

Spirit and Inspiration

Dumfries and Galloway

A collection of stories and anecdotes that encapsulates a year of inspiration and strength in the region's creative community during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020.



Image: Sanghuar Bricks, The Mertz Gallery, Sanghuar.



This book captures the **resilience** of Dumfries and Galloway's **creative community** and celebrates its **inspiring** response to the global pandemic.

It **shines a light** on the distinct creative solutions developed through tireless work and an unflinching commitment for keeping the **human spirit** of creativity as a central way for keeping us, and our communities, **together** during unprecedented times when we had no choice but to be physically apart.



Leah Halliday & Kirsten Scot, The Guild Dumfries.

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2020 a year like no other

It may not be an exaggeration to say that one day our children and grandchildren will perhaps ask us “What did you do during the pandemic?” It sounds melodramatic, doesn’t it? But it’s hard not to be when it feels like the world has been living through an awful, prolonged nightmare.

This book will help tell future generations at least part of the story of how Dumfries and Galloway’s amazing creative community responded to the global public health crisis. It by no means captures the full picture but it does encapsulate the spirit, resilience and ‘can do’ attitude of our creative practitioners, administrators, technicians and volunteers responsible for helping make Dumfries and Galloway such a special place to live, and a magnet for visitors.

In the same way that water will always find a route through, its way around obstacles in determined pursuit of its natural path: in spite of the pandemic our region’s creative community resolved to find their way through. They did so quietly, beavering away without fanfare and too often without financial reward. They simply used their creative abilities to follow our human compulsion for being connected.

They used their abilities and creative talents to help make the world a brighter and better place during a time of darkness when so many suffered so much.

This book pays tribute to their creative spirit.

David McDonald, Arts Development Director, DG Unlimited

“What did
you do during
the pandemic?”

Connections



Being a creative can be a solitary experience. Often our works are made while we are on our own. But the creative community is also known for collaborating and working together, for celebrating and showcasing its work in the arts, crafts, literature, music, dance, and theatre, through events, performances, and exhibitions.

During a year when we were all forced to physically isolate ourselves from each other, the region's creatives took a leap of faith and used technology to forge new collaborations and partnerships. They created new works and made them available to everyone in innovative ways. The Pandemic did not silence the creative and cultural community. The events, performances, and exhibitions went ahead despite the restrictions. New friendships and connections were formed, and long-standing networks strengthened. Despite the circumstances, the communities across and beyond Dumfries and Galloway were able to see and experience works in all mediums which inspired and delighted them.

Here are a few examples of the collaborations, partnerships, and innovative projects we enjoyed in 2020 and the early part of 2021.

Tabi Mudaliar, Creative Producer, DG Unlimited.

“At a time of universal isolation, connecting, forming new friendships and creative collaborations was a joy to see and experience.”



Electric Theatre Workshop



Bringing the [Big Burns Supper](#) and world class cultural events to Dumfries.

“Our 2020 started with the end of Big Burns Supper Festival, and soon after we began our Covid response with a message to key workers from Dumfries Community Choir. Lockdown Festival was next up in our programme - and the 90-minute online festival showcased over 50 artists across both its editions.

As we moved into our year of creativity, we kicked off with [Dumfries Big TV](#), an interactive online channel dedicated to Dumfries and its history to engage families and young people across the region, created by 10 different associate artists from across Dumfries.

Janey Godley’s Big Burns Supper premiered in January 2021 and, as a 10th birthday celebration for us, we programmed previous friends of the festival to provide a show full of music and comedy to celebrate Burns Night.

In the first 24 hours, the event gained 181,000 views and to date has 316,600 views across all channels. Our international audience increased, and the overall audience were 44% from the UK, 17% from India, 16% from Europe, 10% from Russia and 6% from Asia which can also be recognised from our overall social media reach of 1.8m. We are thrilled by the response to our online endeavours but we can’t wait to open up the Spiegel Tent once more and welcome audiences back to the Big Burns Supper.”

