

Phase 1 September 2008 – August 2009

Focus

Music & Art based projects with East Belfast communities working with artists representing many different cultures, aiming to enhance cultural relationships and artistic value within the area.

Programs

- Confidence building sessions
- World music workshops
- Art workshops
- Showcase/partnership events
- Development sessions
- Broadcast programs (Homely Planet Radio)

Aims of the project

- To provide opportunities to develop cross-cultural relationships
- To build confidence through direct project engagement & life coaching
- To use the arts highlight positive opportunities within a multicultural community.
- To develop skills within multi-cultural arts
- To initiate sustainable programs
- To use the arts to explore identity & citizenship in the East Belfast area
- Widening access to cultural activities.
- Supporting Good Relations and celebrating cultural diversity engaging with communities and marginalised groups

Partners

- Elmgrove Community/Primary School
- Education By Choice (The Bridge)

Project Management – Davy Bates

It was important to assign a project manager to the program....

Who is Davy Bates? - 'I have been playing drums for more years than I care to admit! Currently I'm playing drums for rock band Stormzone, and in a previous life I have been associated with bands; Sweet Savage, Emerald, Peace Frog & Ajenda, to name but a few. In addition to playing drums I also pass on what I have learnt over the years to students at Ossia Music School (Belfast). I have also become involved with a group of multi-cultural musicians, The Motion Project, which has helped to broaden my taste in music, This has led to performances and cultural education projects through music in schools and communities.'

'In April 2007 I became a partner in managing a social enterprise, Motion2Music (motion2music.com) under the management of the Charity Beyond Skin. To date, I have had the pleasure of playing with many different musicians representing many different cultures, in many different environments, all part of the learning curve.

ACTIVITIES

Journey Of Equals

exploring the lives of individuals united through music

Journey of Equals @ Elmgrove Community - A film documentary about the lives of individuals from different cultures united through music was produced by Beyond Skin in 2007/08. The 35minute film forms part of a

workshop where viewers can ask questions to musicians related to the film and then join in an interactive music experience.

Arts & Crafts @ Elmgrove Community - The session was facilitated by Clare Childs. The theme was once again, diversity. We were given the task of making a collage, addressing the impact of the multi-cultural environment we now find ourselves living in and the ways in which this has come about. A giant jigsaw was created, using sheets of card, global posters, magazines, and anything else people could get their hands on. The end result really brought home an awareness of how global our lives have become.



Poetry @ Elmgrove Community - The session was facilitated by Gordan Hewitt & Ellen Factor from the poets groups, Diverse/Scream Blue Murmur/Love Poetry, Hate Racism. Gordan & Ellen take poetry in another direction and challenge the traditional rulebook on the artform. The session also had a guest Indian table drum player Ganesh Kumble who accompanied the created poetry which was recorded. Samples from the session are available to listen to on the website www.beyondskin.net/belfasteast

Music @ Education by Choice - A session at an alternative education school in East Belfast using music to explore diversity. Facilitated by multicultural group, 'the Motion Project', artists involved were; Tessa Greer (N.I.), Donald Makoni (Zimbabwe), Mattias Zuber (Switzerland) & Ganesh Kumble (India). Using DJ decks, electric & acoustic drums, keyboards and vocals, a track was improvised and recorded and presented to the students on a CD. The track is also online www.beyondskin.net/belfasteast



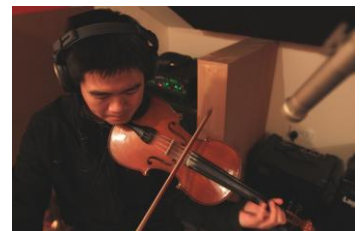
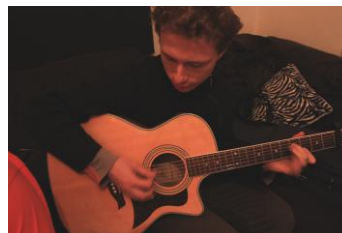
Connecting Cultures @ Education by Choice - A session for Homely Planet radio addresses the mysteries that surround cultures due to lack of communication between people from different backgrounds. The session gave the opportunity to ask questions to people from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Poland, New Zealand & India without worrying about political correctness or background cultural knowledge. The session was facilitated by Zora Molyneaux from the organisation Connecting Cultures and the session was recorded for broadcast by Homely Planet radio. A very simple idea but successful exercise that broke down some cultural barriers and myths that previously existed.



