

AMP! Newsletter 2012

Access Music Project celebrated its second birthday this year after a productive and inspiring year of teaching, learning and playing.



Makana 200 Parade

During the first semester we had some exciting opportunities to perform. In February we led the Makana 200 Parade with our Brazilian samba rhythms and many people commented on how much our group added to the festive atmosphere of the parade. In May our marimba band, AMPlIFIRE, performed at the Rotary Club of Grahamstown Sunset variety concert, Alive! at the Monument, and for the International Day Parade organised by Rhodes University. But the biggest moment for our learners came in July when they teamed up with musicians from France and Cape

Town for a performance on the main programme of the National Arts Festival – Big Time! As part of a cultural exchange between South Africa and France, this event was part of the ‘French Season in South Africa’. Our learners spent a week in rehearsals together with Braka and the Elephant Quartet from France, professional jazz musicians Marcus Wyatt and George Werner, and some young musicians from the Delft Big Band and Little Giants music programme in Cape Town. This was a wonderful learning experience and one the learners will never forget. It has given them a taste of what is required to rehearse for and perform in a professional show, as well as helped a long way to improve their reading, ensembleship and motivation to work towards something greater.



Big Time!

Big Time!



Fire-making on the AMP! Camp by Eastern Wilderness School

In March we held a weekend-long music camp at Assegai Trails, which was sponsored by the Eastern Cape Provincial Arts and Culture Council (ECPACC). This was certainly one of the highlights of the year. Activities included band rehearsals, practising music theory, playing games, watching a live jazz band, watching music videos, learning some outdoor survival skills, swimming, canoeing, looking at the giraffe, listening to African folktales, telling stories around the camp fire and more.

We are very grateful to Mandisa Ntlale who assisted us with cooking and general supervision, to Assegai Trails who were so generous with the accommodation, and to all the individuals who helped us out!

AMP! Camp



AMP! was engaged by the National Arts Festival to coordinate the end of the festival street parade for 2012. Great amounts of creative energy and hard labour went into putting together acts for the parade, and coordinating the many local and international arts groups that participated in this wonderful



Giant percussive tortoise built by AMP!

event. Among AMP!’s highlights were the giant percussive tortoise – its shell consisting of drums and various other noisy objects; the ‘bucket band’ – a drumming group of high school learners from Ntsika, Khutliso Daniels, St Andrews College and Diocesan School for Girls, in which the bulk of the drums consisted of recycled oil, mayonnaise and chutney buckets; and of course our AMP! learners performing with the Big Time! group.



National Arts Festival street parade, coordinated by AMP!



Bucket band rehearsing for the NAF street parade



Big Time! on the NAF parade



Saxophone lessons

In the second semester, funds received from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) allowed us to expand our core programme by taking on a new group of learners. Our new learners are from Khutliso Daniels, Nombulelo and Ntsika secondary schools. We have now have a total of 20 dedicated



Bass guitar lessons

learners, studying drum kit, keyboard, trombone, trumpet, saxophone, bass guitar and voice. All of our learners are also doing music theory, music literacy, music history, and playing in the band.



Arrival of new marimbas!

Additionally, the NLDTF grant has allowed us to purchase a new set of marimbas with an awesome sound! This has enabled us to use our original set of marimbas, donated to us by the College of Transfiguration, to start an extended programme by which we can reach more learners at a greater number of schools and involve them in learning practical music. The marimba set is being housed at Ntiska

Secondary School, where learners from 3 different schools (Ntsika, Benjamin Mahlasela and D.D. Siwisa) have marimba band lessons taught by volunteers from Rhodes University. From January 2013 we will be starting a further 2 bands for 2 additional schools, and we aim to continue to grow this programme in the future, eventually providing the means for capable senior learners and school teachers to begin to lead the bands themselves.



Marimba lessons with learners from D.D. Siwisa Primary

On Heritage Day, 24 September, AMPLiFIRE performed at the Sakhuluntu Youth Festival at Extension 9 Hall. Last year AMPLiFIRE won second place in the music category. This year the judges decided not to include some of the groups in the awards because they were more advanced than the majority of groups and the judges wanted to give an opportunity to the more amateur groups. AMPLiFIRE was included among the 'advanced' groups, along with other groups such as Amaphiko and Ubom! Obutsha, so although we did not get a prize we were honoured that the judges put us in such a high category!



Writing exams

Now the fourth term has passed and learners have completed their theory and practical exams. The exams give the learners good practice in preparing for and performing in formal music exams, and the results and comments they receive provide an additional form of feedback to the learners regarding how they are doing in the programme. We have had some wonderful results, including 5 learners achieving over 80% for their practical component and 7 learners over 80% in their theory.

This year we launched our website: www.accessmusic.org.za. Please visit this site for more photographs, information and updates on AMP! We are continuing to campaign for further musical instruments and equipment, including sets of marimbas to be allocated to various schools as part of our extended programme. We are also beginning our plans to work towards a physical centre in Joza in which to house our growing number of classes. We are greatly in need of new/used shipping containers and building materials, and our continuing needs include stationery and catering for learners' lunches.

Once again, we would not have been able to do any of this work without the assistance of our sponsors and generous community members/organisations. Thanks go to the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF), Eastern Cape Provincial Arts and Culture Council (ECPACC), the National Arts Festival (NAF), African Musical Instruments (AMI), Rhodes University Centre of Excellence, Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE), Association Faux Défi Défait Fou (FDDF), Lee Gold Music, Victoria Girls' High School, Diocesan School for Girls, Graeme College and all individuals who donated instruments or funds for instruments and books (see our [website](#) for the full list). Thanks also go to our volunteer tutors – Grant Mears, Steve Ellis, Yemurai Matibe, Lotta Matambo, Sarah Waterfield, Nomashawekazi Damasane, Lebogang Koloane and Heather van Niekerk. We are extremely grateful to Child Welfare for generously allowing us use of their office and containers in Joza as teaching and storage spaces, and to all individuals who have come to share their time and knowledge with us. We are thankful to Khutliso Daniels, Nombulelo and Ntsika secondary schools for their continued support and enthusiasm.

Wishing you a restful and happy festive season,



Shiloh Marsh
Project Manager

