Canny Sing' Choir
SAT 9 th Oct	The Creators, band
MON 11 th Oct	Starlight Youth Theatre
TUES 12 th Oct	Right2Dance
WED 13 th Oct	The Buddy Beat
THUR 14 th Oct	'The Lindy Hop' dance demo
FRID 15 th Oct	Celine & Friends ceilidh band
SAT 16 th Oct	Angela McCallum School of Music
MON 18 th Oct	Hannah Jackson, mezzo soprano
TUES 19 th Oct	Aisling Gilbert, soprano
WED 20 th Oct	Art demo, Phil Arbon of Paisley Artists
THUR 21 st Oct	Dirty Feet Dance Company



The lunch menu



Just along from The Hub sits the Sanity Shop and in here we have the “Taking down the Wall of Stigma”. Here, professional artists, members of the public and mental health arts groups will work side by side to develop an extensive canvas mural to change perspectives about mental health. This is one of the few local projects funded by See Me and will also run for the duration of the festival.



So, a great buzz was created in Paisley with the Festival Launch and opening of The Hub. It looks to be an exciting time ahead and with the festival full of music, drama, dance, poetry, writing, comedy and film, there is sure to be something for everyone!

Photographs kindly submitted by Allan Borland,
Tom Chalmers with the help of Ross McFarlane.
Words by Tom Chalmers