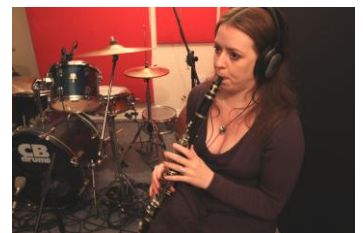
Recording Session @ Shabby road Studio - Local singer/songwriter Jonny Nixon has donated his song 'Take It Easy' to represent the Belfast East program. In August 08 Jonny performed an acoustic set recorded by Homely Planet radio and the song impressed Beyond Skin management so much they asked Jonny if it could be used for projects within the Belfast East planned activities. Jonny also recently joined the multicultural music collective 'the Motion Project' and the idea of a new studio version of the song was suggested. On Sunday 7th December 12 musicians entered Shabby Road Studio in East Belfast and did just that. The song will be available on CD and online and will also be performed as various versions throughout the Belfast East program.

Musicians involved were...

- Jonny Nixon – vocals & guitar (N.I.)
- Daniel Perskawiec – electric guitar (Poland)
- Maurice Macartney – electric guitar (N.I.)
- Aidan Millighan – bodhran drum (N.I.)
- Tracy Dempsey – clarinet (N.I.)
- Wilson Magwere – vocals & djembe (Zimbabwe)
- Keith Watterson – bass guitar (N.I.)
- Stephen Huo – violin (China)
- Michael Speers – drums (N.I.)
- Ganesh Kumble – tabla drums (India)
- Darren Ferguson – tamborine (N.I.)



East Belfast Carnival - An annual event developed and coordinated by the Beat Carnival organisation. It was important that the carnival was represented within Beyond Skin's Belfast East program so we employed the services of Skye Bompas, a live arts photographer from South Africa to visually document the event. The event took place on 6th December.



Orangefield Primary School World Music.

What better way to start the New Year than with an iMe. On this occasion our visit was to Orangefield P.S. We set up in the central hall and awaited the arrival of the first of the three P7 classes. It wasn't too long before we were in full 'iME mode,' the walls were vibrating to the sound of drums, thumb piano's, saxophone and tambourine's, great crack. The pupils, as usual were encouraged to ask our musicians about why they came to live in Belfast, what did they miss about being away from home, (usually the warm weather) etc. The success of an iME is normally based on the level of interaction between the musicians and the participants, in this case it proved to be a great success.



Short Strand Community Centre

One of the main goals of the 'Belfast East' campaign is to address issues with regard to racial and religious tensions. We therefore contacted Short Strand Community Centre to see if we could do something with them. They were about to run a 'cross- community' project involving kids from both the Short Strand and the lower Newtownards Road. It was felt that an iME would be a great 'ice-breaker'. The venue, time, date and kids were all sorted. Unfortunately at the last minute the venue had to be switched, and one of the group of kids were unable to attend For those that were there it proved, once again, to be a great success.



Ashfield Girls School

Beyond Skin are keen to get involved with people of all ages so we felt that a visit to a secondary school would be appropriate. We were delighted to be given an opportunity to visit Ashfield Girls school. We had musicians from India, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Ardglass, a fine mix. The aim of the visit was to give the pupils an opportunity to ask as many questions as possible to the musicians, to learn as much as they could about their culture, and the reasons why they have settled here. As always, we used music as the 'ice-breaker'. Over the next couple of hours we worked with three classes, they played drums, asked questions and most importantly of all... interacted.