Allison McLellan, Company Manager

places
where
we
dream

Up the hill there is the Twin Oak tree,
My sister married there many years ago.
I stand beneath there,
Arms tightly embracing their trunk,
I pour my ear into their bark to listen to
their whispering wisdom.
My tears flow down and water them at
their roots,
And mine, for they are one and the same.

Celia Donovan

For Enjoyment CIC



For Enjoyment is a group of people coming together to do a quintessentially human thing – be creative for the simple pleasure of it – in Dumfries and Galloway and beyond.

“Over the last year For Enjoyment CIC has been working away providing an online supply of live creative workshops, events, and day sessions. As well as working to supply other organisations, we’ve also continued with our regular For Enjoyment (FE) sessions. Printing, Photography, and Drawing for Enjoyment have been highly productive. The online sessions have been a lifeline for us all in more ways than one.”

“The output from an army of creatives has been prolific, and having people joining us from all over Scotland and beyond has reinforced our drive to keep art accessible to everyone. The impact and value of creativity and a supportive connected community under current circumstances is not to be underestimated!

FE has held exhibitions, live and virtual, its community has grown in number and well over a thousand places have been filled at its online workshops sessions and projects.”

Frank Hayes, Director, For Enjoyment CIC.



Moniaive Fights Back Comic



MONIAIVE FIGHTS BACK COMIC

Moniaive, the [Festival Village](#), is a friendly, creative village in the Southern Upland hills of Dumfries and Galloway. Like many rural communities, Moniaive was hit hard by Covid-19 and the resulting lockdown. Looking to revitalise the economy and increase community cohesion, it was suggested to comic book writer, Alan Grant, that he write a 'fightback' comic. Alan is known worldwide and during his 40-year career has worked on hundreds of comic characters. He said, "Having written superhero comics for many years I realise that heroes come in every shape and size and the people of Moniaive certainly fitted the bill!"

Sue, his wife, compiled details of how the community pulled together, they were then asked to draw a panel. Sue said, "The response was overwhelming and over 80 artists ranging from 4 to 88 years old took part, making this a real community project and it gave us all a real sense of pride."

"It's not my usual type of story," said Alan "but it gave me a great deal of satisfaction writing it."

The Stove Network





THE STOVE NETWORK An [award-winning arts and community project](#) based in Dumfries using creativity to bring together people and ideas, inspire new community-led projects, grow opportunities, and celebrate local places and people.

“With the out-break of COVID-19, The Stove’s field of operation was radically altered. The Stove has always functioned in collaboration so our priorities shifted and over the last 12 months, we’ve developed and delivered projects and events that have been focused on learning with our members and community so that we could support new and ambitious ideas from across the region.

Our first lockdown project, Homegrown, encouraged an exploration of four values through a series of creative challenges and commissions. We explored the impacts of the pandemic further and Atlas Pandemica was launched with a call out for artists to work with communities to learn from informal COVID responses in our region. Nithraid, our annual River Festival, was reimaged as a three-month long celebration and exploration of the River Nith.

Restrictions eased in October and the inaugural Wild Goose Festival took place, uniting key partners in an exploration of nature, creativity and place. Elsewhere came to the High Street in November, offering a chance to discover temporary artworks and installations. Lowland: The Play was launched as a Podcast in December - an audio play reflecting on life in Dumfries written by Doonhamers. We ended the year with our annual Dark Time, helping us to touch base and reacquaint ourselves with our core values and place our members at the heart of what we do.”

Matt Baker



Voices

Dumfries and Galloway's creative voices are strong. Whether in literature, song, or as spoken word or performance, we have always had something important to say. Globally, 2020 saw an increase in reading and creative pursuits across all ages and cultures. People had time and space like never before and a desire to express themselves and enjoy cultural experiences. As a result, we also saw an increase in online events including workshops, writing, singing, music, and dance classes, seminars, tutorials, podcasts, live streamed concerts, virtual choirs. And for the first time, we were all able to enjoy interviews, discussions, and online festivals we may never have been able to attend. The use of technology allowed us all to continue experiencing the creativity in the world safely from our homes.

The Bakehouse Community Arts





Annette Badland

THE BAKEHOUSE COMMUNITY ARTS

[Bakehouse Community Arts](#) is an organisation based in south-west Scotland dedicated to poetry and the spoken word.

