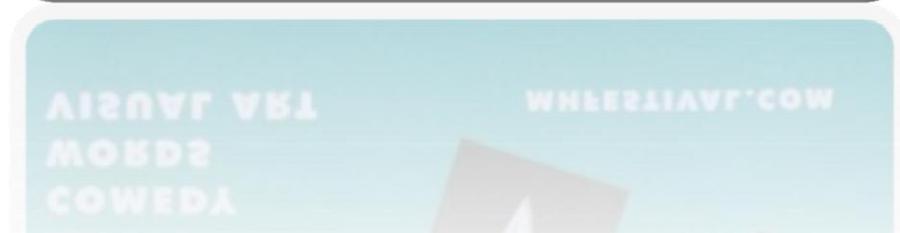
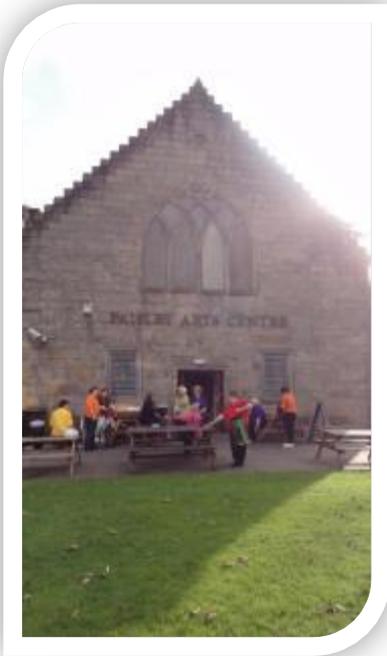


RENFREWSHIRE MENTAL HEALTH

ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL 2011

SEPTEMBER 30TH - OCTOBER 24TH





It is hard to believe that Friday 30th September saw the launch of the fourth annual Mental Health Arts & Film Festival in Renfrewshire. Jeanette Allan is the driving force behind the festival with the help of scores of dedicated people on a creative forum who meet throughout the year to plan the events. Humungous is too small a word to describe that task!

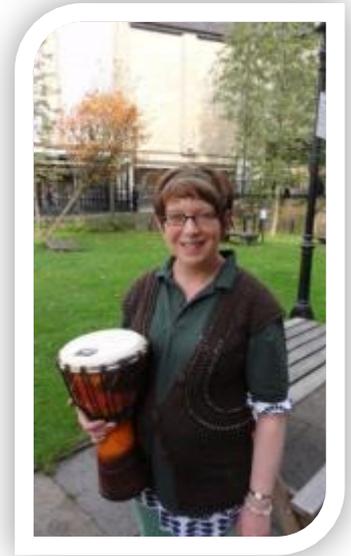
Paisley Arts Centre was once again the launch venue and it was sure to be a terrific way to start things off. The festival is traditionally Buddy Beat's busiest time of the year and this will be no different with Buddy Beat playing at

Paisley Museum, Dykebar Hospital, The Arts Centre, County Square and several other venues during the course of the festival. Jane was away elsewhere spreading her magic, so Christine Robertson bravely volunteered to take over the reins for the launch- the idea being that Buddy Beat would sit outside The Arts Centre and play for 20 minutes while everyone arrived. Allan was asked by Jeanette to be the festival photographer and he could be heard click, click clicking away during the entire show. What an industrious lot we are!

The Buddy Beat were-

- Marion Bisland
- Allan Borland
- Hazel Borland
- Tom Chalmers
- Anne Dowie
- Patricia Fitton
- Angie Gilmour
- Mary Graham
- Margaret Kinninmont
- Jackie McDowall
- Eileen McGrory
- Christine Robertson
- Sarah Van Der Molen
- Noreen Young
- And Connor Muir who was there in a different and surprising capacity- More of that later!

Anne stakes her place while Noreen is wondering when she may get a cuppa and Mary is ready for action



Eileen, Angie and Margaret going all Madonna & getting Into the Groove



The gang gathered around 10.30 and took their seats on the benches outside The Arts Centre. Scotland had been having strangely warm weather for the end of September and it was hot outside and we were swarmed with midgies as we began to play. Aaagh! Guided by Christine, with able help from Hazel, the group started with a jamming session as guests began to arrive for the event, some smiling and stopping to enjoy the beat. After a few moments Christine said we should try "The Funky Lunch". That we did, led in by Allan delivering 8 loud beats on our big silver drum and we joined in, each group taking on their own rhythm and it sounded sparky in the open air and everyone seemed to be relaxed and having fun. A few passers-by stopped at the sound of the music. We finished that piece off and jammed some more.



