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THE SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS AND FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCE 2012 LINE UP

The Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival introduce their nation-wide programme of events, screenings, workshops and exhibitions taking place from 1 - 24 October 2012. The theme this year is 'walk in my shoes'.

Tickets are on sale now for over 250 arts events encompassing theatre, film, music, dance, comedy, literature and visual arts happening throughout the country. Now one of the largest social justice festivals of its kind in the world, this year's SMHAFF has extended its eclectic and thought-provoking programme to include video-gaming, a community opera and a bipolar circus.

Taking inspiration from this year's theme, musicians, writers and artists will explore aspects of empathy and understanding in collaboration with arts organisations and venues working with activists, community groups and people who have experienced mental health problems.

Douglas T Stewart (BMX Bandits), Rod Jones (Idlewild) and Malcolm Middleton (ex-Arab Strap) are some of the musicians involved in creating this year's programme, along with writers **Alan Bisset, Christopher Brookmyre** and **Rodge Glass**, Scots Makar **Liz Lochhead**, comedians **Mark Steel** and **Susan Morrison**, poet and comedian **John Hegley** and award-winning theatre director **Nicola McCartney**.

Lee Knifton, Festival Director says: "The arts allow you to explore meaning in a fun way, to engage your emotions and connect with one another emotionally as well as intellectually."

Now in its sixth year, the Festival has expanded in size from a weekend of film in 2007 to almost a month-long event spanning sixteen regions, multiple art forms, and hosting a major film programme and annual International Film Awards.

The Festival has also developed in scope. "SMHAFF has evolved to be a broader social justice festival where we're not just looking at improving mental health for everyone, we're looking at reducing the inequalities in well-being that we experience as a community," says Lee.

"The Festival is about social justice, it's about tackling stigma, it's about exploring mental health identities and it's about connecting people and organisations that otherwise wouldn't meet. And it's about creating space – not just for great art – but for exploring what art can tell us about mental health and about identity more generally."

Isabella Goldie, Head of Mental Health Foundation, Scotland says: "The Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival has gradually become one of the most exciting, innovative and important arts events in Scotland's cultural calendar. Not only because each year the quality of the art on offer just keeps getting better and better but many will know that this festival is much, much more than a series of fantastic and of course accessible events - it's a celebration of the human spirit."

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

FILM: The Scottish Mental Health Film Festival breaks new ground with previews of unreleased and rare films plus special guests.

Anti-Clock and **Dali In New York** with an appearance by maverick filmmaker **Jack Bond**. (GFT & Filmhouse, Edinburgh)

The Scottish premiere of **I, Anna**, starring **Charlotte Rampling**. (GFT & Filmhouse, Edinburgh)

Film maker **Jim Burns** and subject **Douglas T Stewart** discuss **Serious Drugs** - a film about inspiration, creativity and the BMX Bandits. (Filmhouse, Edinburgh)

The SMHAFF international film submission provides a platform for filmmakers from all over the world to share their ideas about mental health and social justice issues. The best entries will be honoured at the **SMHAFF International Film Awards 2012** ceremony on Wed 24 Oct at Filmhouse, Edinburgh.

THEATRE:

Box of Frogs - An exhilarating, high-octane performance showcasing a deluge of circus skills including trick-cycling, tumbling and acrobalance, exploring circus as a metaphor for emotional instability, inspired by Mish Weaver's experience of bipolar disorder. (Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock; The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen; Lochgelly Centre, Lochgelly)

Piece of Mind - A surprising, funny and captivating documentary dance theatre work by **Vanessa Coffey** bringing to life the experience of young people diagnosed with bipolar. Pulsating with rhythm, this is a new interpretation of last year's sell-out *Of Two Minds*. (CCA; Paisley Arts Centre; Arts Guild Theatre, Greenock; Carnegie Hall Studio Theatre, Dunfermline)

The Visitors Presents: The Occupation of Heather Rose - Award winning director **Nicola McCartney's** production of Wendy Lill's play about an idealistic nurse in a Canadian outpost who discovers that mental health is not simply a physical or emotional issue, but also a political, economic, and cultural one.

MUSIC:

Music Like A Vitamin - The Fruit Tree Foundation returns with a unique collaboration by **Fatherson, The Birthday Suit**, featuring **Rod Jones of Idlewild, Withered Hand** and **Sparrow and The Workshop**. (HMV Picturehouse, Edinburgh).