“2020 was a challenging year but snatched from its Covidian jaws The Bakehouse Community Arts has much to celebrate!

Our online Lit Mag, ‘Bakings’ has attracted some of the best poets UK wide. Our filmed ‘shorts’ have kept our audience entertained while our ‘BIG LIT’ festival went digital starring the likes of former Scotland Makar Liz Lochhead, and TV star Annette Badland, alongside writers from as far afield as Australia. Our regular monthly offerings, on The Bakehouse Zoombiescope, have attracted a worldwide audience, and Creative Scotland has been more than generous in support of what we do.

Altogether, the pandemic has given us a unique opportunity to learn new skills, new ways of working with distant colleagues, attract new funding and extend our reach across continents. Not that we wouldn’t love to see our wonderful audience in real life, but in the meantime...!?”

Chrys Salt



Kim Ayres
Photography



KIM AYRES PHOTOGRAPHY Based in Castle Douglas, [Kim Ayres](#) is a gifted cinematic and theatrical photographer, artfully storytelling with the images he creates.

The weekly, live video podcast, “Understanding Photography with Kim Ayres” was Kim’s response to Lockdown.

In it he talks through the multiple decision-making processes in his photos, explains composition and lighting techniques, and sets regular challenges for followers. Viewers can also send in their images for critique and feedback.

It’s an interactive experience, with followers commenting, asking questions, and even starting conversations amongst themselves. It also has a global reach with regular contributors from Texas, Norway, South Africa, and India. Uniting them all is a passion for photography, and a desire to grow their understanding in a fun, friendly and supportive environment.

“What began as a 12 week experiment to maintain an online presence during the pandemic, has now become an integral part of my output. The podcasts are here to stay.” Kim Ayres

Tune in to @kimayresphotography on Facebook Live every Tuesday at 7.30pm UK time, or watch the recorded version on [Kim’s YouTube channel](#).



Wigtown Festival Company



WIGTOWN FESTIVAL COMPANY The organisation that runs [Wigtown Book Festival](#) and supports Dumfries & Galloway's literature community, helping writers fulfil their potential, and creates opportunities for young people to enjoy and learn through writing and storytelling.

"When the UK went into lockdown on 23 March 2020, Wigtown Festival Company had never run a single digital event. With such uncertainty and the whole country 'stuck at home' we recognised the opportunity for a captive audience for reading and literary events.

On 2 April, we launched the first ever 'Wigtown Wednesday', an online event using Zoom. Our first guest was local author Patrick Laurie discussing his book 'Native', and we were thrilled to attract an audience of 120 people.

A year later and we've developed an online bookshop, delivered more than 200 digital events across five programmes, released over 40 podcasts, held four online showcases, created a 'festival in a box' for residents at HMP Dumfries, produced six sensory story and rhymes packages for children and young people with additional needs, and progressed new and ongoing projects to help support the region's economic recovery post-COVID.

It has been an incredibly steep learning curve, but one we firmly believe leaves the organisation more flexible, resilient, and sustainable for the future, thanks to the confidence and support of our audiences, funders, sponsors, volunteers, Trustees and staff team."

Anne Barclay, Operations Director, Wigtown Festival Company.

Vision

Dumfries and Galloway has a long-established and deserved reputation as a hub of excellence in visual arts and crafts. During the restrictions our studios, galleries and exhibition spaces were forced to close. Flagship arts events, like Spring Fling, which provide an annual showcase of works had to quickly be redeveloped.

The open studios, galleries, exhibitions, and events throughout the year present artists and makers with a vital opportunity to showcase their works and earn a living. The sudden loss of these opportunities was a huge blow to the creative community, many makers and organisations were under extreme financial pressure throughout the year.

As time progressed, we saw exhibitions being moved online, artists and makers digitising their work to share and provide the public with the opportunity to buy original works. The region's events and exhibitions were made available online so venues, galleries, and arts organisations could continue to bring in some ticket and sales revenue. And the work continued so the public could continue to enjoy and experience visual art and crafts.

While the world shut down, the region's artists and makers continued to create.



