



summer newsletter



2014

Edze & Dolapo
Afro-Women's Creative Group Choir
at Station 8 of the Great North Passion

welcome

As I often do, I will start with an extract from a poem – this time part of ‘Summer in a Small Town’ by Tony Hoagland – one of my favourite poets, and author of a collection entitled ‘What Narcissism Means To Me’ – job done!

Summer, when the living is easy
and we store up pleasure in our bodies
like fat, like Eskimos
for the coming season of privation.

All August the Ferris wheel will turn
in the little amusement park,
and screaming teenage girls will jump into the river
with their clothes on,
right next to the No Swimming sign,

trying to cool the heat inside the small towns
of their bodies,
for which they have no words;
obedient to the voice inside which tells them
‘Now. Steal pleasure.’

So, back at TVA Towers, we’re all very busy making good things happen; our Moving On project, with young people in the care of the local authority, is indeed moving on, and our activities for the One Planet Middlesbrough programme are all getting underway – Ree Collins, TVA Projects Officer, will tell you more about those in due course. Peter Neal, TVA Office Co-ordinator, has been working with mima to refine and improve the Cultural Emailout, and is planning a possible TVA artists’ membership scheme, and a small TVA equipment hire wing – watch this space.

Maurice Dezou has been very busy with Wider World, our work with refugees and others newly arrived in the UK – see more later; with planning our WorldFest events – see more later; and with supporting our young people in the Musicmix project, who will get a chance to showcase their talents at WorldFest – see more later!

The stand out event has undoubtedly been our participation in the BBC’s Great North Passion, which was broadcast – live – on Good Friday, 18th April, from Bents Park in South Shields. The programme told the story of the Stations of the Cross, through the use of shipping containers, transformed by artists and community groups. Our contribution was that Maurice supported the Tees Valley Afro-Women’s Creative Group to perform a song he had written for the occasion, live, to an audience of 3000 people and one million viewers, and that Adrian Moule and the Phoenix Arts Group from Stockton created a stunning back drop, and a mandala floor, for our very own container. Everything about this project was interesting/ challenging, and nothing was ordinary – I got used to having phone conversations about our container, 60 other containers in the shape of the Cross, Station 8 and the women of Jerusalem, singing in three languages, getting the wooden superstructure into and out of the container, lentils and beans for the floor, and permission releases for press coverage.... In the event, it all came together brilliantly, the women did us and themselves proud and there wasn’t a dry eye. I accompanied the group to the run through on the Thursday and the live performance on the Friday, and something that impressed me, apart from the glory of the women singing and the freezingness of the wind, was the professionalism of Fern Britton! Seeing her up close, surrounded by cameras and crowds, with no teleprompt, and speaking fluently, naturally and

warmly, well – it was impressive.

On another note (ha) TVA is about to welcome a new worker (at time of writing). We were awarded some funding by the Lloyds TSB Foundation (as was), to recruit a new worker for a period of time, to develop our work with adults. We are delighted to welcome Miki Rogers to this role – I'm sure many of you will know Miki as she has been active on the creative scene for a few years now, both as a freelancer and involved in a variety of initiatives, including SkyBlueRed Studio and Totally Locally Guisborough. Miki will start in late May, and then no doubt, she will update readers on her activities in the Autumn newsletter.

Further great news for TVA is that we have been awarded a core funding grant by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, which helps us to survive and to continue to make positive and enjoyable things happen in the lives of people of all ages and backgrounds across the Tees Valley – big thanks to them!

Finally, I would like to thank two people who have made a great contribution to TVA over recent years – Penny Vowles of the Northern Rock Foundation, and Richard Anderson, Chair of the TVA Board of Trustees.

Penny was manager of various NRF culture and community programmes which have supported TVA, and she has overseen our current grant from them which funds the Wider World project. Readers may be aware that the NRF will not continue in its current form – which is a huge blow for the North East – and Penny has left to spend more time with her grandchildren and to develop other interests. Bon voyage to her, and bienvenue to Pete Barrett, who will be our new NRF Programme Manager.

Richard Anderson has announced his intention to step down as Chair of the TVA Board of Trustees, as he will be taking up a new senior finance post, requiring more time and travelling, which will in turn make the commitment to TVA – which is entirely voluntary - hard to fit in and do justice to. I am pleased to say that he will be staying on as a Board member, just as his predecessor, Tony Campbell, has done. Richard has steered the organisation through some challenging times, and has done so with unfailing good humour, positive intent, clear-sightedness and stout heart. I thank him for his contribution, wish him well for the future, and am delighted that he will be sticking around with TVA!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rowena Sommerville". The script is fluid and cursive.

