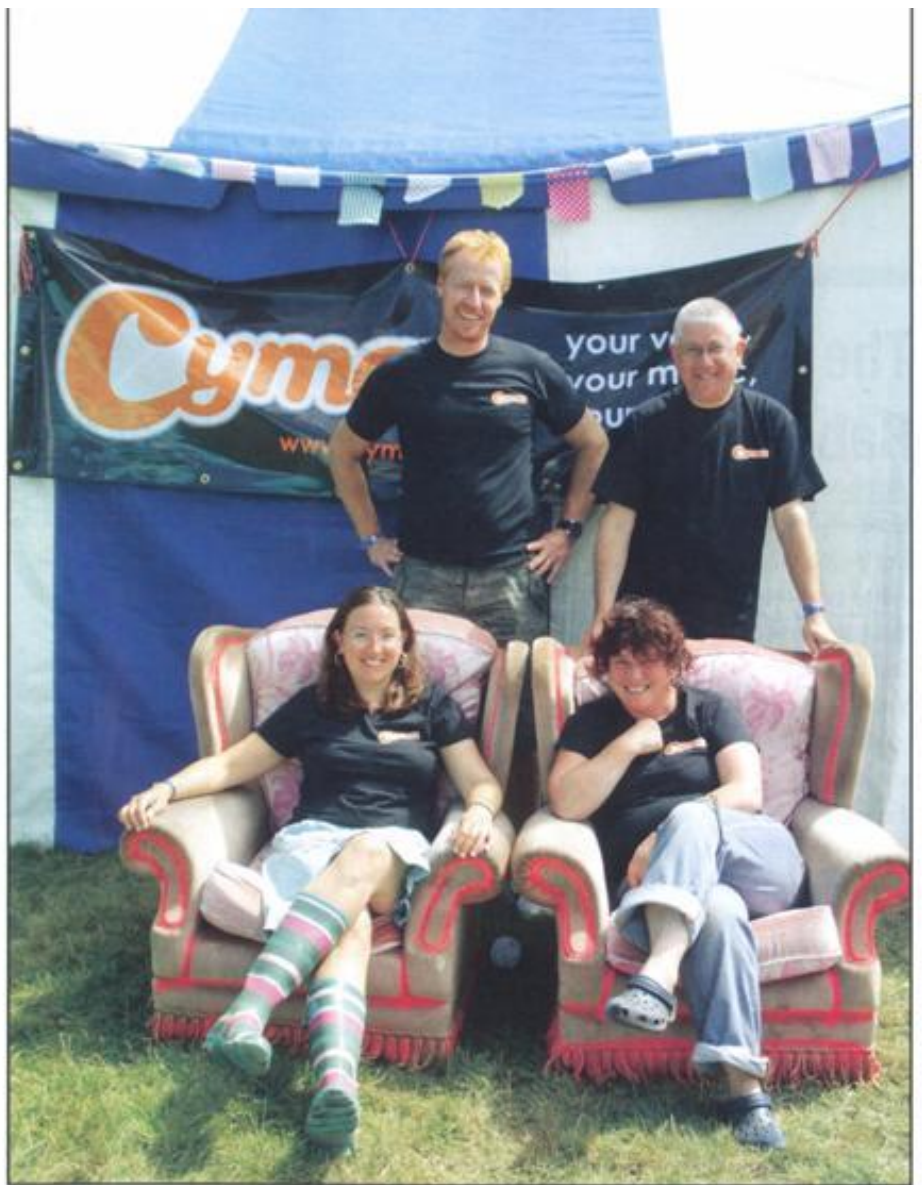


Your Music, Your Voice

Cornwall Youth Music Action Zone carries out invaluable work to help young people in Cornwall, writes Amanda Gough



Cornwall Youth Music Action Zone (CYMAZ) is dedicated to supporting young people's music, personal and social development. Working in partnership with other organisations and agencies, CYMAZ aims to support a young people's music and radio network in Cornwall. The charity has no base, working in youth centres and schools throughout Cornwall; therefore I went along to the Port Eliot Music and Literature Festival in St Germans in July 2010 to see the team in action.