“Working to support our creative community throughout this time has been humbling and uplifting; the deep-rooted desire to transform materials, to continue to make objects and artworks that challenge, inspire and soothe the soul, despite all, has been truly inspirational.”

Maggie Broadley, Programmes Manager, DG Unlimited.



Bea Last



The descent of man 2017 / recycled newspaper broadsheets / artist Bea Last

BEA LAST - [Artist & Mentor](#)

2020 was incredibly hard and unsettling for most of us with many plans for exhibitions, workshops and teaching being cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic. An artist that is process driven, I took the uncertainties on board with thoughts along the lines of getting creative, finding solutions, and being flexible. After all, that is what we artists do isn't it?

As a result, mentoring sessions went online, via zoom, and have worked very well. There are many advantages to mentoring online for those of us that live in a rural area. Teaching for The Glasgow School of Art, Widening Participation Portfolio Preparation Programme was cancelled for 2020 but a programme of online talks and workshops went ahead to bridge the gap. I was also asked to create a couple of digital films based around experimental mark making and another for sketchbooks.

With regards to exhibitions and projects, again, flexibility became the key word, with many exhibitions postponed until 2022. However, with a push for all things digital to keep the artist profile moving forward, I was invited to take part in many online exhibitions. This can be quite a moot subject for exhibiting artists however I chose to look at this form of online activity as a way of marketing and promoting myself as an artist and to have an active online presence.

Networking online has meant more meetings and activities via a computer screen. However, through doing this, I have connected with some amazing artists and curators from around the world leading to both physical and online exhibition invites, invitations to talk about the creative process to arts institutions and recently the potential of an artist residency in Tuscany 2022.

Cample Line





Located in rural south-west Scotland, **CAMPLE LINE** is an independent arts organisation dedicated to presenting contemporary art and film of international scope.

“We were about to launch our spring programme when Scotland entered lockdown in March 2020. Our exhibition – Helen Mirra’s *‘Acts for placing woollen and linen’* – was due to open on 23 March. Initially it was very difficult postponing so much activity, especially before the Chancellor announced financial support for those losing work directly because of the closures.

As a team, we decided immediately to reorganise and be as active as possible, and we moved quite quickly to migrate parts of our programme online so that we could continue providing resources and opportunities that way. Those early decisions helped carry our programme through the year, and we were able to reach and be in touch with people really very directly.

As for Helen’s exhibition, it had to shelter in place until we could reopen our building on 13 August. We felt incredibly lucky to be able to do so and then to open a second exhibition at the end of October, Sara Barker’s *‘Undo the knot’*. Sara’s exhibition includes 18 relief works that she made at home during the first national lockdown, and it seems incredible now that she was able to do so in the circumstances.”

Tina Fiske, Director, CAMPLE LINE

A black and white photograph of a person's torso and arms. The person is wearing a dark necklace. Their right arm is bent, with the hand resting on their left hip. The lighting creates strong shadows, emphasizing the contours of the skin and the texture of the fabric.

Carolyn Yates - Gaze



CAROLYN YATES - GAZE

[Carolyn](#) is a published poet and an emerging playwright, gaining an MSc in Playwriting from the University of Edinburgh in 2017. Her writing practice is rooted in feminism and the impact science and technology has on women's life cycles.

"Gaze, a (Digital) Work In Progress, is a creative response to photographer Kim Ayres' nude portraits of women over 50. Initially conceived for the stage, it became a film. Two days before the director Drew Taylor and I started working with the actors Sheila Grier, Kirsty Miller and Linda Duncan McLaughlin, to make the show, we cancelled it. Age made us vulnerable to Covid-19.

As it turned out, five days later the first national lockdown was imposed. It was not until September 2020, that I decided to join the crowd and go digital.

Thanks to the flexibility and understanding of the DG Unlimited Bright Sparks Award team, I embarked on a very different project to the one I had planned. I learnt 'on the job' - redrafting a script for a YouTube film under social distancing requirements; learning to use an online platform to run an interactive workshop with actors; and agonising over what a sense of audience means in a digital world. The film was shown as part of DGArts Live digital programme and will be aired again as part of this years' DG Arts 'Hame'll Dae Me' Festival.