Here we have Hazel, Sarah and Christine taking a different slant on things.

*Anne, Mary and Marion-
rockin' in the graveyard.
Spooky*





Aisling Gilbert



Maire Collins



As the clock ticked towards eleven we undertook a second rendition of "The Funky Lunch" as more and more people arrived. For the last few moments we jammed and ended on a loud series of beats, ending as one. Great! We then went inside and took our seats.

The Launch Event itself was heralded in by a piper- Callum McFadyen of Kilmarchan Pipe Band who had us all transfixed by his music and he received a hearty round of applause.



The MC of the launch was none other than Buddy Beat's great friend, Maggi Boyd. Maggi took to the stage and opened with a few words, telling us that the theme of this year's festival was "Memories and Dreams" before introducing Maria Wilson and Aisling Gilbert from Starlight Youth Theatre. Maria played the keyboards while Aisling sang a beautiful version of the very apt "Memory" from the musical Cats.

The Hostess with the Mostest- Maggi Boyd

Next up Maggi introduced Dr Chris Johnstone, Senior GP at The Barony Practice in Paisley. Dr Johnstone began by saying that he had worked in Paisley for 24 years, also in Community Health and Dykebar Hospital. He had us chuckling when he said that this festival was like Heinekin, reaching parts that other festivals couldn't reach. He stressed the importance of continuing to promote mental health and reduce stigma.

Then Maggi introduced John Laurenson, Cultural Manager for Renfrewshire Council. Mr Laurenson spoke about the importance of the festival and how it opens up discussion and asked everyone to not be shy and get involved. He said that sharing ideas and making things happen help reduce mental health stigma.

Then we had 17 year old local singer/guitarist Maire Collins who had won a competition to have her song produced and recorded by Rod Jones of Idlewild. Her song "Thursday" filled the room and went down very well indeed as did her second song, a cover of "Valerie" made famous by the late Amy Winehouse.

Maggi took to the stage once more. It was time for the short version of Buddy Beat's film "Keep the Beat.....Our Journey in Rhythm". Maggi began by saying that in her field of work she makes many lovely relationships and

friends and she then said that the next person is one of her friends- Tom from Buddy Beat. Tom took to the stage and began by asking the audience "Don't you just love Maggi Boyd?" which got a chorus of positive replies and Tom added that he was sure Maggi would get the gong she deserved in the New Year's Honours List, bowing as he said "Dame Maggi Boyd". That over, Tom explained that Buddy Beat had recently celebrated its 4th birthday, achieving 90 plus performances and that writing up tales of their experiences had brought him the title "Buddy Beat Storyteller". Tom then explained that Jeanette had met film-maker James Cairns and how she brought both of them together and he then explained the five month epic journey to produce the end result. The film began and we could see how interested and attentive the audience were towards it, and there were a few laughs along the way too at some of the lighter moments. As the end credits came up, the audience clapped loudly and fiercely, which is one of the best sounds you can hear!



Scenes from the big screen





Mark Reilly from Paisley's Charleston Centre was up next. Mark is one of Jeanette's Creative Forum people and has been heavily involved with this festival over the years. Mark's job was to speak about some of the festival highlights and he started by saying that Buddy Beat were like reusable fireworks (great comment!) and how we are more than involved in events over the coming weeks. Mark then went on to speak about the Big Public Launch the following morning in Paisley's County Square, Singing for the Brain and the three upcoming films "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind", "The Visitor"

and "Juno". Lastly Mark mentioned the end of festival ceiliadh in Johnstone Town Hall which also includes an 80's disco, a strange marriage if there ever was one. (Several of Buddy Beat snapped up tickets for that one!)

Maggi next introduced a lady called Maureen, a contemporary singer songwriter and mental health activist in the war against depression. Maureen started by saying that she had loved The Buddy Beat film and admitted wiping a tear from her eye. Maureen has a few events lined up during the festival, The Connected Baby and Dreams & Lullabies. She ended by singing her composition "Little Thinker" and she delivered a terrific performance that was thrilling to listen to and you could see the joy and passion in her face as she sang this beautiful song.