There are 20 organisations delivering the Youth Music Action Zone programme throughout England. Primarily funded through the Lottery by the national charity Youth Music, CYMAZ has been supporting and facilitating music, radio and performance for young people outside of school in Cornwall since 2001, becoming an independent charity in 2003.

The group works with and supports other arts and social agencies across Cornwall. Jane Staffieri, the Director of CYMAZ, says: "Music can have a profound impact on people's lives and when that experience is supported by a workforce of highly skilled music leaders the effect is transformational."

This was CYMAZ's second year at the Port Eliot Festival and has become a bit of a tradition. If you are

young and interested in music in any way then Tent Twenty Five is the place to be. Partnered with Rogue Theatre, CYMAZ managed the Green Room for the acts playing on the two live stage venues, offering them a space to relax, network and be interviewed for CYMAZ Radio, a new internet radio station run by young people for young people. The Twenty Five Tent gave young people a chance to get actively involved in the bands showcased and an opportunity to show everyone what they could do.

Emily Foulkes, the Development Manager of CYMAZ, says: "Young People have so much drive, but we know from our work with young people that they have little outlet to express their creativity and love for music, especially in Cornwall where rural isolation is a big issue." CYMAZ provides that outlet and assists music projects with funding and development, with the aim to enhance music and radio projects in Cornwall and improve access and participation to these projects for young people.

Projects such as CYMAZ Internet Radio have been set up. The Radio Station Manager, Moss Cantrill, says: "Music binds you, and draws people together." The CYMAZ Radio Hubs enable young people to be involved in all aspects of radio, allowing them creativity

Above
Back row: Moss Cantrill (Radio Manager, CYMAZ) and Robin Leah (Office Manager, CYMAZ); front row: Emily Foulkes (Business Development Manager, CYMAZ) and Jane Staffieri (Director, CYMAZ)



and an opportunity to have their voice heard.

Another big project with which CYMAZ is involved is 'Splanna!', which is Cornish for 'to shine'. Splanna! tells the story of young people's dreams, hopes and aspirations by the use of music, circus performance and dance. CYMAZ searched for talented young people in Cornwall willing to devise a performance piece for the stage; many of the young people also participated in all areas of the promotion and management of the project itself. Splanna! will be held at the Hall for Cornwall in Truro on 30 November 2010.

CYMAZ projects have truly transformed young people's lives. Ashley Reynolds has been a part of CYMAZ since he was 12 years old; now 19, he helped out at Port Eliot. Moss Cantrill met Ashley on a project to provide access to instruments and the opportunity to rehearse at Redruth School. Ashley was lost and falling through the school system when Moss introduced him to music decks on a DJ workshop run after school. Ashley then attended every music workshop that CYMAZ held and now volunteers with CYMAZ whenever he can.

"CYMAZ projects have transformed young people's lives"

Ashley told me that if it wasn't for the CYMAZ music projects he became involved in he is certain that he, and many other kids, would not have had the drive to finish school. He has just completed a BTEC National Diploma in Music Technology, with distinction, at Truro College and is now attending the University of Plymouth. Ashley has gained so much work experience already with CYMAZ and believes that this will be invaluable when applying for jobs.

Emily Foulkes says that she has witnessed music transform young people's lives. Hung up in Twenty Five Tent are scribbles of what young people feel about music.

Some comments are so heartfelt, believing music to be their only inspiration and voice in a sometimes lonely world. One scribble simply read: 'Music is my life'. I think that sums up what music means to so many young people and how CYMAZ can reach these people and inspire them for the rest of their lives. □

For further information visit: www.cymaz.co.uk, www.youthmusic.org.uk

Top
Megan Chapman (from the band MCMC), Eddie Willers (from the band Wisdom), Kyla Howitt, Ricky Lovell (from the band Tricky), Ashley Reynolds and Andrew Bate (CYMAZ Project Assistant)

Centre left to right
Tent Twenty Five;

The Port Eliot Festival;

This was CYMAZ's second year at the Port Eliot Festival