

Drum therapy

Julie Ann of Dubai Drums helps people come to terms with themselves through the simple but liberating art of creating rhythms on drums

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Staff Reporter

The heartbeat can be evidence of life or the deep throb of a drum beat. It can be the most primal sound known to man, earthy, exciting and full of passion.

Its rhythm has the ability to enter the consciousness of an individual and touch the rawest human emotion. Various cultures through the ages have developed distinct styles in percussion.

The African continent has contributed massively to percussion styles and rhythms in this world. The therapeutic element in music has been well documented through the ages. In the city of Dubai, as life gets more complicated there has been a gradual move towards more innovative approaches to cope with its demands.

Julie Ann of Dubai Drums helps people to come to terms with themselves through the rather simple but liberating art of creating rhythms on drums.

As a child growing up in London, Julie Ann was fascinated by world religions and innovative approaches towards finding oneself.

Her travails through the Middle East and more specifically Egypt and Jordan over a period of twenty seven years opened her eyes and ears to an entirely different culture, sound and approach to raising self awareness. Her experimentations in search of the truth moved her in the direction of the magic of percussion.

She recognized and accepted this fact and three years ago she tried to organize the Mind Body and Spirit Festival in Dubai. She had heard of a drum circle in the city and organized their presence at the festival.

At the last minute the one and only sponsor dropped out leaving her in the lurch. As she says "I was so looking forward to hearing the drum circle I was extremely disappointed when it fell through, I decided then that I ought to learn drumming, this is of course two years ago."

This was also the time she started doing community drum circles. This



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Julie Ann: Fascinated by the drum beats.

meant groups of people coming together to share a unique experience. "I never drum by myself, I am passionate about it, I like to practice with other people and enjoy myself."

The instruments used were usually percussion instruments divided into four timbres; drums, metal, wood and shakers. The concept of a circle is vital in such an exercise since it optimizes listening and communicating and every one is equal. As one who has read the 'Celestine Prophecies' she says, "There are no co-incidences in life."

She approached "Inspire Performances" headed by the inspirational Paul Bennett to give her a chance to perform professionally.

"I did my first corporate show and it was a brilliant experience. I have to thank Paul for encouraging me to walk the walk and talk the talk."

Drumming has a therapeutic effect which has been well documented. It has a de-stressing effect on people. The sustained repetition of the pulse results in a rhythmic phenomenon called rhythmic

entrainment. Entrainment uplifts the self physically, mentally and emotionally. There is a calming effect on the body and an energizing effect on the spirit.

"There is a perception amongst people that they don't have rhythm, it is a fallacy, everyone has rhythm. It is just that some people take a while to come in touch with their core self; you don't have to be a musician to be a drummer. I like to say that God's favourite instrument is the drum because he created the heartbeat." says Julie Ann.

Dubai Drums is now well established amongst corporate circles. These exercises help in team building, create strong and unified group identity, provides inspiration and guidance, release stress and more importantly for hr managers it encourages co-operation.

The drum circle meets every Saturday and Wednesday at the Le Meridien Mina Seyahi between 7:30 pm and 11:00 pm. Individuals visiting the circle without a drum will have to pay thirty five dirhams and those with one will pay ten dirhams less.