



Summer

Digital

Newsletter

2009



Opening remarks...

Greetings all, this is our Summer newsletter – hope we’ve got a summer... By the time you read this, Worldfest 09 will have been a fantastic success, and will be written up with fabulous photos elsewhere in this digital magazine. Hope you didn’t miss it!

At the time of writing I am looking forward to – not only WorldFest – but also my summer holiday. I am going to Thailand in June to visit my son who lives out there; no sooner had I booked my flight then the normally peaceable Thais began rioting in the streets, a state of emergency was declared, and UK citizens were advised not to travel; Jane Gray our Education Officer is booked to go to Sri Lanka where hostilities have broken out in part of the country; so far no member of staff has booked for Mexico - but maybe there’s no need as their special exports are winging to the UK anyway. It’s not straightforward this holiday lark.

Anyway, maybe those of us who work in the arts and are continuing to do so shouldn’t leave the country at all but should stay put and get together to celebrate our cultural and economic survival. I do actually think that we cultural folk have a lot of skills for surviving challenging economic times – we’ve never had it easy anyway, we are used to fighting our corner, we are resilient and we are flexible. Celebrate a cultural worker today!



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA



WorldFest 09

Tees Valley Arts in partnership with African Arts Association and Middlesbrough and Stockton Councils brought you WorldFest 09, celebrating diversity in the Tees Valley and showcasing world class talent.

People said:

'Just lovely'

'Enjoyed the whole night'

'Nice atmosphere, great mix'

'Very interesting – something I wasn't expecting'

'It's got everything I love'

'Fantastic event, great music, well presented, interesting mix of people, great fun'

The starter was the Youth Event on the Tuesday night in the Crypt at Middlesbrough Town Hall, where we were entertained by a drumming group led by Maurice; a dance group which had been

working with local B-boy specialist (look it up!) Michael Sogbetun; a drama group (supported by Stockton Asylum Team) which had been working with Scott Young at Arc and which retold the birth of the world (no lack of ambition there); the very talented young rapper Flava; and the excellent and original band The Main Exchange. There was also a display of artworks by young people who had been working with Adrian Moule and Gassan Mohammed (some of them supported by Middlesbrough Welcome project). We had a really good audience with a lovely mix of young people, supporters and parents.

Next up was Soul MaP (soul music and poetry) on the Thursday at the Hub in Teesside University, where a select gathering was treated to music from Robert Maseko and Otis; poetry and music from Bob Beagrie and Andy Willoughby + Milo and Kev; acappella harmonies from Henwen; African soul music from O'nel Mala + a variety of musicians from very diverse backgrounds; and lilting easy soul from Delsena and Shimmer – a very (world) cultured night.

WorldFest 09

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Then on Friday we had the Nuit d'Afrique at Arc, Stockton, where a large and lively crowd was shocked into action by the 100 drum salute led by Maurice and Alphonse of Drum Planet. This was really something to see and hear and worked really well to engage and relax the audience – carnival style fun! This was followed by Rafiki Jazz – an astonishing line up of musicians and singers from all sorts of traditions making top quality world fusion music; one of their number was Juldeh Camara on an instrument called the Riti who had received a 4 star review in the Guardian only that week. Then O'nel and the band performed again – what a lovely voice; and we ended the night dancing to Kasai Masai with a surprise visit from Kanda Bongo Man, and didn't finish till midnight. I made the mistake of wearing new shoes – you live and learn.

On Saturday of course was the Gala Night in Middlesbrough Town Hall, again kicked off with the 100 drum salute, making a great festive atmosphere. Reggae legends Aswad played first, followed by Horace Andy and the Dub Asante Band. I was the MC and I said on stage it was an honour and a privilege to welcome those bands to Middlesbrough and I truly believe it was – this is music I've been listening to for years and which has contributed to my life, so how wonderful to meet the originators. Many people commented on not only the fabulous music, but also the great atmosphere, the very diverse audience, and how good the big hall looked with the screen and the new lighting etc. It was grand to be there.

Then we headed downstairs to the Crypt for Soznak – a funky brass line up – and Beta Simon and his band, who played for us at WorldFest 08 and whom we were delighted to be able to invite back – they had made a lot of friends during their first visit. We carried on till 2am with a good number of people wanting more but there is a limit! (Though I did wear comfy sandals this time.)

As I write this we still have the community event on Saturday June 6th at Middlesbrough International Community Centre at 2.30pm to look forward to – showcasing performances and artworks by the young people again, and featuring our very own Tees Valley World Drummers and Salam UK – a band made up of musicians from Egypt, Iraq, probably some other countries, and Staithes! This event is free and all are very welcome.

Then one last blast – WorldFest 09 is sponsoring Zion – a Bob Marley tribute band, to perform at Middlesbrough Music Live on June 7th – check it out!

TVA and African Arts association would like to thank everyone who has helped, everyone who has come along and enjoyed events, everyone who has encouraged us, and everyone who wants to see WorldFest continue and grow. We can't do it without you, and there wouldn't be any point to it!

