



*The Buddy Beat at
Inverclyde Festival
Launch*



Thursday 3rd October 2013

The Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock

The Buddy Beat hit the road once more and travelled down the road to Greenock in a day of incessant rain. The reason? We had been invited to perform at the launch of Inverclyde's Mental Health Arts & Film Festival. Brian Young is Inverclyde's Lead for Mental Health Improvement and a wonderful supporter of Buddy Beat. This was the 2nd time that Brian had requested our services for the Inverclyde Launch, the first time being in September 2011, a memorable day for us all.



The venue was in the impressive Beacon Arts Centre in Customhouse Quay in Greenock. On the left we have Eileen, Jess and Ann raring to get inside.

When we arrived we were shown to the conference room by Jill from the Beacon and we were not prepared for the sight that was in front of us. The room has floor to ceiling windows that look out onto the water and it is a breath-taking and hypnotising view (even in the rain!)



The Buddy Beat adventurers were-

Dr Jane Bentley, Graham Blair, Mark Brand, Tom Chalmers, Anne Dowie, Eileen McGrory, Jess McMillan and Christine Robertson.

Special note- October 3rd was Jess' birthday and she chose to spend it with Buddy Beat. Now, that is what we call commitment!

After a spell of jaw-gaping and oohing/aaahing at the view, Jane reined us in for a quick run-through before Brian Young kindly invited us to tea and scones. Then it was a quick photo-shoot for the Greenock Telegraph. It's a glamorous life, this drumming lark!

At 3.20 the event began with Brian thanking everyone for coming and talking about this year's festival, Inverclyde's 7th in succession. He then invited Councillor Vaughan Jones to speak and she spoke of the importance of mental health awareness and also the diversity of events organised for the festival.

It was time for Buddy Beat and Brian Young introduced us- now, we have won a few awards in our time and Brian never fails to get that message across- and he proudly boomed "It's the award winning Buddy Beat!"



"Yes, we are guilty- we are The Buddy Beat!"

Jane began with a few words about how Buddy Beat came together in 2007 and that we had celebrated our 6th birthday last month. Jane also spoke of how some members of the group come along weekly to get the benefit of the music, while others like ourselves are happy to come out and perform, but this is of course not compulsory! We launched into our tune of the moment, "The Buddy Beat Mash", which we had just recently tweaked, so this was the first performance of the new version, which includes solo slots for members to do their thing.



Anne set us off and ably guided us through the beats and we ripped along and I could see a few feet tapping in the audience. When we came to the ending, which is a loud cheer of "Yeah!" the audience showed their warm appreciation.

Jane then informed the audience that it was their turn to join in and we handed out Boomwhackers. Once the room was suitably attired, the gang took it in turns to teach each coloured group to stop and start before Jane launched into a musical jamboree. Everyone was playing along and it sounded lovely. Jane then let each group be heard on their own and then issued them with a particular rhythm before mixed it up so that two colours played in unison before switching around.



Boomwhackering is just fabulous!

Next Jane had all the colours playing simultaneously and the different rhythms complimented one another beautifully and the delighted faces in the room were great to see. One lady sat at the back with her six month old daughter- and this young starlet was doing her very best with an oversized orange Boomwhacker; and she even later tried her hand at drumming! Jane let the tempo build up before finally bringing everything to a perfect stop. We were delighted with the response and took to our seats for the remainder of the launch.

We were not finished for the day just yet. When Brian was bringing the launch to a close, he invited anyone to join Buddy Beat for a drumming workshop. And so, we were joined by some of the audience including Jess's long-term friend Agnes who lives in Greenock.





Brian Young sitting in the centre (blue shirt) drumming merrily away

For thirty minutes we hit the beats with lots of jamming, Call & Response, Travelling Quartets (where four people play at one time, but as one drops out another joins and the music mutates as it travels around the circle) and we ended with a fun game of the frantic "Freeze/Go!"

That was a busy and rewarding afternoon and as a thank you for coming, Brian Young kindly presented us with tickets for a play held that evening in the Beacon Theatre. "Linwood no More" is a one man play set just at the start of the millennium where a homeless man relates stories from his life and work in the Roots car factory in Linwood where the Hillman Imp was created and how it's closure in 1984 decimated the local economy and community. This well-acted and thought provoking piece was well attended and Tom, Eileen, Anne and Jess went along and enjoyed it very much. Thank you, Brian!

Another great Buddy Beat day out for the gang and it won't be too long until the next one!

Before we go- When we go on our travels we sometimes have time to spare before we perform. This enables us to take more photographs. Some are often silly, such as a few of the ones below. But being silly can be good for the soul!



It could almost be a Girls Aloud album cover. Well, almost.



Left-Ann screaming "I'm a celebrity, get me out of here!"



Cheeky Chimps



Anne & Tom will not be winning Strictly Come Dancing any time soon.



So Jess, you are 21 again?



Words by Tom Chalmers

Photographs by Tom, Jane, Eileen, Jess and Jill (from the Beacon)

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