This work has already influenced and changed my practice, I am now creating a new play for radio and transforming Gaze into a long-form poetry pamphlet."

Carolyn Yates

Photo credits: Kim Ayres



Upland



Making Connections schools project at Langholm Primary led by Morag Macpherson.

UPLAND A bold, ambitious, rural-based visual art and craft development organisation, [Upland](#) is based in Dumfries & Galloway.

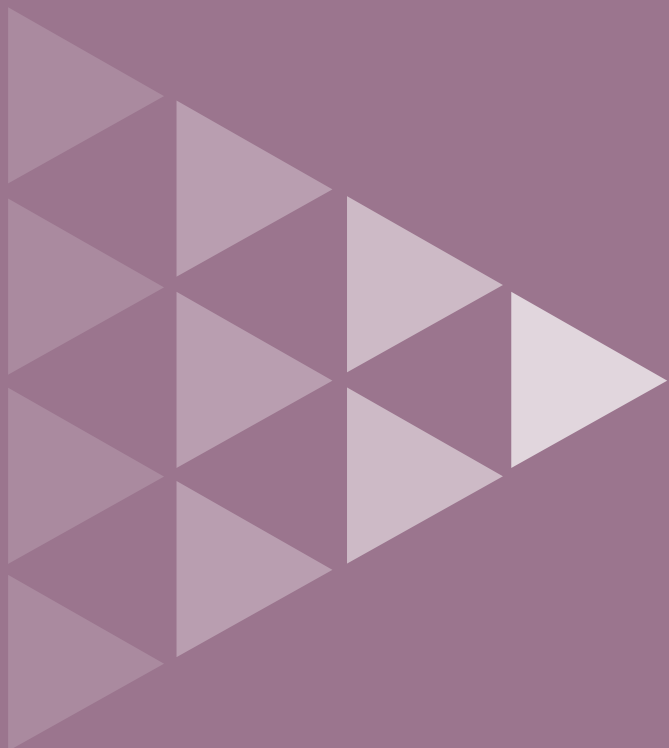
“Upland has sustained its support for artists and makers throughout the pandemic, providing remote opportunities for both emerging and established practitioners. Like many, we faced the challenges of the pandemic head on, adapting our programme rapidly to fit the changing landscape. This forced changes but has also provided positive opportunities with potential for longer term change.

Our flagship event, Spring Fling, had to be completely re-thought in order to take place digitally in 2020, with online activity during its usual slot in May followed by a postponed event in October. Participants created video studio tours, online workshops, and demonstrations. The website hosted new virtual studios, window exhibitions went up throughout the region, and an online exhibition was swiftly developed and delivered during the summer. We are currently looking ahead to a hybrid event this year Utilising the learning from this.

Having multiple projects running which rely on the connection of people meant there was no end to the constant problem solving! In the last year we’ve created school activity packs; held a school’s ‘window’ exhibition; hosted online advice sessions; set up a remote peer support group; piloted remote mentoring sessions and restructured residencies. Our current Modern Makers have been learning remotely with jeweller, Lisa Rothwell-Young, through a combination of online tutorials, videos, and toolkits, which have been posted out across the region.

It’s only been possible due to the amazing resilience and inventiveness of everyone involved and is really testament to the staff team, our Board, funders, partners, and our artists and makers.”

