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SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS AND FILM FESTIVAL 2012 KICKS OFF THIS WEEK

The sixth Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival kicks off this week with the first of over 250 arts events, running from 1–24 October across Scotland.

Susan Philipz, winner of the 2010 Turner Prize and **Rod Jones of Idlewild** helped launch the 2012 Festival, which encompasses theatre, film, dance, music, comedy, literature and the visual arts at Paisley Town Hall last week.

HeadSpace at Platform, Easterhouse, today launches Glasgow East's contribution to SMHAFF 2012. The launch event (2–4pm) features a selection of mini performances as a taster to the events taking place between 8–13 October. Headspace offers free and low cost opportunities to take part in music, drama, visual art and creative writing as well as watching performances by young people, theatre groups and creative writers.

Fife region also hold their launch event 'Feat First' this evening (7–9.30pm) at Carnegie Primary School, Dunfermline, with a variety of exciting and thought-provoking entertainment including comedic monologues and film screenings.

Highlights of the first week of the Festival include two shows which emphasise the benefits of humour in maintaining our mental well-being with acclaimed writer and stand-up comedian **Mark Steel** in Moray, while comedian and poet **John Hegley** brings his show for all ages, Animal Alphaboat, to Edinburgh.

My Sister, by Scandal Theatre, a Glasgow-based international touring company, is a gripping piece of physical theatre about a family secret that threatens to destroy two siblings. Fresh from the Edinburgh Fringe, My Sister is written by **Jessica Phillipi**, directed by **Deborah Hannan** and performed by them both at The Old Hairdresser's, Glasgow, while **Nicola McCartney** directs **Molly Bunder** at The Arches, Glasgow, in **The Occupation of Heather Rose**, a witty and unsentimental monodrama telling the story of a newly trained nurse who travels to Canada's unforgiving north. Slowly, she realizes their health issues are related to its political and cultural impotency.

Melancholia and Creativity is an afternoon of discussion and Q&As supported by The University of Edinburgh. Writers, thinkers, doctors and artists have long pondered the causes and cures for inexplicable sadness. Writers, commentators and psychotherapists will take the floor at The Sanctuary, Edinburgh.

The Festival will continue to run throughout most of October. See www.mhfestival.com

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

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Tickets are on sale now. For more information see www.mhfestival.com

A PDF of the full Festival 2012 programme and press releases can be downloaded from 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