Scottish Opera and Shelter Support Services present: The Magic Boot - A one-off performance of a new community opera written and performed by families affected by homelessness. (Maryhill Burgh Halls)
Soundminds - Soundminds are a group of young people who organise live music events for young people, focusing on creativity and mental well-being. Dates and locations are kept secret until just before the gigs. (Various secret locations, Lanarkshire)

LITERATURE:

Walking, Talking, Writing from Lapidus Scotland - a weekend of writing events featuring Scots Makar **Liz Lochhead** and **James King**, performance poet. (Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum)

Falkirk Rocks - **Alan Bissett**, author of *Boyracers* and Scottish Writer of The Year, is among the Bairn-only line-up, along with Grangemouth's own **Gordon Legge**. (Behind The Wall, Falkirk)

Animal Alphaboat with John Hegley - Poetic fun for all the family. (St Columba's-by-the-Castle, Edinburgh)

An Audience with Christopher Brookmyre - The award-winning author known for his satirical, in-your-face crime fiction will discuss his writing and inspirations, taking audience questions in an open discussion format. (Elgin Library, Elgin).

COMEDY:

Mark Steel's In Town - The acclaimed writer and stand-up comedian brings the feel-good factor to Moray for a unique show. (The Loft, Kinloss, Moray)

Laugh? I Nearly Died - Keir McAlister and John Scott are among a group of Scottish stand-ups, led by Scotland's favourite MC Susan Morrison who will be playing various gigs around the Highlands and Islands, finishing up in Rutherglen. (Various venues)

VIDEO GAMING:

Walkthrough - In a first foray into a new sphere for the Festival, speakers from some of Scotland's most successful video games companies take you on a journey through their creations. (Cineworld, Glasgow)

VISUAL ART :

Elemental - A visually stunning exhibition of work from emerging Falkirk artist Archie Tipple. Archie uses the visual reference of the elements and science to make astounding and breath-taking large scale images. (Forth Valley Royal Hospital, Larbert)

A Walk In My Boots: Veterans First Point Art Open Day - displaying visual and written artwork exploring the experiences of veterans and their families. (Veterans First Point, Edinburgh)

ALSO:

- **HEADSPACE** - Headspace is a diverse celebration of health and well-being activities and projects that enrich the North East of Glasgow. The 2012 festival is a partnership between Platform and Positive Mental Attitudes, programming a vibrant collection of exhibitions, workshops and performances, from creative writing to visual art and theatre. (Platform, Easterhouse, Glasgow)
- **MOVING MINDS** - A museum-wide day of events exploring diversity and mental well-being, including music, dance, dress making, creative writing, yoga, tai chi, guided tours, stalls and exhibitions. All events are free. (Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow)

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

For interview requests, images and press tickets please contact Alison Young, Media and Communications Coordinator: alisonsmhaff@gmail.com T. 0141 572 1661 M. 07891 038 053
Tickets are on sale now. For more information see www.mhfestival.com

A PDF of programme of the full Festival 2012 programme can be downloaded from www.mhfestival.com/media.php

ABOUT SMHAFF: Now in its sixth year, the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival is one of Scotland's most diverse cultural events, encompassing music, film, visual art, theatre, dance, and literature. The annual festival takes place in venues across Scotland throughout October, aiming to support the arts and challenge preconceived ideas about mental health.

By engaging artists, connecting with communities and forming collaborations, we celebrate the artistic achievements of people with experience of mental health issues, exploring the relationship between creativity and the mind, and promoting positive mental health and well-being.

PARTNERS: The festival is supported by The Mental Health Foundation in association with the following national partners: Mental Health Foundation, Scotland's anti-stigma campaign 'see me', NHS Health Scotland, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, NHS Lothian, The Royal College of Psychiatrists, Lanarkshire Recovery Network, Voices of Experience, IRISS, University of Strathclyde.

The festival is also supported by hundreds of arts, voluntary, community and health organisations across Scotland. These groups programme diverse, innovative events in their own towns and cities on behalf of the festival, utilising local talent and creativity.

The Mental Health Foundation is a leading UK mental health charity that conducts robust research, provides practical solutions to help everyone lead mentally healthier lives, and works to raise public awareness and improve mental health services for the entire population. The Foundation is proud of the vital role it plays in hosting, developing and managing the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival www.mentalhealth.org.uk