Education By Choice Poetry Session

Although we generally use music to address the issues that we are concerned with, it is not our only vehicle and on this occasion we used poetry. Gordon Hewitt from *Scream Blue Murrur*, has considerable experience in using poetry to address issues relating to racism. He has travelled the world and worked with kids in Australia, New Zealand, S. Africa, to name but a few. We had visited Education By Choice before so we were all pretty comfortable with each other. Gordon, through a thoughtful selection of poems, demonstrated how poetry can have a 'street value', similar to how 'wrap artists' use words to get their message across. The students were shown how, with the use of a few words (picked by the students), that a few lines of poetry could be written. Topics such as violence, unemployment, and racism were discussed. A mind opening session!



Elmgrove Primary School Connecting Cultures

Although our visit was to Elmgrove P.S., on this occasion we were not working with the pupils. We were in fact meeting with the parents. There is a community group attached to the school which meets every wednesday morning. We had arranged to record a radio program for 'Homely Planet', our internet radio station. We asked Zora Molyneux from Connecting Cultures to chair the meeting. In attendance we had representatives from S. Africa, China and Venezuela. The purpose of the meeting was, once again, to give local people a chance to meet and talk to someone from a different culture, to

demystify some ideas that they may have. Topics such as religion, violence, racism, education, housing and unemployment were discussed. The musicians all agreed that they felt much safer living in Belfast than their homelands. They felt that generally the standard of living here was better, and that there was much to be gained by living here, a point that proved rather surprising to many of us in the room.

Orangefield Primary Radio

As a result of several conversations with one of the teachers at Orangefield, and the reaction by the pupils to our initial visit back in January, we decided to visit the school once again. However on this occasion the pupils were to prepare in advance. As part of the educational curriculum, the pupils have to learn about different cultures, traditions, religions etc. They were set the task of compiling enough material for them to produce a radio show for 'Homely Planet. As usual we brought a few representatives from different cultures with us, (Zimbabwe, S. Africa, Venezuela). Nothing could have prepared us for the amount of hard work the pupils had put into making our visit a success. They sang songs, read poems, and told stories about their knowledge of different cultures. The material just kept coming. They asked loads of questions, offered opinions and I for one, was totally bowled over by the whole experience. It was with considerable reluctance that we had to bring proceedings to an end. A truly momentous morning and a special thank you must be made to Mrs Luney and the P7 pupils of Orangefield.



Royal National Institute Blind Radio

Having met with a representative from R.N.I.B. we discovered that they have a group of 'senior citizens' that meet in a community centre in east Belfast on a regular basis. We discussed what might be appropriate for our visit and in the end we decided that a music/poetry morning would be ideal. As this was a 'senior citizens' group we felt they would have much to say, so we decided to produce another radio program for 'Homely Planet. Once again we recruited the skills of Gordon Hewitt along with representatives from India, Zimbabwe, S. Africa. The 'topic' of the morning was the conflict of the last thirty years, After initial introductions Gordon got the conversation going by reading out a poem, which made use of humour to address conflict. As expected, there was plenty to be said, with a wide range of opinions expressed. We soon became aware that they refused to believe that 'all is well in the camp'. Far from it. They were not going to be fooled by what politicians, or the press, would have us believe. They listened attentively to what our artists had to say about how they have found living here, the problems they have had to overcome to be accepted within the community. Some of the 'senior citizens' expressed concerns regarding housing and employment, there was an understandable fear that 'local' people would be deprived of opportunities as a result of the influx of foreign people settling here. The discussion was informative and good-natured. However it confirmed that there is still much work to be done if we want to make our community a better place to live in.



THIS TERM OF THE **BELFAST EAST** PROGRAM WAS CORE FUNDED BY BELFAST CITY COUNCIL CULTURE AND ARTS DEPARTMENT