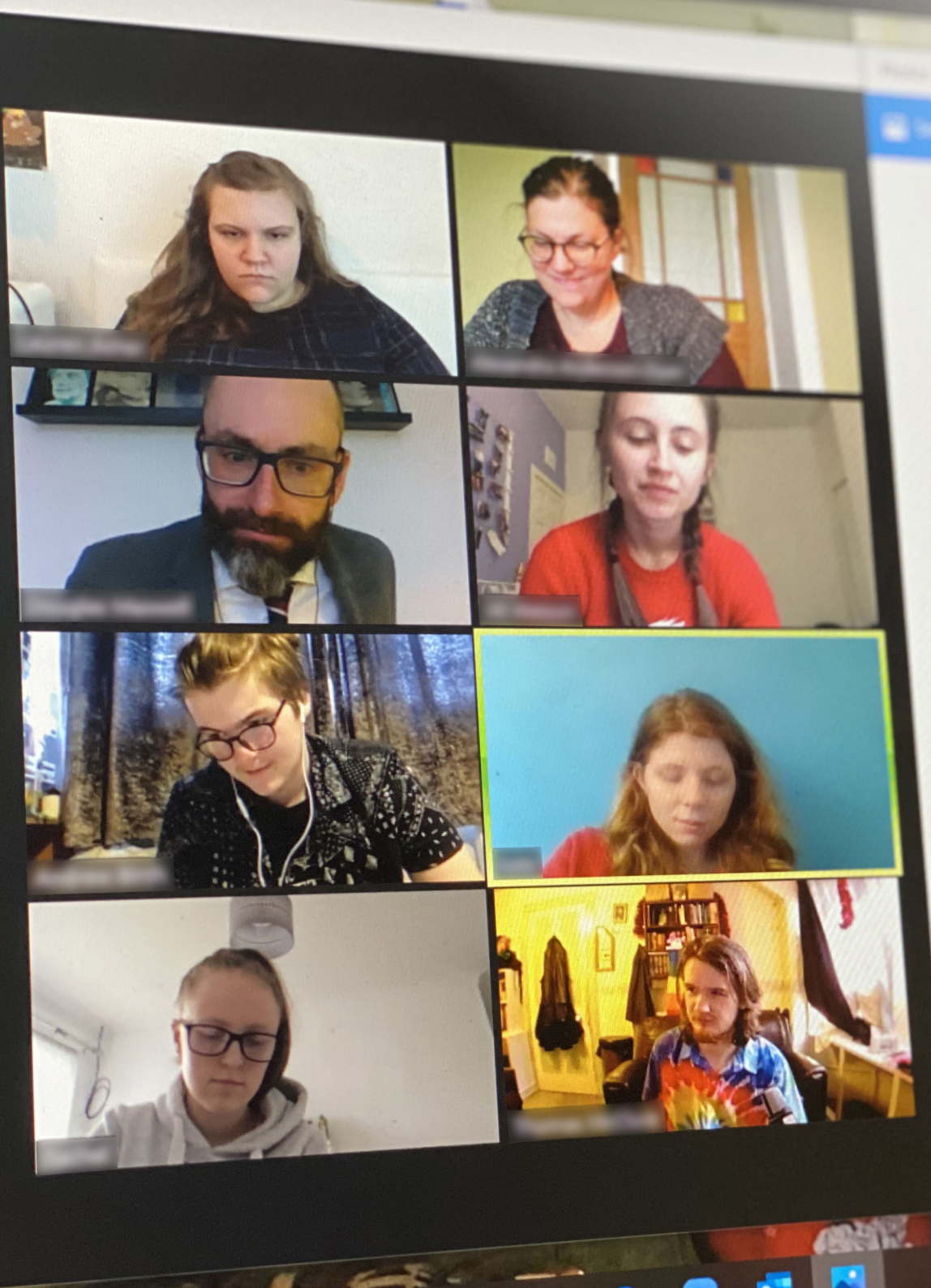
Amy Marletta, Upland Creative Director



Movement

Our theatrical producers and live performers found creative ways to keep audiences entertained throughout the restrictions. Online interactive plays, radio plays, podcasts, outdoor entertainment, and even a drive-in Panto! All these performances were successfully delivered around Dumfries and Galloway during 2020, thanks to our region's many theatrical talents.

Bunbury Banter Theatre Company





BUNBURY BANTER THEATRE COMPANY Based in Dumfries and Galloway, [Bunbury Banter](#) is an award-winning theatre company creating multi-sensory, immersive productions which build a sense of community through shared artistic experience.

“While there have been some losses this year, like our tour being cancelled, and education groups temporarily closed, here at Bunbury Banter we are still striving to find alternative ways of connecting with our audiences, which has led us into exploring new areas of ‘digital work’. At Halloween, we brought the game of Werewolf to a high-production online format, with its own unique twist of personality. It ran for a month of public performances, and private games continue to be booked for birthdays, celebrations, and workplace events.