Maggi then called upon poet George W Colkitto who would be part of Poetry Read Raw. Maggi had asked George for his words for her to use in his introduction. Maggie said that George called himself "The Man in Black" and that he had published two poetry collections, a couple of children's books and short stories too. George then went on to read four of his poems, one of which was titled "Bouncing" and was all about life's highs and lows and another quirky one entitled "There Ain't No Lone Ranger".

George W Colkitto

Our very own Jeanette Allan was up next and Jeanette spoke about My Good Memory. In the festival goodie bag handed out at the beginning, there was a sheet for this very topic. Jeanette became Arts Centre Therapist and her soft tones began by asking everyone to think of a good memory, take yourself to that time, notice whoever is in the picture, see if you are alone or with company, recall the sense of touch, smell and sound. Jeanette then asked everyone to hold that memory and to think how we felt in our body and in our senses. Well, the theatre was pure silence and so chilled and relaxed! Jeanette ended by asking people to jot their memories down and deposit them in a box on the stage, as it is hoped to produce a Memories Booklet.



Next up we had Alan Clark from Create. Allan had put together a DVD called "Made in Paisley", in which he created expressions of Positive Paisley

linked to memories and dreams. Alan interviewed people across Paisley and showed one such segment where a lady called Annie related her time when she worked the Paisley cotton mills. Alan explained that the DVD contains a song from Maire Collins and a musical piece from The Buddy Beat. Yes, Alan visited Buddy Beat earlier in the summer and asked us to create a new piece. Drawing memories from the mills, Buddy Beat created “Paisley Pattern”. This revolves around a day in the life of the mill from the slow trudge to work to the clocking in to the cranking and churling of the looms to a machine breakdown and subsequent hammered repairs to a joyous final hooter and the sound of mill lassies singing a ditty as they happily clock out and walk home. This new piece is a joy to play and we are all quite rightly very pleased and proud of it. The DVD was included in the goodie bags.

Lastly, Angela McCallum’s School of Music filled the stage. Angela said that she loves to be involved in the festival. Buddy Beat members were very surprised to see our own Connor join the choir on stage. Angela did say that to be quite correct they were today Angela McCallum’s School of Music and Connor from Create. That fact settled, the School launched into a fabulous rendition of “Sing”, a song by My Chemical Romance. We were treated by the actions and moves, for this is the song Angela will use at the Big Public launch when she attempts a flashmob! A great way to end the Launch and the audience sure showed their appreciation.

Angela and her songbirds, aided by Buddy Beat’s Connor, belt out “Sing”



Maggi rounded things off by stating that local artist Gary Byars would be on stage, giving people a chance to be part of the picture and Maggi said that she believed there was a wealth of talent in this year's festival and that she hoped as many people as possible would take part in the many events to make them a success and to help get the message across.

This was a terrific Festival Launch, amiably and warmly knitted together by the ever excellent Dame Maggi Boyd. Superb singing from Aisling Gilbert, Maire Collins and Maureen added to the event. It was a thrill for The Buddy Beat to see their film once again on the big screen and the reaction was wonderful. Hazel said that she had received several positive comments from people who hadn't seen the film before and one chap shook Tom's hand on the way out, adding that the film was "phenomenal". And one of the Arts Centre theatre staff told Tom that she thought the film was "excellent". Bring on the next event in what is surely the most diverse festival yet!

Margaret Kinninmont later reflected on the event- "I was proud to be part of Renfrewshire's launch of The Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival. It is time for me to give back for all that I have received through Mental Health Services." Ah, beautifully said, Margaret.

Lastly, Jeanette Allan's father, Michael Horsburgh, a Buddy Beat fan himself (there is nothing the Horsburgh household don't know about Buddy Beat!) sought out Tom to ask him about the Buddy Beat logo on our coloured polo-shirts. The two B's are the reverse of one another split by a capital T and when Michael asked Tom the reason for this Tom thought it was simply a symmetrical thing. However, Michael said he had given this some thought and went on to say that the B's are the way they are because mental health is all backwards and forwards, never something straightforward. That was a kind of epiphany for Tom, as it all made sense in that moment. So, thank you Michael!



Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers

