



27<sup>th</sup> May 2012

The Buddy Beat

At

The West End Fair, Paisley

*Fun in the sun!*

Two years ago Buddy Beat were asked to join in the festivities of The West End Fair in the town's Ferguslie Gardens. It was a great day then and we made many new friends.

And so, when the organisers were planning the latest fair, which is held every two years, they contacted our Hazel to set the ball rolling. In 2010 we had set times to hold workshops but this time we giving a free hand to play as we wished. And added in- a performance on the main stage!

*The (Famous Five) Buddy Beat were-*

- Jane Bentley
- Allan Borland
- Hazel Borland
- Tom Chalmers
- Eileen McGrory

Allan and Hazel arrived first and set up the stall. It looked great and was attracting a lot of interest, and the new lines were a treat- small ocean drums that were just the business and neat little wooden flutes. Buddy Beat is so lucky to have two dedicated entrepreneurial shop-keepers like Allan and Hazel and perhaps we don't say thank you often enough for all the hard work that they put in to keep the stock levels up, setting up the stall, meeting and chatting with customers and of course raising funds. Cheers, guys!

The fair itself had several stalls selling candy, craft items, candles, etc. and there was also a large marquee where many stalls were set up by local support organisations with leaflets and publicity papers for people to peruse. Pick of the bunch in there- why Maggi Boyd of course and it was lovely to see her. There was also many fairground rides to keep the kids happy, birds of prey to see up close, a fire engine, police on horseback and on the main stage an array of singing, live music and dancing, all gelled together amiably by Angela McCallum from the Angela McCallum School of Music.

One thing you can't factor into these outdoor fairs is the weather. We have played in all sorts over the past few years. But we couldn't have asked for any better as Scotland has been basking in a heat-wave for a week. Tom joked that it had taken us almost five years to find the best weather!

Buddy Beat had a circle of chairs on the grass, just behind our stall. Jane kicked things off with a couple of short workshops which attracted some youngsters and a few grown-ups. There is something quite brilliant about playing outside, the way it should be!

At 2pm our small band gathered at the side of the stage. Angela McCallum gave us the word and we shuffled on. Angela, with microphone in hand, interviewed us. Eileen was first up and she explained that she had been part of The Buddy Beat for three years and that our drums were djembes from Africa and then went on to show the different tones and positioning of the drums. Angela then asked if she would manage to play and Jane said that anyone could learn and that there is no right or wrong with the djembe! Lastly, Angela asked Hazel if she could join and Hazel informed everyone that our weekly meeting is for adults with experience of mental health issues but that we have a monthly open night for anyone to come along.

It was performance time at last. Recently Buddy Beat has put together a new musical piece entitled "Rhumble in The Jungle". This is a bouncing, toe tapping number punctuated with breaks of four, each of which is filled with a differing sequence of beats. Now, with a small but merry band, Jane led us in an abridged version which we ripped through. The crowd appeared to be enjoying themselves, with some clapping along and a few dancing! Tom thought it was the nearest thing to playing at Glastonbury! We finished to a hearty round of applause. As we came off, Jane was very pleased at the way it had gone down. Eileen commented that she is no longer frightened when asked to speak on a microphone, now that she is a lovey and is so used to performing!





We made our way back to the stall and began our next workshop. We were joined by Tom's wife Lesley, and a young lady who multi-tasked by playing, being on Facebook while smoking a cigarette. As the sun blistered, Jane had us all free-styling for a few minutes before instigating a sequence of copy-cat rhythms. Jane

then asked Hazel to do the same, and then it was the multi-tasker's turn, followed by Tom and then Lesley. We rounded off by Jane starting a rhythm and it built up around the circle and after a while we dropped out one by one, leaving Lesley to round it off!



After a break we began again and this time we were swarmed by children. Four young girls, maybe aged five to eleven, climbed onto the chairs and selected a drum. A young girl around twelve sat to Tom's right, and two young brothers, aged three and seven or thereabouts, sat between Tom and Hazel. Jane explained how the drums worked and mentioned that they come from Africa, where they are played outdoors in the kind of glorious sunshine we were sitting in. Jane had everyone playing along for a while and we showed the kids how to stop and start on a count of four and then just like the previous circle, we ventured into copy- cat rhythms, with Tom and Hazel also having a stab. The kids mastered whatever we threw at them and when Jane asked if anyone else wanted a go, the young girl beside Tom was happy to do so, as was the elder of the two boys, who gave us a series of neat rhythms after a bit of gentle persuasion. We knew he really wanted to!

After another break, Eileen came back to the fold from her shopping at the stalls and showed off her many purchases. Then it was time to play again and this time we spied an older lady on the fringe of our circle. We persuaded her to join in and she was really interested in the drums and the beats.

And that was that! Once again we attracted a range of people to the Circle of Music, especially the children who always seem very eager to have a go. Allan did well on the stall too and we all got a bit of the sun. Smiles all round!

Words by Tom Chalmers

Photographs by Ross Chalmers