Please see www.worldfest.co.uk for more fabulous pictures and to see all our sponsors, funders and supporters.



Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA



Maurice Dezou
WorldFest Director

Education

Firstly, a thank-you to all the artists I've worked with over the past year – I look forward to working on many more projects with you; constantly being surprised, and seeing the huge difference the work makes to children, young people and teachers. I feel some congratulations coming on, and nothing does this better than fabulous quotes from the participants themselves;

"He opens the possibilities." (Student, Evolve project)

"I am really pleased with this project – it by far exceeded my expectations."
(Teacher, textiles project)

"Les is cool to work with as he lets you think in your own way." (Student, Evolve project)

"There isn't anything I didn't enjoy." (Pupil, textiles project)

Project News

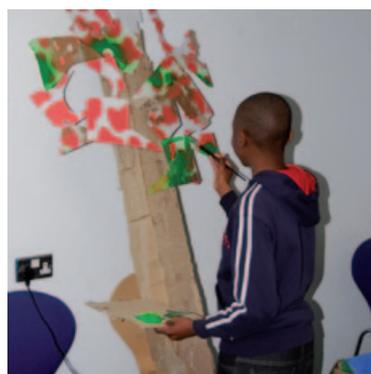
SPACE - sadly we've not landed a partnership with NASA, but happily, with the regional partnership for children and young people identified as gifted and talented. Students across the North East will enjoy activities through the regional **SPACE** (School's Programme for Able Children in Education) programme during the summer and autumn terms. TVA were invited to put forward a range of activities, and we're delighted that all 13 have been included in the brochure – thanks to all our artists for their work, and we look forward to being inundated with requests.

FUTURESCOPE - working with Marchday PLC in relation to the Lingfield Point development in Darlington, we will be delivering visual art and creative writing workshops with local schools and groups during May and June. Workshops will be based on artwork on the turbine tower - a series of 8 huge circular images by artists and architects Christian Barnes and John Kennedy, the first of which is to be launched this summer – so if you're about in Darlington, take a look.

art:works

DANCE-SUMMER will be running at Sure Start centres across Hartlepool this Summer, working with parents and tots to get active together and share work with a celebration event at the end.

PRINTMAKING will be coming to KS3 students at Conyers School in Yarm in June – taster sessions across a week for 24 classes! We're also hoping to deliver summer activities in Redcar & Cleveland with Extended Schools and Skelton Youth Centre.





Education

Project Funding

The word that makes all of us twitch and want to reach for the vodka bottle has not exactly been a friend to me this year and I seem to have been somewhat of a funding pariah. Despite writing really very good applications (so I'm told) for interesting, challenging projects, whose outcomes and outputs (everyone's favourites there!) are exactly the targets that need hitting, success so far, has not been forthcoming. Sorry, far too much doom – there's plenty to look forward to this year. We have yet to hear (July 09) about the application to the BIG Lottery, and there are various education projects for which I'll be applying for funding this year. Determined as ever, perhaps, like the tortoise, we will win the race!



Jane Gray
Education Officer





Heritage & Environment

As I predicted in the last newsletter, the last few months have been extremely busy for the Heritage & Environment Programme, and it looks set to continue (let's hope this spell of good weather matches it). It has also been quite a successful time as well.

The IMPACT drama project continues to pick up momentum, with the participants exploring and enjoying a raft of dramatic techniques and activities. The project has also welcomed the arrival of Michael Edwards, a creative writer (a recent graduate from the HAAM's project) who is helping to support, refine and edit the material the groups have produced and create scripts. The groups will be performing some of their material at the Middlesbrough Partnership board on the 16th June, and also using sketches based on attending GP/ hospital appointments to assist in GP training. Whether the sketch of Elvis dying of a heart attack and attempting to get an emergency appointment at a GP surgery will be used, we will see!



As mentioned in the last newsletter, the Heritage Lottery Fund were making a decision on our application for the Green TV project – a Tees Valley wide heritage education and celebration programme that will raise awareness of and increase public access to key areas of outstanding natural heritage. This decision was made after we went to print (metaphorically), and I am delighted to announce that Green TV was a first round pass, and has been awarded a development grant to work the project up to a second round application. In brief, this is wonderful news for TVA, shows that the HLF believe in the project and now gives TVA and the project partners (Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, RSPB Saltholme and Teesmouth Field Centre) the perfect opportunity to develop the idea into a fantastic project.

Staying on the subject of successful bids, we also had some more brilliant news with the eaga Community Fund supporting our application for a project with SureStart. This project is a programme of visual art, dance and drama/performing arts workshops run at SureStart centres in and around Easterside in Middlesbrough, where participants (tots and Mams and Dads) will have fun and learn about

Heritage & Environment

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their natural environment (both urban and rural) and the diverse range of wildlife that is found there. Things will start in June and run for 13 weeks. I am really looking forward to the 'Eager Beavers' project (quite a good title we thought!) starting and working with the SureStart staff, who have been nothing short of wonderful so far.