Rowena Sommerville
Director, TVA

WORLD FEST 2014

Dennis Bovell

British Reggae Dub Master

Heritage Survival

from Zimbabwe

Shurooq Abu Alnas

from Sudan

tickets

£5—

under 14s FREE

**“A great night of
music from
the wider
world”**

MIDDLESBROUGH TOWN HALL CRYPT / 28 JUNE
DOORS & BAR 7–30 / START 8— / FINISH 11—

Please note that all under 18s must be accompanied and will be wristbanded

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refugee arts

I have been busy working on Wider World and Musicmix. As you will already have seen, Wider World – our programme of work with people newly arrived in the UK – has included The Great North Passion.

When the BBC approached us about the possibility of our being part of the GNP, I was already helping the Tees Valley Afro-Women's Creative Group, and I knew that their aims included helping their peers settle here, to provide guidance and support to them, and to help their own creativity to flourish. When I first told them about the GNP possibility, they were a bit reluctant, partly through not knowing what was going to be involved (which none of us did) and partly because of a natural suspicion of the mainstream media and its presentation of diversity issues.

However, once we progressed into the project, the women became more and more enthused, and wanted to do it well. I wrote the song 'Stranger', following lots of discussion about the African tradition of welcome and hospitality, and I incorporated lyrics in English, Arabic and Swahili. Until we came to the 'dress rehearsal' run through, we ourselves had no clear idea of the scale of the GNP installation, or how the programme would work, and it was great to see the women's surprise and also how they rose to the challenge of performing live, and live on TV! After the live performance the group was so positive, basking in the glory, and full of positivity for the future, eager to recruit more members and to achieve more great things – fantastic!

This year we have recruited some enthusiastic young people to Musicmix and it is great to see those youngsters develop in skill and confidence.

We are currently planning two WorldFest events in late June, one for Youth and Community and one more 'headline'; some of the talented young people, the women's choir, and one of the choir – Shurooq who is a professional music star in Sudan, will be performing at the WorldFest/s – check out the details in this newsletter and on the TVA website. See you there!



Maurice Dezou
Refugees Officer, TVA

adult arts

As a Teesside girl born (in Middlesbrough) and bred (in Eaglescliffe) the area has always been very close to my heart. Though I spent many years living in Kent, I came back to the Tees Valley ten years ago, a husband and two children in tow and have never looked back. Recent media attention on the area seems to have been unnecessarily negative, but I have entirely the opposite view of the North-east, the fabulous diversity of both the inhabitants and landscape being something I love and missed dearly over the seventeen years I was away.

During my previous role as a teacher I managed to stay in touch with the best and worst of Teesside, working in some of the area's most difficult but most rewarding schools and at HMPS Holme House. This led to me setting up not only my own community arts company SkyBlueRed, not-for profit arts venue SkyBlueRed Studio, and onto being a founding member of shop local group 'Totally Locally Guisborough'. My days away from the office are still spent setting up art projects and commissions, organising markets and meetings with independent businesses, and (if time allows) hand-making items for sale on markets through my 'Ruby and Blue' label.

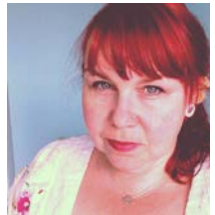
My first couple of weeks with TVA have gone extremely rapidly, but I'm starting to get into the flow of things in the office. During my first week I was able to sit in on a couple of meetings alongside Rowena, which have emphasised to me both the large scale and diversity of projects TVA undertakes, as well as the attention to detail and huge amount of time it takes to get these projects right. Going back through some of the previous projects to acclimatise myself to the role has been a real insight into the impact TVA has had over the years in the larger Tees Valley area.

Keen to get my teeth into my own work, I've been looking into two possible projects. The first is with adults in the Thorntree area; after a meeting with TVA Board member Councillor Purvis, we began to identify both groups who would benefit from a TVA managed project and funding to facilitate this, initially discussing adults with dementia and young mums on the estate. This week I have visited a provider of accommodation for homeless males in Stockton-on-Tees, many of whom are ex-offenders and have been through drugs rehabilitation. The organisation seems excited about the prospect of working with us, and I am informed the lads are very keen on exploring creative opportunities.

Exciting times ahead I think... I have to thank everyone at TVA for giving me this great opportunity to use the skills I've gained through the last few years to do what I feel passionate about, trying to improve the lives of people who need it the most through creativity. Now I'd best get on with it!



Miki Rogers
Adults Officer, TVA





Great North Passion ft. Zororai and Edze in front of Adrian Moule's Station 8 Backdrop

projects

I write this newsletter update as I return from a week away in Connemara National Park. A lovely week spent with the family, climbing hills and finding remote white sandy beaches, only to come back to a wealth of emails... Amazing how a week away from the desk can cause a massive pile up! The desk is beginning to take the shape of one of the mountains from Connemara! Anyway, despite the week away, the projects are taking shape and running smoothly.