Next, we have an immersive digital thriller coming out in summer 2021, set here in Dumfries and Galloway. A real time, four-week long story, to be experienced with teams of friends, brought together to solve the disappearance of a local businessman.

Additionally, we have had to find innovative ways to continue our educational work, with our Young Playwright’s Programme and private London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art lessons moving online.

Ally and Phil Anderson-Dyer

Moniaive Young Theatre Makers





MONIAIVE YOUNG THEATRE MAKERS is a creative drama ensemble for 7-17 year olds in Glencairn and surrounding villages. MYTM is a local group with global inspiration.

“Making a drama out of a crisis is what we did.

Being apart didn’t feel good, so we hopped into our little squares and learned about having drama meet ups on zoom. Improvising and seeing things from diverse perspectives; telling stories and creating theatre are what we do. 2020 gave us an opportunity to test what we do best.

Missing our planned performance slot in May 2020 was deflating and it began to feel like we needed to *create something* in light of our circumstances – together in our apartness. In collaboration with Company 3, we joined the internationally acclaimed Corona Virus Time Capsule Project and with the help of Jade, at Feltlove Creations in Moniaive, and committed support from Revitalise Moniaive, we found an outlet for ‘performing’.

Over 20 incredibly committed young people aged 7-13 with phone cameras and remote directed tasks made a short film from home called *Apart2Gether*. It’s the story of young people and their response to enforced isolation. Using creativity to connect and tell a story. We also wrote letters to our future selves, drew pictures and created a physical time capsule, which will be buried in the village as a memento of our place in this history, to be dug up at the Moniaive Gala in 2040.

Creative spirits we are and in-spite of it all, we have held a space for each other, and using whatever means we have we have found a way to tell our stories. We hope we can share them with you soon.”

Jess Fusco-Naish, Theatre Practitioner

‘[Apart2Gether](#)’, a short film by Moniaive Young Theatre Makers.
Directed by Jessica Fusco-Nash, Edited by Jade Goddard

South West Media Factory CIC

PASSION LED US HERE



SOUTH WEST MEDIA FACTORY CIC

The [SWMF](#) are focused on widening access to cinema and movie culture, and encouraging the use of creative digital media within the creative community in Dumfries & Galloway.

“Over this past year we have all had to adapt to Covid restrictions and lockdown but starting a community interest company focussing on cinema exhibition when all cinemas shut in March 2020 was especially tricky. However, we kept busy, working with partners to deliver online festivals and film seasons, and preparing for when cinemas re-open and we can all enjoy the wonders of cinema again.

We all had to rethink ways of sharing experiences and watching together; joining forces with Driftwood Cinema, Catstrand, and Scotland’s Moving Image Archive Catalogue we produced a season of online films this summer called ‘Engage’. We organised panel debates, filmmakers’ Q&A, and continued to develop ideas to work together during this difficult time. At the beginning of 2021, SWMF curated an online season of films by and about women called ‘Diamond Women’, celebrating women in film, and sharing the stories of women our audiences may not have seen. And thanks to funding from Film Hub Scotland, we loved remotely working with our two young mentees who helped curate, market, and deliver ‘Diamond Women’.

Lockdown gave us time to think deeply about how we can develop our company and the direction it should go. We passionately believe people love film and are desperate to return to cinema, theatre, and performances of all kinds. This past year has shown there is a human need for us to share space with strangers and bond over something we all watch together. It’s magical when an audience reacts – laughing, applauding, screaming – together in the moment.”

Belle Doyle, Co-Founder SWMF.



Melodies

Music has always been an important part of our lives. During the pandemic we found creative ways to continue playing, performing, and enjoying music to lift our spirits and express ourselves. Musicians, singers, choirs, and broadcasters all over the region used their creativity to find new ways to bring us the live performances we were missing and keep the music playing.



Absolute Classics

ABSOLUTE
CLASSICS



ABSOLUTE CLASSICS [Absolute Classics](#) connects individuals with the world's finest music. They offer an impressive calendar of concerts, series, and a festival, bringing the best of world classical talent to Dumfries and Galloway.