Currently I am spending about half my working week at Kilton Thorpe School in Brotton, where, yep you've guessed it, we were successful again with another application! This time it was to be the creative practitioner in the school as a part of their Change School programme with Creative Partnerships. TVA's (well, Rowena's and my) role is to undertake creative consultation with predominantly the children, but staff as well, to inform ideas on how they can develop a stimulating environment that encompasses both indoor and outdoor learning. We will provide recommendations on other practitioners that should be used to deliver additional workshops and other artistic/ capital work to be carried out. This is an exciting, enjoyable and challenging project, with those three elements heightened by the fact that the pupils at the school have an array of complex and special needs. Work thus far has proven to be extremely rewarding and positive, and I can only envisage it continuing to be so.

March saw Rowena and I carry out more creative consultation (creative writing by Rowena, and visual arts by myself) with young people of Skelton for the Churches Conservation Trust, all based around Skelton All Saints Old Church. The idea was to engage young people with the church and its grounds, and engaged they were! A total of 58 young people (aged between 9 – 14) took part and created some fantastic stories/poems and images of gravestones and graveyards, voyages and seascapes and pirates – all inspired by the skull and crossbones found on a gravestone in the graveyard.

And finally, Rosewood primary in Middlesbrough got all minibeastly with me and my Habitat and Minibeast Environmental Learning Through the Arts session, with Park End primary, again in Middlesbrough, set to have 11 of my sessions as a lead in to their environment week in June.

So as you can see, it's no rest for the wicked, and all busy with me. Still, it keeps me on my toes.



Joe Dunne
Heritage & Environment Officer





Projects

StART Rocks!!!

The stART Project continues to fizz and buzz with frenzied activity; the first cohort of young people completed the course on 27th March. Five young people were submitted for moderation at the bronze arts award level - all five achieved the award. The moderator was impressed with the young people's work and practitioner's delivery of the course:

"An excellent well presented set of folders. Folders clearly show that students have enjoyed all sections of the Arts Award course. Folders show a true sense of ownership and individuality. Students have been stimulated by a wide range of activities led by a talented team of practitioners. Marking and assessment procedures were clear and accurate.

I would recommend this set of folders as an example of good practice when working with a potentially difficult client group."

Visits to The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Newcastle and Yorkshire Sculpture Park were an excellent means of stimulating and inspiring the young people. Many participants had not been to a cultural venue before and found that the visits widened their understanding of the arts and the creative industries. Interactive artworks (Yoko Ono) were particularly effective, drawing an often deeply personal response from the young people. These visits have made a significant contribution to the young people's development.

Young people were particularly impressed with the informal approach to teaching from stART project workers and freelance artists.

"I wasn't sure in the beginning what to expect but I thought the course was very educational but fun at the same time, you never felt like you were learning."

Projects

[continued]

Young people's comments:

What have you got out of this project?

"I have more confidence to explore new skills. I have also improved my existing arts skills."

"New skills. Learnt to draw without being self-conscious"

Did the project meet your expectations?

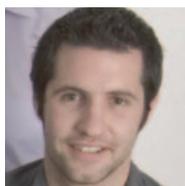
"Yes, I loved it, it was fun and interesting"

"I didn't expect to do half the things on the project. It was class."

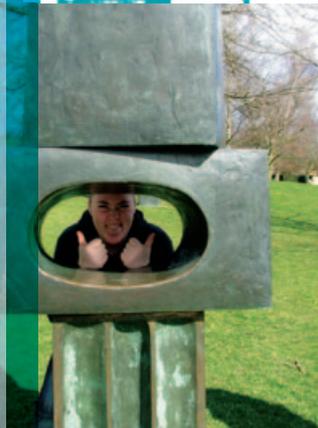
Were there any challenges? How were problems solved?

"Yes but I learned to develop patience".

The second cohort is now underway with visits planned and workshops underway. A core group has been established with a truly diverse mix of interesting young people. I am looking forward to working with the group over the next six weeks; lots of fun to be had, skills to be developed and knowledge to be shared and acquired by all. stART is funded by One North East through Visit Tees Valley and works in partnership with Middlesbrough Connexions.



Tim Coyte
Projects Officer





Projects

Parachute

After a slow start Parachute is approaching the target with great fervour and excitement. With the Stockton drama group working all hours over Easter producing props and costume for their performance about the beginnings of a world, their world, one of peace and harmony. In Middlesbrough the dancers are getting into step on their hip shake da boom with Michael Sogbetun, a beat boy dance instructor, and Maurice Dezou is beating the drum with a group of young percussionists. This is going to be a fantastic show down of talent at the WorldFest 09 youth event. Gassan Mohammed has also been running ceramics workshops with children at the Trade Union Centre in Middlesbrough.



Adrian Moule
Project Co-ordinator



Tees Valley Arts can work with you to plan and set up 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:



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