



BACK WITH A BANG!

Hello again to everyone who's received my newsletters over the last ten years, and welcome to those who're reading for the first time. Many of you will know that the last two years have been very sad ones for me, but I'm pleased to say that I'm back on track, and excited to be telling you of some of the projects that have found me busy during the last few months. Please do get in touch if you would like to make a booking, or discuss ideas for a project.

WORKING IN SCHOOLS

Whether running a "show-and-tell" session for foundation/ reception, exploring the artefacts and instruments of Africa with KS1 through singing and playing together, or teaching traditional West African rhythms on traditional instruments with KS2 and above, the focus of my work is to educate in a fun, friendly and supportive environment, where all participants are valued and encouraged to make music as part of a team, whatever their age or ability. I bring 25 drums and a variety of hand percussion, enabling a whole class to be hands-on in each session.

As the National Curriculum and other government dictates develop and change, so too does the focus of funding for music in schools, and recently some of my projects have come under the umbrella of "Extended Schools" or "Wider Opportunities." I've visited too many schools to mention them all, but the following feedback helps paint a picture of my work:

"As I'm sure you could tell, the children all had a fantastic time ... at last an opportunity for hands-on music-making in which they were ALL engaged and enthusiastic. We do lots in school and in music in particular where you try to draw everyone in but generally miss a few around the edge. Today was one of those rare times when everyone was thoroughly immersed and absorbed and the time just FLEW!" Liz Mills on behalf of all the staff and pupils at Bottesford Primary School.

"What an inspiring and unique experience for our children. Even the most reserved were brought to life by

Julie's enthusiasm and drive. An awesome day!" Tracey Gordon, St Mary's Primary School, Melton Mowbray.

St Bartholemew's Primary School in Quorn have been a real delight to work with over the last few months – what started as a couple of days in school running one-off workshops for all the children, culminating in an end of school assembly with everyone singing and drumming and percussioning (is that a word?) together, grew into a 5 week project with year 3/4, an after-school drum club for all KS2 pupils, and a 5 week project working with Year 2 children, using African and other world percussion instruments to make music together in the classroom, which included listening, composing and performing. Some of the Year 3/4 children were able to show off their skills playing in their annual performance to school and parents. It makes a really great change for me to be able to extend the one-off work that is usually all that schools have the funds or time for.

In addition, with the advent of specialist schools and colleges, there have been further openings to work in middle and high schools with specialist arts status. I've thoroughly enjoyed working with KS3 and GCSE students at South Wigston and Abington High Schools in Leicester, Ibstock Community College, De Lisle Catholic Science College in Loughborough, Hind Leys Community College in Shepshed, and Champion High School in Northampton. The standard of musicianship, commitment and obviously excellent teaching by the music staff at these schools is reflected in the enthusiasm and ability of many of the students, enabling me to stretch my own skills and teach more complex rhythms.

tel: 01509 814569

mobile: 07904 541520

email: julie@beatworks.co.uk

Community Projects

The opportunity arose in summer 2008 to perform at several community and charity events. As it's been a while since I've led performances, I invited my students from Toothill Community College evening classes, together with members of The Whole Shebang and students from other projects over the years, to join together and perform with me. The Sileby Slappers were born! For those who are unfamiliar with drumming techniques, the slap is an important sound we use on the djembe - the traditional West African hand drum. So - The Sileby Slappers is currently the name for any group who perform with me at any event!

We played to appreciative audiences at The Green Place in Sileby, Coalville Picnic in the Park, Elton Village Open Day, the opening of the new Skillington village hall, Send-a-Cow charity fundraiser event in Manton, Beauchamp College's inaugural One

World Fair and the ValeFest Music Festival Launch at The East Midlands Food Show (*photographs can be seen on www.ValeFest.com*)

"To have you there to open the event with your drummers made it truly spectacular and many people commented on the quality of the performances. In addition, Julie's drumming workshops helped to engage young and old, and it was good to see all the workshops full to capacity. I do hope I get to work with you again, and I certainly would have no problem recommending you to other institutions." Ryan Pemberton, Student Manager at Beauchamp College

Following on from the successful launch at the East Midlands Food and Drink Festival I was invited to take part in the **ValeFest** Hootenanny event in Melton Mowbray in January. I invited Year 6 children from Stathern Primary School to perform, as we had worked together in a

Wider Opportunities project the previous year. I returned to the school for a day, working with everyone from both Key Stages, and some of the Year 6 children performed at the grand event at Melton Theatre. Troy Jenkinson, Head Teacher of Stathern, said:

"Wow! The drumming workshops were amazing! The children were extremely enthusiastic and those who took part in the Hootenanny show were especially complimentary, both about taking part in the performance and watching others perform. The project hit every area of the music curriculum together with the social and emotional development of the pupils."

Collaborations

It has been such fun for me to return to work with international students at The London School of Puppetry - the students' creativity and artistic flair is amazing to watch and work with, developed under the expert guidance of Caroline Astell-Burt, Course Director, and Wendy Cook, choreographer and theatre director. I have the absolute pleasure of working with Wendy again in June - this time in Sweden! We've been invited by Anya Ison-Wallace to run a 4 day course for professional dancers and dance teachers, including daily ballet class (led by Gwen Berwick) and choreographic workshops. Guess who'll be playing piano and drums! My work started many years ago as a dance accompanist, so perhaps I've come full circle...

By the way . . .

... watch out for news of my new website in the next edition!

and finally ...

... to the two heads of music I know who are off work and my student, Janet, recovering from an operation, warmest wishes to get well soon, and I hope we'll all have a warm and sunny summer! Julie 2009



Photograph courtesy of liz@lizzypix.com