

I've Got
An Idea!

tva

Spring Newsletter 2014



welcome

Spring 2014 finds TVA with a slightly different format newsletter, a new team of personnel, a likely move of offices upcoming, and many new and invigorating challenges ahead – to join on to all the invigorating old ones...

Falling back on to poetry, as I often do, I'm going to go with the classic opening of The Wasteland:

**April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.**

Thomas Stearns Eliot was never a laugh a minute (this section is entitled 'the Burial of the Dead'), but he does express the pain of the return to life that can come with spring and reawakening...

Anyway, back to work – I am delighted to introduce to you our new TVA team: Peter Neal and Ree Collins. They will very capably introduce themselves in more detail elsewhere in the newsletter, and we will also have an update from Maurice Dezou, our Refugee Arts Worker. Maurice has had a recent brush with fame and fortune, as he has been working in a London recording studio with reggae maestro Dennis Bovell, and ended up playing on a Boy George track!

Our Risky Biz project, working in partnership with Barnardo's SECOS service came to a rather unexpected conclusion (in event terms, I mean, not that the end was unforeseen!) as we had a celebration event arranged at MIMA in early December, and when the evening arrived the country was engulfed in gales and floods: a film-maker who was coming up from London from Trinity/ Arts Award to film the event had her train stopped midway because of 'trampolines on the line', and just as we were about to begin the awarding of certificates and so on, the electricity went off across central Middlesbrough and we had to be evacuated under emergency lighting! The young people, of course, enjoyed it all. We have now submitted our final report to Comic Relief (after three years' work), and they have praised the project and said 'they look forward to our next application', so that's very encouraging for future activity.

Also in December we held a 'World Party' (thanks to Middlesbrough Town Hall Crypt for support with this) which was enjoyed by all who attended and who performed – it was a great chance to boogie, blame yourselves if you missed it. Our current work with refugees is funded by Northern Rock Foundation (NRF) and I was recently interviewed for an evaluation report on their Culture Programme 2003/10; as (I've no doubt) most respondents will have said, the NRF has been a great funder to deal with – straightforward, clear, helpful and supportive, and – very importantly – locally based and locally informed. Many North Eastern organisations have a great deal to thank them for, and they will leave a great vacuum if and when they go.

With the support of the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, we have been bringing together our partners in the Looked After Children's services of the Tees Valley, and will soon be kicking off new projects with those young people, promoting positive creative activities and including Arts Award. We are also starting a new programme of musical activities for young people of diverse background, funded by Youth Music

Foundation (YMF), whilst 'Let's Make a Noise!', the YMF funded project at Middlesbrough myplace, is also getting underway.

At the time of writing this TVA is going to be involved in the Great North Passion – an initiative led by the BBC's Religion and Ethics department, in partnership with Creative Spring in Sunderland. Our activities, and those of other NE arts organisations and participant groups, will be part of the wider project, to be broadcast on Good Friday on BBC One. We hope to have various people who are newly arrived in Teesside making and performing music (supported by Maurice) and others creating visual arts (supported by Adrian Moule). The creative theme will be one of the Stations of the Cross – in our case, focussing on the notions of welcome and kindness to strangers, appropriately enough.

By the time this newsletter is published, we may either be just coming up to the big day (Good Friday) or it will be going ahead but without us. Either way, it is an extraordinary project and I do urge you to watch the broadcast or look it up.

And finally, April may be the cruellest month for moving offices or at least facing up to the possibility (mixing memory and desire...); as yet we don't know where we will be going, but will endeavour to keep everyone informed (and to stay sane while we make a move). Melrose House has been our home since 1999, I think, and very commodious it has been – thanks to our hosts and building managers.

So, 2014 is off to a lively start, plenty to be getting on with as always, not least the breeding of lilacs... hope you enjoy the newsletter.



Rowena Sommerville

Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA



Risky Biz Project / 2013

refugee arts

This has been a busy time for the Wider World with a number of events in November and December: we have had a film night with the Creative African Women's group, the exhibition of Osama Khalil's paintings at Café Bahia, followed by a Café International event, and then the World Party at Middlesbrough Town Hall Crypt.

The film night was well attended by group members from Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Eritrea, with delicious African food and a DJ playing a great mix of African music. Osama was thrilled to see his paintings on the walls of the café and they have been much admired by the owner and the customers. At the Café International event there was a mix of artists linked to Wider World, plus people from the University of Teesside and local dignitaries such as Peter Montelier, former editor of the Evening Gazette – we talked about the eternal issues of the contribution/s to society and to place-making made by artists, as contrasted with the difficulties they encounter in earning a living and finding places to use as studios and galleries and so on.

The World Party was well-attended with a lively audience, enriched by the presence of Mayor Ray Mallon, Andy MacDonald MP and Police and Crime Commissioner Barry Copping – none of whom took to the dance floor! There was a mix of talented performers including local young people and other musicians, plus an enjoyable duo from Sheffield and an African band from London, who got (most) people up and boogying.

We are currently recruiting more talented young people for the next chapter of Musicmix, which will offer song-writing, singing, guitar, keyboard and production skills, and I will be helped in this by Gabriel Mulangu (as before) and by Fran Hammill of local band Cattle and Cane.