Moving On... And so we enter our third year of delivery of the **Moving On Project**. This project works across the Tees Valley with young people in or leaving care. Host Artists work closely with the leaving care team of the Borough to deliver creative arts engagement and support the young people through Bronze Arts Award. This year the groups are engaging with film making, song writing, clay modelling, self-portraits, samba drumming, and glass making! As part of the project, each group embarks on a cultural trip in the North East. For example, one group went to see the **Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra** at Middlesbrough Town Hall... what an opportunity! I have found time to get away from my desk and actually visit a few of the sessions, and it has been an absolute pleasure to meet these young people and engage with the activity. (I was rather jealous not to be joining in myself!) Nicola Parkin, Robin Vickers and Tim Coyte are our host artists for the project, providing the groups with some fantastic arts activities and experiences. Watch this space for some photos of the sessions!

OPM... As the arts partner of Big Lottery Funded project **One Planet Middlesbrough**, we offer creative engagement activity to a wide range of groups.

We are a few weeks in to our collaboration with **Middlesbrough and Stockton MIND**, working with a collective of people in combining music practice with creative writing around the subject of caring for you, your community and your planet. **Fran Hammill**, musician and part of local band Cattle and Cane is our lead artist on this project and is joined by Creative Writer **Bob Beagrie**. It has been great to bring both arts practices together and I look forward to the celebration event later in the summer where some work will be exhibited and/or performed.

In addition to our activity with MIND, we are also currently in the planning stages of setting up some collaborations with **Middlesbrough schools**. Artists will work closely with a class to create a final project based around various subjects such as Climate Change, Flooding and Recycling which will become part of the school's **Creative Curriculum**.

Alas, I must return to the desk mountain, whilst also trying to plan moving house...Hopefully by the time of the next newsletter, the mountain will be a mole hill and I will have moved to Norton! Bye for now!

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

Ree Collins
Projects Officer, TVA



days, weeks

...months and soon no doubt it will be years that I've been, which is no bad thing and with the pace we've set it feels like we're making steady progress in the right direction - no treading water here!

The Cultural Email Service is going from strength-to-strength and thanks to the ongoing support of Kerrie Page over at **mima** and we've just begun integrating sign-ups for the service on both our website and mima's creative community pages which will hopefully open the service up to a wider audience, making it more accessible to all. In the spirit of greater consultation we'll also be sending out another survey to ask you how we've been doing and what improvements you'd like us to make. If you would like to make use of the service please see our guidelines for submissions at **teesvalleyarts.org.uk/cultural-emails**.

As the team has continued to grow - welcome Miki - we have been putting a great deal of thought into how we can better serve the wider creative community in the Tees Valley and as part of this process we have begun to outline a new equipment hiring scheme where you'll be able to hire, at an affordable rate, some of the equipment own ranging from a full broadcast quality Sony digital HD videocamera, to the GoPro Hero 3+ we've just ordered, to musical instruments such as our collection of African Djembe drums, to more craft orientated equipment such as our sewing machines or badge maker. So watch this space!

Over the years TVA has supported and commissioned hundreds, if not thousands of artists. So we've learnt a few things about the needs of artists and how to support them. In order to be able to do this better, and with a view to making TVA more sustainable in the long-run, we've begun to explore the idea of introducing a membership scheme for artists which would give them support on a range of professional matters such as DBS checks through to providing early or pre-vetted access to opportunities available through TVA and its partners. If this is something you'd like to see then please don't hesitate to get in touch to discuss further.

Finally you can continue to stay up-to-date with what's happening here at TVA through our website, which has now undergone its transition to wordpress and is being updated regularly; on twitter @ **[teesvalleyarts](https://twitter.com/teesvalleyarts)**; on Facebook **facebook.com/teesvalleyarts**; as well as on Google+ **plus.google.com/+TeesvalleyartsOrgUk**; and not forgetting **vimeo.com/teesvalleyarts**.



Peter Neal
Office Co-ordinator, TVA



WORLD FEST 2014

youth & community event



a free, warm & friendly musical get-together featuring
talented young performers from TVA's MusicMix programme
the Tees Valley Afro-Women's Choir *as seen on BBC1*
the Roma Band *thrilling Roma music*
special guest Don E *soul singer, songwriter, member of Grace Jones' band*

MIDDLESBROUGH TOWN HALL CRYPT / 27 JUNE
DOORS & START 7— / FINISH 9—

All welcome, family friendly and free to enter - children must be accompanied
www.teesvalleyarts.org.uk / 01642 264 651 / 07525 053 193



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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