Prior to the COVID social distancing restrictions, Absolute Classics' concerts across the region were a lifeline for our audiences living in remote communities as we provided regular and affordable social events locally, which helped to overcome the impact of social isolation. During lockdown we continued our commitment to deliver these opportunities for our audiences and provided free online events through our digital channels.

"Thank you for finding a way to bring live music to us through all this. It's giving some moments of calm in the uncertainty." - YouTube channel viewer and supporter via Just Giving

Our response to the restrictions challenged us to work in new ways and through our digital approach, Absolute Classics' new online channels reached over 1 million viewers and lifted awareness of our organisation from local and national, to international levels.

During this time we continued our educational work through a series of free 1-2-1 virtual lessons for local young people with our world class musicians. We also commissioned our professional musicians to record live accompaniments and tutorials to support young vocalists' practice for exams. Practicing alongside a human accompaniment and being able to see correct techniques in action is vital for the development of greater musicianship. These resources were made available to all young vocalists of the region for free, where they could access them online from home, to support their daily practice.

www.absolutemymusic.co.uk/virtual-learning-resources

'We are truly grateful to Absolute Classics for the opportunities that they have provided. They responded very quickly to the developing situation and provided invaluable aids that support young people not only at this point, but in the years to come.' - Jamie Brand MBE (Principal Teacher Annan Academy)

Narelle Freeman, Absolute Classics.

Alive Community Radio





ALIVE COMMUNITY RADIO [Alive 107.3 FM](#) Community Radio for Dumfries, Scotland, and online worldwide.

“One thing we all learned during the pandemic was the importance of community radio. Transmitting to Dumfries and surrounding areas, Alive 107.3 continued to broadcast throughout the lockdown bringing local news, local voices, and music to the community. We had to adapt quickly to the lockdown restrictions.

By March 2020 our Studios in Dumfries were closed due to restrictions.

We gathered equipment together, and the team helped each other set up home studios. The music kept playing and the conversation continued. We broadcast a full schedule and developed some new shows and content too.

Partnership with Summerhill Community Centre in Dumfries developed into new shows. Line-dancing classes, sing-a-longs, and bingo all live on the radio! We are proud to have been able to continue serving and entertaining the community in this way.

There were interviews and remote live gigs via zoom, we ran online competitions, reported local news, broadcast an original radio soap opera and ensured daily COVID information was provided. Throughout the year, without fail, our presenters carried on so when anyone turned on the radio they would hear a cheery local voice and uplifting music.”

Dave McFarlane, Chairperson, Alive Community Radio SCIO

Stranraer Music Festival

A man in a kilt and sporrans is shown in profile, playing a bagpipe. He is wearing a dark jacket and a kilt with a patterned sporran. The background is dark with some distant lights, suggesting a night setting. The text "Stranraer Music Festival" is overlaid in the upper right.



STRANRAER MUSIC FESTIVAL An annual celebration of music brought to Stranraer by [Stranraer Music Town](#).

“In October 2020, with restrictions around live music easing, Stranraer Music Town began working quickly to prepare a digital version of our traditional Hogmanay Hoolie event. We were fortunate to receive financial support from Dumfries and Galloway Council’s Common Good Fund, and Stranraer, Belmont, and Ochtrellure Community Council in order to put together this show.

Our 2-hour ‘Hogmanay Hoolie @ Home’ event was streamed on Facebook and YouTube from 8.30pm on 31st December, with a separate video featuring one of our talented young pipers playing on top of Castle of St John in Stranraer, launching at midnight to celebrate in the bells.

We were blown away by the response we received from not only our community, but also from people watching across the world! With a short but intensive social media advertising campaign, we managed an impressive reach of over 22,000 people within a few weeks of the videos being posted – much further than our previous posts.

Everyone at Stranraer Music Town is delighted to have been able to support local bands, videographers, and technicians in putting together this event while bringing our community together from the safety of their own homes.”

Catriona McGhie, Chair of Stranraer Music Town



Image: Peace Pole Henge, Allanton Peace Sanctuary, Auldgirth.

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