I am continuing to work on my own music as creator and producer – having contributed to the Boy George session as mentioned already – and I am delighted to be continuing my productive working relationship with reggae maestro Dennis Bovell.

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Dezou'.

Maurice Dezou
Refugees Officer, TVA

Son Yambu
WorldFest / 2013



hello!

It is such a privilege to be joining the Tees Valley Arts team and I am very excited to get started on some great arts projects! I come from a drama based background and believe that arts can produce fantastic effects in non-arts settings.

In 2011, I graduated from the University of Kent with a Masters in Drama and Theatre, specialising in Contemporary Performance Practice and have been since working on numerous different participatory arts projects all over the UK and developing my own freelance practice in the North East.

During 2012, I worked alongside Performance Artist Bobby Baker and her team at Daily Life Ltd on the show Mad Gyms and Kitchens. I started off as Stage Manager for the National Tour but then also became a performer in the show. Alongside this, I co-managed the installation of her Diary Drawings Exhibition at London's Southbank Centre. Bobby continues to be a great inspiration to me.

My freelance work currently focusses on working with young people in the North East and encouraging the creative devising process in order to gain skills not only within theatre and the arts, but also developing inter-personal relations, people skills and encouraging team work. It was through doing this at length whilst at University, that I realised the merit of working in this way and felt it was an area that Youth Theatre tends to disregard. I currently run the Creative Factory group at ARC Stockton and last year set up D-VISE at Tuned in! in Redcar. These are both groups which encourage the creative devising process in order to create performance from scratch.

I also work as a movement artist and choreographer for Kent based performance company StevensonThompson who work with particular groups or communities in a collaborative process. The company has a particular expertise in working with older people and researching into the impact of performance on health and wellbeing.

It is an absolute pleasure to be working here at Tees Valley Arts and I am already working on some exciting projects. I am currently in meetings and discussions about Year 2 of the Moving On project which saw great results last year. The project works with young people in care through various art forms and is set across the Tees Valley. It is our hope that we see more young people completing Arts Award this year.

Tees Valley Arts are currently working in partnership with Middlesbrough Environment City on a project called One Planet Middlesbrough, a community engagement programme aimed at creating a sustainable One Planet Town. The project is funded through the Big Lottery fund. We will be working with artists and other partners to create lively, creative engagement activities which will raise awareness about sustainable living and help to achieve the aim of creating a One Planet Town.

I look forward to writing in the Summer Newsletter when these projects are well underway!



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, looped 'R' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot.

Ree Collins
Projects Officer, TVA

shoes...

I say shoes not only because I spent four years running the private office of a luxury shoe designer in London, but because I'm stepping into some rather big shoes. Andrea Williams and Simon Smith, whose posts have been merged into the new post of office co-ordinator both joined TVA whilst I was still in Primary School and Ree was still a babe in arms. That kind of experience and knowledge of the people, the arts and the sector locally can't be easily replaced but I'm committed to giving it my best.

Having spent the last three years co-ordinating the Saltburn School (arts centre) from bid to transfer to operation, both as volunteer and a participant, I have worked with some amazing people trying to figure out new ways of funding, engaging and sustaining a thriving community that embraces and engages with the arts. As many of you know, its not been without its challenges or failures, but just as the school's story remains unfinished, I hope that these lessons learned will prove useful to TVA as we seek a new home.

You'll be seeing a great deal of change in 2014 from TVA, starting with the improvements we've begun to make to our email service; which thanks to some support from our friends at mima and some seed funding from their Strategic Development Fund has been significantly expanded, now reaching over 3,000 people across the region. We've also moved the service over to MailChimp, which places you in the driving seat, giving you control of the information you receive from TVA.

With over 2,682 followers **@teesvalleyarts** has a strong voice on twitter but we've neglected other social media platforms in the past, but that's all about to change. I'm pleased to announce that we've launched the following new channels, where you'll be able to engage with TVA, starting by embracing facebook with a new facebook fan page: **facebook.com/teesvalleyarts**, as well as a presence on Google+: **plus.google.com/+TeesvalleyartsOrgUK** and **vimeo: vimeo.com/teesvalleyarts**.

And it won't stop there. We're looking to engage with you wherever you are, whatever the platform, so if you have any suggestions then please get in touch (even through traditional methods such as giving us a call ;-). FYI my direct line is 01642 264 656). We'll also be looking to give our existing presence a makeover starting with the TVA website, which we'll start transitioning to the open-source wordpress platform and linking it up to our social media streams, so were able to keep you better informed.

Anyone else think I've just completed a long to-do list? What **was** I thinking?

Anyway as you can see there's a lot to do.

Like Ree I'm very pleased to be joining the team here at TVA. I think there are great times ahead. With so few arts organisations and little infrastructure in our area we need to conserve & cherish those we have; and I'm glad to be a part of protecting TVA's legacy, whilst working towards a brighter future.



Peter Neal

Office Co-ordinator, TVA





Tees Valley Arts can work with you to plan and setup a programme of creative activities, find a suitable artist, help to frame a budget and secure funding, and then manage the project, both artistically and administratively. If you have an idea you would like to discuss, please contact us at:



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